

## The Joy Destroyer

- I. After celebrating Easter and the wonderful Resurrection Power of Jesus.
  - A. Many people this last week worldwide have given their lives to Jesus...
    - 1. This past week I was in communication with Sean Dunn at JesusCares.com
      - a. 300% increase in people coming to Jesus.
  - B. I remember when I asked Jesus into my heart and life over 50 years ago...
    - 1. I had never experienced that kind of peace... that kind of hope...  
that kind of release... **THAT KIND OF JOY...**

II. Today I want to talk about the JOY that comes from knowing God...

- A. Our joy is a very powerful weapon against the enemy...

Nehemiah 8:10 (NIV)

"...for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

- B. Joy is a powerful weapon, so the enemy pours out a lot of his resources to steal it and destroy it...
  - C. There have been many studies, books, and sermons that address how he robs our joy.
    - 1. Sorrow, anxiety, unforgiveness, sickness, bitterness, selfishness...
    - 2. These are just symptoms of the number one thing that destroys our joy.
- III. The number one thing that destroys our joy is SIN...
- A. It Alienates us from our Father God...
    - 1. It is more than "The Big Ten of Sin" (The ten commandments)
    - 2. The word sin means "To miss the mark"
  - B. Let's look at Nehemiah and find out why he was reminding the Israelites "The Joy of the Lord is your strength".
    - 1. By the time we get to chapter 8 the walls around Jerusalem had been rebuilt...
    - 2. The people had settled in their homes...
    - 3. They all came back to Jerusalem and the priests now were going to instruct them on how to live according to God's standards.

Nehemiah 8:8-12 (NIV)

[8] They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read.

[9] Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, "This day is sacred to the LORD your God. Do not mourn or weep." For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.

[10] Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

[11] The Levites calmed all the people, saying, "Be still, for this is a sacred day. Do not grieve."

[12] Then all the people went away to eat and drink, to send portions of food and to celebrate with great joy, because they now understood the words that had been made known to them.

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- C. Things were going good for them... (Many had come back from exile)
  - 1. They rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem with great difficulty...
  - 2. They now once again were taking ownership of their homes and land...
  - 3. They were seeing blessing and fruit in their lives...
- D. So why were they morning?
  - 1. God's will for their life was explained and they realized...
    - a. They had missed the mark
  - 2. So what did they do?

[12] Then all the people went away to eat and drink, to send portions of food and to celebrate with great joy, because they now understood the words that had been made known to them.

- 1. They stopped and counted their blessings... (Eat and Drink)
  - 2. They shared with those who had nothing prepared... (Sharing kills selfishness and sin)
  - 3. They celebrated with great joy because they understood how God wanted them to live.
- IV. When you lose your joy to get it back you need to rejoice!
- 1. Count your blessings...
  - 2. Share what God has given you or shown you...
  - 3. Rejoice in God's boundaries to protect you and grow you.

Psalm 119:14

[14] I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches.

- V. All of God's guidelines for us are because He loves us...
  - A. When we miss the mark... Or come to the realization we have missed the mark...
    - 1. God wants us toe come to Him and start over...

Before I finished up today's sermon Cindy and I went for a walk and we witnessed a wonderful interaction between two parents and a young child that showed us God's heart for each of us.

- 1. Going up an incline... You can make it keep peddling...  
Almost to us but it was too steep, and he stopped and fell over...  
You did so great!!! Are you alright???

I want to be alright!!!

- 2. God's saying to us today in our struggles... Are you alright???  
Our answer needs to be... I want to be alright!!!

Here's a prayer in Psalms that will help you say to the Father I want to be alright!!!

Psalms 139:23 (NIV)

[23] Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.

[24] See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.