

THE EDIFIER

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The Joy of Jesus

Are you a “joyful” person? Do you have joy in your life, and do you genuinely experience joy? From the Greek, joy means “cheerfulness”, “calm delight”, “gladness”, as in to be “exceedingly glad, joyful, to experience joyfulness”.

We’re not discussing mirth. Or happiness. Joy is much more than just being “happy”.

Happiness is an emotion. God never intended for us to be in that particular emotional state all the time. Ecclesiastes tells us that there is a time to weep, a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance!

Joy, rather, is a state of being, looking upward and outward, and not inward. Joy is also largely composed of gratitude. But, there’s yet another dimension to joy.

Right after Love, Joy is the second fruit of the Holy Spirit, as listed in Galatians 5:22. Thus, joy is produced by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Paul wrote to those in Rome, saying:

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13 NKJV)

Paul also stated in Romans 14:17 that peace and joy come in the Holy Spirit. We see where the disciples were “filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit”. (Acts 13:52)

The Psalmist testifies that “in your presence is fulness of joy”! (Psalms 16:11)



Do you desire that joy? Not as just a fleeting moment of laughter or happiness, but as a permanent state of being. God wants us to ask him, in prayer.

Jesus reflected this desire for his followers when he said: “Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.” (John 16:24 NKJV)

In the previous chapter in John’s testimony, Jesus again expressed his desire that we experience his joy: “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.” (John 15:11 NKJV)

As Christ is being formed in us, as we are in Christ and Christ is in us, (the same relationship that Jesus has with the Father), we will begin to know and experience true joy.

Joy imparts Godly empowerment, presence and great rejoicing. Jesus said of his disciples, who would experience difficulties and persecutions, “Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven...” (Matthew 5:12 NJKV)

Our eyes are not on the things and circumstances of this earth, but rather on Jesus and his heavenly promises. Joy is empowering and so powerful that it transforms us even when amidst our most dire and tragic circumstances. Even in grief, we can experience joy. In death we naturally grieve the loss of a loved one. But, hope and belief in the

resurrection elevates that grief with a joy – found, for example, in Jesus’ words when he told his followers not to be amazed that the righteous would rise from the dead when they hear the voice of the Son of Man. (John 5:28-29)

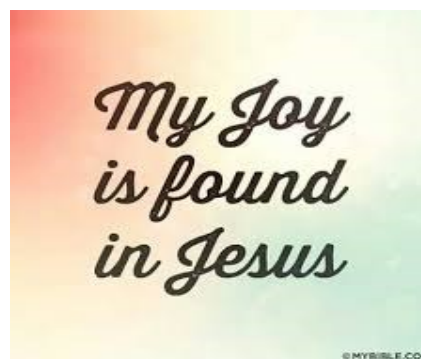
Jesus said to his disciples of his own impending death and resurrection that, “your joy no one will take from you.” (John 16:22) We can be sure that, following the gruesome rigours of the crucifixion, the disciples rejoiced when they saw Jesus again! Luke tells us that, when Jesus finally returned to heaven, the disciples “worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.” (Luke 24:52)

Joy is mentioned some 158 times in scripture, and its verb “rejoice” is quoted some 198 times! We can be sure that when Jesus returns, and the righteous are raised back to life, and we see our loved ones again, in glory, we will rejoice exceedingly! Paul affirmed this when he wrote, “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?” (1 Thessalonians 2:19 NKJV)

The apostle Paul suffered greatly during his ministry. He was often beaten, stoned, imprisoned, ship wrecked and abandoned by others. In fact, Jesus said of his calling to ministry, “I will show him how much he must suffer for my name’s sake.” Paul speaks about having “received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit.” (1 Thessalonians 1:6 NKJV) Paul truly suffered, and yet he also at the same time experienced the joy of the Holy Spirit – a divine reality that sustained him.

Paul echoed this reality when he wrote, “all patience and longsuffering with joy, giving thanks to the Father”. (Colossians 1:11 NKJV) Nearing the end of his life, no matter what he’d experienced, there was one note that Paul wanted to finish on. He said, “nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy...” (Acts 20:24 NKJV) Like Paul, when you come to really know Jesus, you are blessed with a profound perspective, a state of mind that is characterised by joy.

Even before Jesus was born, we’re intrigued by the account when the wise men from the east were awaiting the Messiah: “when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy”. (Matthew 2:10 NKJV) When they finally saw the infant Jesus, they gave expensive gifts, including gold, and we can be sure that when they returned home via a different route, thus avoiding the murderous intentions of Herod, they would have been rejoicing.



When Mary was pregnant with Jesus, she visited her relative Elizabeth, who was by then six months pregnant with who would become John the Baptist. From that visit we learn that the Messiah already affected Elizabeth’s baby. Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, said, “For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in

my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.” (Luke 1:44 NKJV) We see evidence of this joy in Jesus. Luke wrote about one such event.

At that time Jesus, “full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children...” (Luke 10:21 NIV)

As Christ is being formed in us, the Joy of Jesus can be ours as well. In fact, Jesus prayed for his disciples, of which we’re a part, that “they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.” (John 17:13 NKJV)

No matter what we experience in this life, we’re assured that we too can overcome, just as Jesus overcame. The author of Hebrews exhorts us to fix “our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith, For the joy set before him he endured the cross...” (Hebrews 12:2 NIV)

In the lead-up to Jesus’ death, he knew he was returning to his former glory, and he knew that by his death and resurrection, all our sins would be atoned for, and salvation offered to all! That joy now resonates throughout heaven, every time a sinner repents. (Luke 15:10)

Jesus desires us to be where he is. Now, all of creation longs for the “revealing of the sons of God”. What joy awaits!

Written by John Klassek



Repenting of False Religion

If a husband died in Israel leaving a widow who had no son, the deceased's brother, if he lived nearby, was required by the Law of Moses to take the widow to be his wife and their first born son would then continue the deceased's line in Israel (see Deuteronomy 25:5-10). So the dead man's brother had an interesting duty under Moses' law. He had to be what we call a *good Samaritan* to his brother. But, what if he didn't want to?

In such a case the widow would report this to the elders. The elders would attempt to persuade the brother to perform his duty. However, if they failed, then the widow in the presence of the elders would remove his sandal from his foot, spit in his face and say, *so shall it be done to the man who will not build up his brother's house*. His name shall be called in Israel, *The house of him who had his sandal removed*.

A good legal system

The Law of Moses contains several other examples of these *good Samaritan* laws. Leviticus 19:18 instructs to love your neighbour

as yourself. Deuteronomy 24:14-15 required employers to pay their poor and needy servants wages at the end of the day. Deuteronomy 24:19-24 required owners of farms at harvest time to leave some olives or grapes on the trees for foreigners, orphans and widows. Anyone who saw their brother's ox going astray or stuck in a ditch was required by the Law of Moses to help. I think we can agree these *good Samaritan* laws were a compliment to Israel's legal system.

Did you realize though that *good Samaritan* laws are not so common in our world. In Australia, for example, if the Prime Minister was tied down on a railway track and you saw him lying there helpless as a train was fast approaching and you did nothing to help, the law could not convict you of anything! The common law casts no duty on a person to go to the aid of another who is in peril or distress!

The wonderful *good Samaritan* laws of Moses's day were not brought about through democracy, monarchy, communism or any other form of earthly government. No, they were brought about by theocracy. God was on the throne (and still is, forever) and He passed on His laws through His servant Moses. Our western democracies think democracy is the best thing since sliced bread and we try to impose it on countries like Iraq and Afghanistan. As good as democracy is though, if the Prime Minister was in peril we would have no obligation to help! In many ways the Mosaic laws were outstanding for their time, especially compared to the barbaric, arbitrary and superstitious legal systems that existed in many

cultures of the world of Moses' day. Many leaders or so called *progressives* today mock the laws of Moses; yet in many of our western legal systems there are no *good Samaritan* laws.

And who is my neighbour?

Let's jump forward though about 1500 years from the time of Moses to the time of Jesus and see whether having good laws resulted in a nation of good people. Consider Luke 10:25-37:

And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?" So he answered and said, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.' And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live." But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among thieves?" And he said, "He who showed mercy on him" Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

A good system failed

Jesus was concerned about the righteousness of this lawyer who asked, *And who is my neighbor?* Do you think that somehow this lawyer who wanted to justify himself might have resembled the priest or the Levite in the parable? What if the priest and the Levite represented the leading religious figures of Jesus' day and were not just characters in the parable? What a shame it would be if those who were supposed to be setting the example were not doing so at all. In fact, this was the case. Such a good legal system, but what a shame this indeed was the result. Jesus would have been dismayed or even angry. It seems He was sending the priests and Levites, who wouldn't lift a finger to help anyone, a strong personal message such as that in Matthew 23:4:

For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

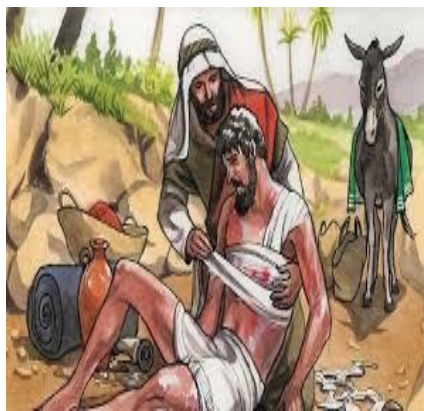
What good were their devout practices of fasting, Sabbath keeping, religious ceremonies and sacrifices if they wouldn't stoop to help one of God's precious children lying helpless on the road? *God help us* if we pass by those crying out for help.

When the system in place fails and when those in the system who are supposed to set the example fail miserably, what do you do? If the best student in your local school fails to pass their Year 12 and all the rest fail too – what do you do? If the best 100m runner in Jamaica can't qualify for the Olympics what do you do? You get a new

system. God, through Christ, was indeed bringing in a new system – the New Covenant.

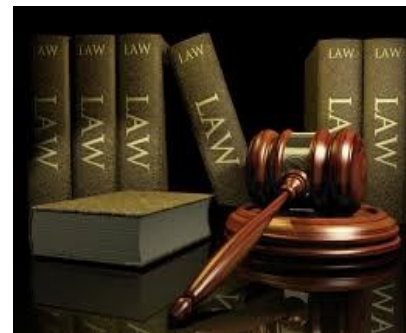
The irony of the Samaritan

Yet, before considering the new system, we should pause to consider the Samaritan. He did the right thing in a beautiful way. He did what the letter and the spirit of the Law of Moses clearly taught. He loved his neighbor as himself. He's an example of the gentiles, which Romans 2:14 says did not have the law but by nature did the things in the law, and of whom God said, *I was found by those who did not seek me. I was made manifest to those who did not ask me, but to Israel he said, 'All day I have stretched out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people' (Romans 10:21).*



Isn't it ironic the Samaritan, considered to be a low-life dog in the eyes of many in Israel, was given by Jesus as the example of righteousness. In 2007, Brendan Keilar, a Melbourne lawyer, was tragically shot dead when he stopped to help a tourist who was struggling with another man. This is ironic too when we consider lawyers in Australian society are often mocked as being money grabbing and uncaring. Yet it was the lawyer who risked his life to help de-

spite probably knowing better than anyone there was no legal requirement to help. Isn't this again the gentiles not having the law doing by nature the requirement of God's law?



Who do we resemble – the Levite or the Samaritan?

Let's look at where we stand though. Are we more like the Levite or the Samaritan in the parable? God did bring in a better system through Christ's blood. In the book of Hebrews, it's described as the new and living way, a better covenant established with a better sacrifice on better promises bringing in a better hope. We even have a better system than Israel had at the time of Jesus' parable. We have the greatest example – Jesus the High Priest of our souls, not the priest who couldn't even cross the road to help. So much was invested for us, not just the blood of bulls, but the blood of God's own Son. Well, are we more like the Levite or the Samaritan? What a great shame it would be if we were more like the Levite!

Let me suggest if we are not consistently helping needy persons, yet we are attending church weekly and reading our Bibles regularly, praying every day and keeping many of God's commands,

Continued on page six



Bible Facts and Trivia

Books of the Bible:

Old Testament: 39 books
 New Testament: 27 books
 Complete Bible: 66 books

Verses:

Old Testament: 23,214 verses
 New Testament: 7,959 verses
 Complete Bible: 31,173 verses
 Middle verse of the Bible: Psalms 103:1,2
 Middle verse of the Old Testament: 2 Chronicles 20:17
 Middle verse of the New Testament: Acts 17:17
 Shortest verse of the Old Testament: 1 Chronicles 1:25
 Shortest verse of the New Testament: "Jesus wept." John 11:35; "Rejoice evermore" 1 Thessalonians 5:16
 Longest verse in the Bible: Esther 8:9
 Verses most alike: Psalm 107:8,15,21, 31

Chapters:

Old Testament: 929
 New Testament: 260
 Entire Bible: 1,189
 Middle chapter of Old Testament: Job 29
 Middle chapter of New Testament: Romans 13
 Middle and shortest chapter of Bible: Psalms 117
 Longest chapter in the Bible: Psalm 119
 Chapters that are most alike: 2 Kings 19 and Isaiah 37

Words:

In the Old Testament: 592,439 words
 In the New Testament: 181,253 words

"Lines Written in a Bible"

Read it, believe it, live it, and love it!
 Give not the world an abiding above it.
 God, in eternal wisdom has penned it;
 Nothing of man can ever amend it.

Search and discover the joy-giving
 story
 of comfort and hope in Christ and His
 glory:
 Read of the Cross, and the love that
 produced it;
 Tell it again to the ones that refused
 it.

Christ is the Theme of it;
 Salvation the scheme of it;
 Deep is the truth of it;
 Life is the fruit of it.

Down through the centuries man's
 meditation
 Finds it the witness of His Revela-
 tion.

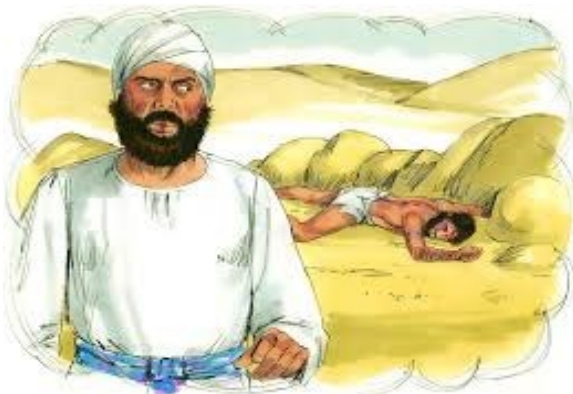
Written by Bert Sundberg
 Published in, 1943

Continued from page 4

but we are not regularly and consistently loving needy people then we are more like the priest and the Levite in the parable than the Samaritan!

If we don't go to church, but still think we are godly, but likewise are not regularly and consistently loving needy people then we are more like the priest and the Levite in the parable than the Samaritan!

I also want to suggest if we are waiting for people's needs to suddenly appear along our path at the exact place we are walking and then and only then will we help we are not much different to the priest or the Levite because there are desperate needs all around us, if only we'd open our eyes and find some time to help.



It's time to repent of false religion, for if our religion is false we are certainly not prepared for the glorious and dreadful day of the coming of Jesus Christ.

"Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world" **James 1:27**

Written by David Kidd

FAITH-LIFT

**YOU DON'T HAVE TO SEE
MIRACLES TO BELIEVE**



Essays to Inspire and Restore Faith

Author David Kidd

From introduction

This book has two aims. Firstly, it aims to help the skeptic and those unfamiliar with the Christian faith to understand why many people believe in Christ. The biblical insights shared will be thought provoking and perhaps challenging to the skeptic. I think they will also be stimulating and uplifting to those who are struggling to find meaning and satisfaction in life and to all who are hungering for truth.

Answers to Test Your Knowledge
1. b, e, a, c, d.
2. c, e, a, d, b.
3. b, c, d, a.
4. b
5. a.

**Please send for the 75 page book,
"Faith-Lift"**

Youth Vibe



The Bible often talks about how the tongue can pour out blessing and cursing.

Controlling the tongue is sometimes difficult to do. It is unnatural for a well to give sweet and salty water, yet we do it with our tongues.

“With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.”

James 3:9-11

Search Proverbs to learn what God instructs us about the tongue.

Proverbs 10:19

Proverbs 12:18

Proverbs 15:1

Proverbs 17:28

Proverbs 18:21

Proverbs 21:23





TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1.

Sort the following characters in chronological order: a. Moses; b. Adam; c. David; d. Solomon; e. Abraham.

2.

Sort the following events in chronological order: a. The Holy Spirit descends on believers at Pentecost; b. John has a vision on the Island of Patmos; c. Jesus is baptized in the Jordan River; d. Paul, Barnabas and Mark are sent out on a mission by the church; e. Peter denies that he knows Jesus.

3.

Sort the following events in chronological order: a. The arrest of Paul in Jerusalem; b. Mary's response to the Angel; c. Nicodemus' conversation about rebirth; d. Peter's denial of Jesus.

4.

In which book of the Bible are the most commonly cited version of the Ten Commandments? a. Isaiah; b. Exodus; c. Genesis; d. Numbers; e. Matthew

5.

Near which holy day was Jesus crucified? a. Passover; b. Hannukah; c. Tabernacles; d. Sabbath; e. Purim



Your Two Appointments with God

Your predestined appointments with God are summarized in one succinct verse of Scripture: *"It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment"* (Hebrews 9:27). Death and judgment — these are your two inescapable appointments with God, and you cannot avoid them!

Are you ready for these two appointments? If you died today, are you ready to meet your Maker? Are you prepared to be judged for eternity?

Please send for the free booklet

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