

# Sermon Outlines

## Joy

*Acts 13:52 - "The disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost"*

If one should ask what one thing characterized the Christians of the New Testament, the answer would be, their joy. Among the chapters of the Book of Acts in which this characteristic attitude is seen are 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 13, 16. Is this true of Christians today? Is joy one of the marks distinguishing them from the people of the world? It may be argued that life is different now; but is it any less bright or easy? Is it not rather, in many ways, more so? The abolition of slavery from so much of the world is only one example of the amelioration of conditions in the old order which were not conducive to joy, and the very presence of Christianity and its undeniable influence on life is another instance. The fact is that joy is like the peace of God ~ the world can neither give it nor take it away.

### **I. Joy - What It Means**

1. Joy is a condition, a state of soul due to being right with God.
2. Joy is not happiness.
  - (a) Happiness is dependent on happy circumstances, on what happens; joy is independent of these.
  - (b) Happiness depends on what one has; joy on what one is.
  - (c) Happiness comes from experience of good as distinct from evil; joy from experience of God apart from good or evil.
  - (d) Happiness comes from things outside which stir within; joy leaps from within, from God in the heart and soul.
3. Joy has three elements:
  - a) Retrospection on revelation ~ faith ~ past.
  - b) Aspiration after realization ~ love ~ present.
  - c) Preparation in anticipation ~ hope ~ future.

### **II. Joy - For Whom It Is**

For "the disciples"~

1. Those who belong to Christ ~ not the world.
2. All those who belong to Christ ~ not favoured few only ~ all are "Called to be saints."

### **III. Joy - What It Does**

1. It fortifies ~ mind and will.
2. It satisfies ~ soul and heart.

Cf. Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8) who "went on his way rejoicing" even though but a new convert with scanty knowledge, bereft of teacher, absolutely alone.

### **IV. Joy - How It Comes**

1. With "the Holy Ghost" ~ incoming, indwelling. The "fulness of the Spirit" enters the yielded life, empty of self and world, and brings the "joy of the Lord."

### **Conclusion:**

1. Admit the Holy Spirit
2. Permit Him to reveal Christ
3. Commit to Him the life
4. Transmit the resultant joy to others

... W.H. Griffith Thomas, D.D.