

I Still Have JOY

Heb 12:1-15 - Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. 2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. 4 In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5 And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, 6 because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." 7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? 8 If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. 9 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! 10 Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. 11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. 12 Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. 13 "Make level paths for your feet," so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed. 14 Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. (NIV)

As we celebrate the Memorial Day Weekend, it's a Blessing to know that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, paid our sin debt with His own precious blood. We Thank God, We Thank Jesus, We Thank the Holy Spirit for Love and the Divine plan of the Great I AM. We must still realize that in the midst of life; even in communities like Spring Hope, Rocky Mount, Raleigh, Wilson, and surrounding areas; life can still have its ups and downs. Has anybody been hurt? Has anyone been mistreated? Pause for just a moment. I just want to Thank God for being so good to us. I'm Thankful for being here today. Did you realize how many people would love to be here, right where you are today? Can I get a witness? So, on this 5th Sunday morning we are so Thankful for the Goodness of the Lord. The Lord wanted me to remind you that "You still have Joy". (In the midst of it all; I Still have Joy and You Still have Joy). In today's text our key verse is verse 2. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (What a Memorial Day that took place for us all!) I'd like to share a few points and then I'll take my seat.

- **Who for the joy set before Him, endured the Cross.**

We talk about the rugged cross, the painful cross, but today we will discuss the

“Joy” of the Cross. In Romans 5:1-6, the scripture says “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us. *You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.* (You see, while humanity was lost, Christ died for us). This is why we can sing the song Amazing Grace, because God made a way for us to receive eternal life through his son; Jesus Christ.) Tell somebody, in spite of what it looks like and in spite of what you may have heard.... I still have Joy.

- **Scorning its shame.**

Scorn is defined as “the feeling or belief that someone or something is worthless or despicable.” Jesus bore our sins, shortcomings, and our shame on the cross. Can you imagine the humility of our Savior – Jesus Christ? He endure it all. I’m sure there were folks mocking Him, some shame He had to endure, and people talking negatively about our King, but He kept pressing on towards that old rugged cross. Jesus bore the burden of a lowly emotional state, emotions too low to mention or name, perhaps He carried depression and shame to the cross because of His love for us. Somebody ought to shout Hallelujah! Shout because our Lord took the pain and scorned the shame for each one of us. John 15:13 says “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.” My brothers and sisters this is how we know what love is... Good God Almighty. 1 John 3:16-20 shares “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Tell somebody, I still have Joy.

- **Sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

Jesus sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Colossians 3:1-6 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. I like the way 2 Timothy 8:13 reminds us that Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained. Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with Him, we will also live with Him; if we endure, we will also reign with Him. If we disown Him, He will also disown us; if we are faithless, He will remain faithful, for He cannot disown himself. (NIV)

In closing, you may not have a refrigerator full of food, but you Still Have Joy. You may have been talked about; but you still have Joy. I've been through some ups and downs, but I still have Joy. Job said "Thou he slay me yet will I trust in him." I may have been down, but I still have Joy. I might not have \$1 million dollars in my pocket, but I still have Joy. This Joy that I have, the world didn't give it to me, and the world can't take it away.

Jesus, Is my Joy. Jesus is my Shield and My Buckler. He's the Alpha and the Omega. The Beginning and the End. The Bright & Morning Star. My Friend, My Confident, My Savior, My Healer, My Deliverer. I got it. Yes, I got it. You got it. Hallelujah, you got it. I still have joy. You still have joy. We still have joy. This joy that we have the world didn't give it to us and the world can't take it away. Rom 10:8-11 teaches us "But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. Jesus is our Joy. Hallelujah, Amen.