

The Healing Power of Joy

I. Why Do the Heathen Rage?

Psalm 2:1-4:

Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?

The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying,

Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.

These verses of Scripture show a contrast between the general attitude on earth and the attitude in heaven. In heaven there is no anger. In heaven there is no strife. In heaven there is love. In heaven there is joy. The Bible says in the presence of the Lord there is joy forevermore! (Psalm 16:11)

The people of the earth rage and imagine vain things. But God sits in the heavens and laughs! The reason God is laughing is because He sees the folly of men who think they can come against Him—who think they have more power than the God Who created the universe!

Rage is one of the best descriptions of what is happening in the earth today. We have the rage of race against race, rich against poor, men against women, students against teachers, parents against children and children against parents. In recent years we even have road rage!

Many people today meditate on things that are meaningless—things that do not really matter. What is sad about the day in which we live is even Christians become enraged. Often as people grow older, rather than operating in more love and compassion toward others, they become increasingly more angry. Perhaps they have not attained to the goals they set as a young person. Many Christians today have increasingly negative attitudes. Rather than being influenced by the attitude of heaven, they allow the world's attitude to influence them.

Many Christians tend to gravitate toward a negative attitude. Instead of being grateful they have a job, they will talk about how they wish they had a different boss or that they would get a raise rather than focusing on the good things in their lives and the blessings God has brought.

II. Fret Not

Psalm 37:7-9:

Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.

This passage instructs us to cease from anger and forsake wrath. This particular psalm uses the phrase “fret not” a number of times. It also says those who do evil will be “cut off.” This term “cut off” literally means “die early.” God promises the believer long life and a good life! Nothing would be worse than living a hundred years and hating every minute of it! Christians must guard against getting caught up with the things of the world. They must avoid allowing the rage of the world to affect their reactions to life. Believers are not to be changed by outside pressure. Instead, they are to be changed by inside pressure—the Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit is not angry or upset. The Holy Spirit on the inside of a believer is filled with joy!

Verse 9 says, “...but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.” The phrase “inherit the earth,” is an idiom for living a long time and prospering.

III. Five Commands

Within the text of Psalm 37:7-9 we are given five commands. The first is **rest**. Rest does not automatically fall on someone. A person doesn't just wake up in the morning with an attitude of rest suddenly falling on him or her. Rest is a choice. Rest is a decision.

The second command given in these verses is to **wait patiently**. Patience does not suddenly engulf an individual. It too, is a decision. Once a person chooses to rest, patience is the next choice because God's promises may not manifest immediately, but they will manifest! Overnight answers are the exception, not the rule in the Christian life. If a farmer planted seed today and reaped a harvest immediately the next day, he would probably tell you, “This is not normal. It is out of the ordinary order of things.” Farmers who plant seed know the harvest will eventually come in due season. It will take time for the harvest to manifest, but it will manifest—first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear!

The third command given in Psalm 37:7-9 is **fret not**. In other words, do not allow yourself to get upset. Do not worry about any situation. Fretting is probably one of the greatest areas Christians struggle with today. But we are commanded not to fret.

Fourth, we are commanded to **cease from anger**. Notice what this verse does *not* say. It does *not* say to taper off of anger. We are commanded to “*cease*” from anger. *Cease* means *to stop*. God does not ask us to do what we cannot do. If He commands us to cease from anger, we can cease!

Finally, we are commanded to **forsake wrath**. Wrath is an explosion of anger. People use excuses about anger. They will say things like, “I explode so easily. My dad exploded, my grandparents exploded, and it’s just a part of who I am—it’s in my genes!” Verse 8 says “forsake it.”

IV. Long Life and the New Testament

1 Peter 3:8-10:

Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion (sympathy) one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful (tender hearted), be courteous:

Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

Verse 9 literally says we are not to repay evil for evil or return insults for insults. Instead, we are to bless others knowing we have been called to inherit blessings.

Peter is quoting from Psalm 34:12-13 which says, “*Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.*”

This passage from 1 Peter 3:8-10 is teaching us we can actually live life loving every day! That is how God designed it for His children. But how does this happen? We are to refrain our tongue from evil and our lips from speaking guile. We refrain our tongue from speaking evil and our lips from speaking guile by changing what is in our heart with the Word of God.

V. Eight Commands

Contained within these verses of Scripture we are given eight commands. First, we are commanded to **be of one mind**. The only way it is possible for us to be of one mind is for us to think the Word of God. The Word is the mind of Christ. If we are to be of one mind, we are to think in line with the Scripture.

Next, we are commanded to **have compassion**. Compassion is not a feeling although it can manifest as a feeling. Just as other areas in our Christian life, compassion is a choice. One of the first things our flesh likes to do when we see others making mistakes is to judge them. We think “How could they have been so stupid?” We may look at a situation and be tempted to be angry, condescending, or blame someone for the situation rather than having compassion. But if we honestly think about it, we have probably done similar things and worse! Yet God has had compassion on us, even in our stupidity!

The third command given in 1 Peter 3:8-10 is **love**. We are commanded to love others and love is also a choice. Many married couples having marriage problems will say, “Well, I just don’t love her anymore” or “I no longer have feelings for him.” But love is not a feeling—it is a decision and a choice.

The fourth command is to be **tender hearted**. Being tender hearted is again, a choice.

Fifth, we are commanded to **be courteous**. This means to submit ourselves to one another. Courtesy says, “You go ahead of me. I’ll wait.” It is preferring others over yourself.

The sixth command is **not repaying insults**. At one time or another, everyone is insulted by someone. It hurts when the world insults us but it hurts even more when a Christian brother or sister insults us. But as followers of Jesus, we are not to repay insults for insults.

Seventh, we are commanded to **refrain our tongue from evil**. And the eighth command is **to speak no guile**.

Repeatedly we are given choices. But what is the purpose of making the right choices? The purpose is that we will live long and see good days!

VI. The First Commandment with Promise

I do not believe we have been allotted a certain number of days in this life and when we reach the end of those days, we have no other choice but to die. Throughout the Word of God we are told about ways to

increase our life and ways to cut our life short. As we studied earlier, evil doers can have their lives cut short. Ephesians 6 teaches children can live a long life by obeying their parents, which implies disobedience can shorten their lives.

VII. Count it All Joy

James 1:2:

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

Notice, joy does not ignore temptations. Instead, joy faces temptations. Rather than meeting your problems with anger, frustration, or rage, we are to meet them with joy.

Philippians 4:4 says, *“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.”* We have a choice and that choice is to rejoice in the Lord! This verse tells us two times that we are to rejoice. I believe it is mentioned twice because it is so easy to forget to rejoice. The world does not know how to rejoice but every child of God can choose to rejoice regardless of the circumstances they may be facing.

VIII. Rejoice Evermore

First Thessalonians 5:16 says, *“Rejoice ever more.”* You may say, “Well, I haven’t done too well in the past when it comes to rejoicing.” But you can make a choice to rejoice ever more from this day forward!

Charles Duncomb had a small Bible school in Tulsa called *Trinity Bible School*. He was British and traveled with Smith Wigglesworth for many years. When Brother Duncomb traveled with Smith Wigglesworth, they would stay in the homes of families from the churches in which Smith was ministering. Smith would always request to have a room by himself. Often Smith would be in a place for two or three weeks while he was holding meetings. One family Brother Duncomb and Smith stayed with were quite wealthy and gave Brother Duncomb and Smith each their own separate rooms. In this particular home, Brother Duncomb’s room was directly under Smith’s room. In Brother Duncomb’s room hung a beautiful crystal chandelier. The first morning Brother Duncomb was awakened at six in the morning by what seemed to be an earthquake. The crystal chandelier was shaking and swinging back and forth. He ran into the hallway to discover nothing else in the house was shaking except in his bedroom. He ran upstairs and peeked into Smith’s room and discovered Smith dancing and leaping around the room. Brother Duncomb entered Smith’s room and asked “Do you do this every morning?” Smith replied, “Yes, I have communion with the Lord and dance before Him.” Smith had made a decision to rejoice in the Lord.

Philippians 4:4 says, *“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.”* Rejoicing is a choice!

IX. The Healing Properties of Joy

Joy is a choice. Rather than waking in the morning and complaining about everything that is ahead—dreading the paper work piled on your desk or how many units need to be completed on the assembly line before the end of the day—choose joy! Joy is a choice to act on earth as heaven is acting at this moment with joy!

Not only will joy bring spiritual healing; it will bring physical healing. When you allow joy to rise in your heart, that joy will overflow into your body and set you free!

Proverbs 17:22:

A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.

A merry or joyful heart will actually heal you. According to this verse, joy is like a medicine. The verse continues by saying *“a broken spirit dries the bones.”* This is an idiom for *sickness*. Drying of the bones means a removal of the moisture within your body which is vital to healing and walking in health. A broken spirit or sorrow will bring sickness. When you choose to walk in the joy of the Lord you are actually choosing to walk in health. Joy will heal your body!

X. A Merry Heart is Like a Medicine

Proverbs 15:13:

A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

You cannot have joy in your heart without it appearing on your face. When joy is in your heart, you do not even need to think about whether or not it shows up on your face—it just does. When joy is in your heart, you do not need to force a smile. You do not need to pretend to be happy. When joy is in your heart, you will be genuinely happy in life.

Proverbs 18:14:

The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?

This verse is saying the spirit and attitude inside you will heal your infirmities. By contrast, if you are wounded inside and carry bitterness, anger, and unforgiveness, your body cannot sustain what you are

carrying inside. Anger, bitterness, and unforgiveness will actually break down and bring deterioration to your body, usually in the form of sickness and disease. One of the greatest ways to manifest divine health in your body is walking in the joy of the Lord.

XI. The Joy of the Lord is Your Strength

Nehemiah 8:10:

Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

Joy produces spiritual strength. Another translation reads, “Go your way and eat fat things and drink sweet drinks, and then send portions of them unto those who don’t have anything prepared for this day is holy unto the Lord. Neither be sorrowful for the joy of the Lord is your strength.” This verse is telling us to focus on the joy of the Lord and not on the food. The main thing that produces health is not the foods we eat; it is the joy of the Lord! Many people eat perfectly healthy and yet, they are not walking in health because they are not walking in the joy of the Lord.

Awhile back there was an article in *Reader’s Digest* talking about the benefits of laughter. The article recounted a story about a man who was dying of cancer. He was not a Christian and had been given up by the doctors to die. One of the requests he made to his wife was to rent some *Three Stooges* movies for him to watch. His wife rented stacks of *Three Stooges* movies. People in the hospital could hear him laughing and laughing as he watched these movies. The article told of how this man laughed himself to health. The cancer in his body completely disappeared! He was not even a Christian and yet, the power of joy brought healing!

It seems some of the people who have lived the longest in the world are comedians. George Burns smoked cigars every day of his life yet he lived to be a hundred years old. Milton Berle was another comedian who lived to a very old age. Red Skeleton, Bob Hope—these are just a few who lived very long lives. I am not advocating smoking cigars or living a worldly life but I am advocating allowing the joy of the Lord to manifest in your life. There are certain spiritual principles that work even when applied by the world. Giving brings fruit and joy often brings long life, even when an unbeliever is applying spiritual principles ignorantly! Often Christians put so much emphasis on external things but Jesus taught it is not what goes in the mouth that defiles a man or woman but what comes out of the mouth—what we speak.

Allow the joy of the Lord to manifest in your life. It is healing and medicine to your flesh. Choose joy!