

# “The Gift of Joy”

Pastor Al Brice | December 2, 2018

**Luke 2:8-11 NKJV:** <sup>8</sup> Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. <sup>10</sup> Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. <sup>11</sup> For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Joy is a major characteristic of God Himself, the Kingdom of God, and of Christian believers, the Body of Christ.

Joy is a supernatural endowment given to us by Jesus Christ and comes in us by the Holy Spirit when we receive Jesus as the Lord of our lives. You cannot receive, manufacture, or get this joy through any other means or worldly source. It comes only through and by Jesus!!!

**John 15:9-12 NKJV:** <sup>9</sup> “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.

<sup>10</sup> If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.

<sup>11</sup> “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and *that* your joy may be full. <sup>12</sup> This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

Again, joy is a divine quality of character that is only possessed and given by God to those who are born again by the Spirit of God.

In **John 17:13 NKJV**, Jesus is praying before He goes to the Cross: “But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.”

When did the joy of God come into this earth and become available for the whole human race?

**John 20:19-22 AMP:** <sup>19</sup> So when it was evening on that *same* day, the first day of the week, though the disciples were [meeting] behind barred doors for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them, and said, “Peace to you.” <sup>20</sup> After He said this, He showed them His hands and His side. When the disciples saw the Lord, they were filled with great joy. <sup>21</sup> Then Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you [as My representatives].” <sup>22</sup> And when He said this, He breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

Jesus' words "Receive the Holy Spirit" help to set in context two different works of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life:

- First, here on this night, the disciples do, in fact, "receive the Holy Spirit" as "the Spirit of life."

**Romans 8:1-2 AMP:** Therefore there is now no condemnation [no guilty verdict, no punishment] for those who are in Christ Jesus [who believe in Him as personal Lord and Savior]. <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life [which is] in Christ Jesus [the law of our new being] has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

Jesus' word is direct and absolute: "Receive." And in doing so, the disciples are "born again" (**John 3:3-8 AMP**) by the Holy Spirit's regenerating work in them (**Romans 8:11-17 NJKV**).

**John 3:3-8 AMP:** <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered him, "I assure you *and* most solemnly say to you, unless a person is born again [reborn from above—spiritually transformed, renewed, sanctified], he cannot [ever] see *and* experience the kingdom of God."

<sup>4</sup> Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter his mother's womb a second time and be born, can he?" <sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, "I assure you *and* most solemnly say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot [ever] enter the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup> That which is born of the flesh is flesh [the physical is merely physical], and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup> Do not be surprised that I have told you, 'You must be born again [reborn from above—spiritually transformed, renewed, sanctified].' <sup>8</sup> The wind blows where it wishes and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it is coming from and where it is going; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

**Romans 8:11-17 NKJV:** <sup>11</sup> But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. <sup>13</sup> For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. <sup>14</sup> For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. <sup>15</sup> For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba,<sup>[b]</sup> Father." <sup>16</sup> The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup> and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.

This passage parallels the breath of the Father on Adam in the first creation, as Jesus breathes on them and the “new creation” is begun.

**2 Corinthians 5:17 AMP:** Therefore if anyone is in Christ [that is, grafted in, joined to Him by faith in Him as Savior], *he is* a new creature [reborn and renewed by the Holy Spirit]; the old things [the previous moral and spiritual condition] have passed away. Behold, new things have come [because spiritual awakening brings a new life].

- Second, however, on the Day of Pentecost the work of God’s Spirit as the Spirit of power (**Acts 1:8 AMP**) is to enable Jesus’ disciples for ministry—witness and service—to fulfill their mission to the world.

**Acts 1:8 AMP:** But you will receive power *and* ability when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be My witnesses [to tell people about Me] both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the ends of the earth.”

The full blessing of Jesus’ promise came on the Day of Pentecost:

**Acts 2:1-4 AMP:** When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place, <sup>2</sup> and suddenly a sound came from heaven like a rushing violent wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> There appeared to them tongues resembling fire, which were being distributed [among them], and they rested on each one of them [as each person received the Holy Spirit]. <sup>4</sup> And they were all filled [that is, diffused throughout their being] with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues (different languages), as the Spirit was giving them the ability to speak out [clearly and appropriately].

They were filled to overflowing with power and joy!!! How do we know that?

**Psalm 16:11 NKJV:**

You will show me the path of life;  
In Your presence *is* fullness of joy;  
At Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore.

The 120 people in the Upper Room were so intoxicated with the joy of the Holy Spirit, the people who came to see them thought that they were drunk with new wine.

**Acts 2:12-13 NKJV:** <sup>12</sup> So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?" <sup>13</sup> Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine."

This is why religion is so mean and miserable. It knows nothing of a God Who laughs, sings, and rejoices. And sadly, it is the same with many churches and denominations: they're empty, frustrated, lifeless, dry, bored, miserable, angry, powerless, and have no joy!!

God is our God of joy and rejoicing!!

**Jeremiah 32:41NKJV Strong's:** Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good.

**Deuteronomy 30:9 NKJV:** The Lord your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your land for good. For the Lord will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers...

**Zephaniah 3:17 NKJV:** The Lord your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing."

**Isaiah 62:5 NKJV:** And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, So shall your God rejoice over you.

**Luke 15:20-25 AMP (The prodigal son returns home):** <sup>20</sup> So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion *for him*, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. <sup>21</sup> And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' <sup>22</sup> But the father said to his servants, 'Quickly bring out the best robe [for the guest of honor] and put it on him; and give him a ring for his hand, and sandals for his feet. <sup>23</sup> And bring the fattened calf and slaughter it, and let us [invite everyone and] feast and celebrate; <sup>24</sup> for this son of mine was [as good as] dead and is alive again; he was lost and has been found.' So they began to celebrate. <sup>25</sup> "Now his older son was in the field; and when he returned and approached the house, he heard music and dancing.

**Luke 15:7 NKJV (The parable of the lost sheep):** I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

**Luke 15:9-10 NKJV (The parable of the lost coin):** <sup>9</sup> And when she has found *it*, she calls *her* friends and neighbors together, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!' <sup>10</sup> Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

That describes all of us when we came to get saved, repented of our sins, received Jesus as our Lord, and submitted our lives to His Lordship.

Listen to our blessings from God:

**Isaiah 61:1-4 NKJV Strong's:**

- <sup>1</sup> “The Spirit of the Lord God *is* upon Me,  
Because the Lord has anointed Me  
To preach good tidings to the poor;  
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,  
To proclaim liberty to the captives,  
And the opening of the prison to *those who are* bound;  
<sup>2</sup> To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord,  
And the day of vengeance of our God;  
To comfort all who mourn,  
<sup>3</sup> To console those who mourn in Zion,  
To give them beauty for ashes,  
The oil of joy for mourning,  
The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;  
That they may be called trees of righteousness,  
The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.”  
<sup>4</sup> And they shall rebuild the old ruins,  
They shall raise up the former desolations,  
And they shall repair the ruined cities,  
The desolations of many generations.

**Isaiah 61:6-7 NLT:**

- <sup>6</sup> You will be called priests of the Lord,  
ministers of our God.  
You will feed on the treasures of the nations  
and boast in their riches.  
<sup>7</sup> Instead of shame and dishonor,  
you will enjoy a double share of honor.  
You will possess a double portion of prosperity in your land,  
and everlasting joy will be yours.

**Psalms 30:5 NKJV Strong's:**

His favor is for life;  
Weeping may endure for a night,  
But joy comes in the morning.

“But Pastor Al, I’m really going through a rough and tough time right now!!!”

**Habakkuk 3:17-19 AMP:**

- <sup>17</sup> Though the fig tree does not blossom  
And there is no fruit on the vines,  
Though the yield of the olive fails  
And the fields produce no food,  
Though the flock is cut off from the fold  
And there are no cattle in the stalls,  
<sup>18</sup> Yet I will [choose to] rejoice in the Lord;  
I will [choose to] shout in exultation in the [victorious] God of my salvation!  
<sup>19</sup> The Lord God is my strength [my source of courage, my invincible army];  
He has made my feet [steady and sure] like hinds’ feet  
And makes me walk [forward with spiritual confidence] on my high places [of  
challenge and responsibility].

**Ephesians 5:18-20 AMP:** <sup>18</sup> Do not get drunk with wine, for that is wickedness (corruption, stupidity), but be filled with the [Holy] Spirit *and* constantly guided by Him.  
<sup>19</sup> Speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, [offering praise by] singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; <sup>20</sup> always giving thanks to God the Father for all things, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;