

The Joy of the Lord is our Strength!

Nehemiah 8:10 (NLT) *And Nehemiah continued, "Go and celebrate with a feast of rich foods and sweet drinks, and share gifts of food with people who have nothing prepared. This is a sacred day before our Lord. Don't be dejected and sad, **for the joy of the LORD is your strength!**"*

I. What is being said?

Nehemiah 1:8-9 (NKJV) *Remember, I pray, the word that You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations; but if you return to Me, and keep My commandments and do them, though some of you were cast out to the farthest part of the heavens, **yet I will gather them from there, and bring them to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling for My name.**'*

Nehemiah 8:9 (NKJV) *And Nehemiah, who was the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn nor weep." **For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law.***

Two things were happening: they were realizing their sin and the fulfillment of God's promise to restore them!

The Babylonian captivity had one very significant impact on the nation of Israel when it returned to the land—the idolatry and false gods of the surrounding nations would never again corrupt it. **They were in exile for 70 years!** A revival among Jews took place after the return of the Jews to Israel and the temple's rebuilding.

Nehemiah 8:12 (NLT) *So the people went away to eat and drink at a festive meal, to share gifts of food, and to celebrate with great joy because they had heard God's words and understood them.*

The people trusted what they heard being taught!

II. He is Faithful

2 Timothy 2:13 (NLT) *If we are unfaithful, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny who He is.*

2 Timothy 2:13 (AMP) *If we are faithless [do not believe and are untrue to Him], He remains true (faithful to His Word and His righteous character), for He cannot deny Himself.*

Numbers 23:19 (NASB 2020) *God is not a man, that He would lie, Nor a son of man, that He would change His mind; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?*

Even when we are not faithful to Him, He is still faithful to His Word and will forgive us if we humble ourselves and confess! Realizing that God is faithful and that He is who He says He is, brings Joy!

*****Psalms 103:10-14 (NASB 2020)** *He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor rewarded us according to our guilty deeds.*

James 4:8-10 (ESV) *Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. **Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.***

Meditating on what God has done for us and having faith that He is true to His word brings joy and that joy is our strength!

Psalms 126:1-3 (NASB 2020) *When the LORD brought back the captives of Zion, We were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter And our tongue with joyful shouting; Then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them." The LORD has done great things for us; We are joyful.*

The people knew about the promises of restoration, but when the actual moment came, it was an overwhelming experience--they were like those "who dreamed."

III. We are His Joy!

Ephesians 3:18-19 (NLT) *And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.*

****Hebrews 2:6 (ESV)** *It has been testified somewhere, "What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him?"*

Proverbs 8:30-31 (AMP) *Then I [Wisdom] was beside Him as a master and director of the work; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing before Him always. Rejoicing in His inhabited earth and **delighting in the sons of men.***

1 Peter 2:9 (NKJV) *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*

Zephaniah 3:17 (NLT) *For the LORD your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs."*

Romans 8:31-32 (NASB 2020) *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?*

He takes delight in us! We are His joy! The fact that He takes joy in us....the Joy of the Lord is our strength!