

## The Fruitful Spirit 05 Yet I Will Rejoice STUDY GUIDE

We are still looking at the fact that inside every born again Christian is the joy of the Lord, that one of the strands of spiritual DNA in your born again spirit is joy. And, that joy is released as we start to read and believe the Word of God. That is the key to operating in great joy. When the promises of God inside you are bigger than the images of your problems, you will rejoice.

Read Psalm 126.1-2. When your fortune is restored you will laugh and sing, and someone who dreams will also laugh and sing. One of the hallmarks of a dreamer who is dreaming big dreams is that they will rejoice.

Now the enemy is aware of the power of the joy of the Lord, so he has invented a fake joy. It's not a good joy, it's fake, it's counterfeit. The devil cannot create because it takes life and wisdom and godliness to create and the devil cannot do it, he can only copy and ape and fake. Counterfeit goods are the hallmark of the devil, and one of his counterfeits is joy.

Read Mark 4.16-17. Notice that here the word is received with gladness, and the word gladness here is the same Greek word we discussed last week that means "joy". And you see that quite often on a Sunday morning, people come and the word comes to them and there is joy – I mean they shout, they "amen", they have joy. And it looks identical to the deep joy of the spirit, but it is the shallow joy of the flesh. It is very difficult to discern the difference on a Sunday morning, but come Monday morning it is very easy to tell!

Read Mark 4.17. The moment that affliction comes, the moment there is persecution, the moment it just becomes hard work to follow Jesus, to stand on the Word, to develop character, then immediately that joy turns into offense and hatred.

There are three hallmarks of the satanic counterfeit joy – firstly, it is immediate and instant. Always beware of instant, it is never as good. Instant coffee, instant mash, instant weight loss, instant spiritual growth, and instant joy. They are no not as good as the versions that take a little time and effort. The problem is many Christians and many churches have this attitude that you can get everything from God instantly. They go to a conference, get high on the conference which is the false, fake joy, and then they go home, lose their joy, cry until the next conference. You do not have to live like that, you can work on joy every day, be in the Word every day, and be rooted and grounded in joy!

The second fact about the fake joy is that it is not rooted. Another way of saying that is that it is shallow. Joy based on environment is not true joy, it's not the joy that is going to bring you to victory. Satan actually does not mind you being in a good environment, as long as you are inconsistent there. If you come to church once a month, or once every six weeks, just enough to say "I go", but not enough for it to become a discipline, then when you go, satan is clever enough to let you have that fake joy – the worship is going well, the songs are beautiful and soul-lifting, the Word is preached with signs and wonders following and everyone is friendly and kind. It makes you happy.

You have to understand the word “happy” comes from the same root as the word “happening”. If something good is happening you are happy, but the minute that good thing stops happening you stop being happy.

In German, and the Scandinavian languages, the word for happiness is the same as the word for luck, “gluck”. In the Romantic languages, the word for happiness is some form of “felicity” and it comes from the Latin *felix*, which means fertility and luck. If you are being fruitful and “lucky”, then you are happy, if you are having tough times then you are not happy.

And so there you are Sunday morning, and good things are happening, so you have the false joy, the happiness based on happening. And then when the tough times come, because your joy was shallow and not rooted, immediately you lose your joy and get offended.

And this is the third sign of the fake joy, it is easily offended – the happiness based on happening will disperse the second that it is not happening any more and will instantly turn into offense. People will immediately say “I hate that church, they said God was good and He isn’t, they told me I was healed, and I have the sniffles, they told me God meets my need and look at this bill.”. The problem was their joy was not deep enough and rooted enough to challenge the issues of life. You need a joy that when circumstances yell “you are not going to make it”, that yells back louder “Oh yes I am!” When the bills are piling up, when you look like a failure, and life is going against you, you need a joy that is rooted that says “I know my God will supply!” You do not get that instantly, you need to spend time in the Word!

The fact is that you live in a world where you will have trouble! Read John 16.33. Jesus said that we would have trouble, but do not just read half the verse, do not focus on the first half there, do not name and claim the trouble, it will come. But focus on the second half of the Word – Jesus has overcome the world and we should cheer up!

When reading the Bible, read the whole thing – check you have read it right! Your bit of John 16.33 is “Be of good cheer”. That’s your bit. The devil’s bit is to bring trouble, Jesus’ bit is to overcome the world, and your bit is to cheer up. When life gets tough, be happy – praise God.

Remember the sermon the week before, in Hebrews 10.34, the people took the spoiling of their goods with joy. Stuff was being stolen from these guys – property, health, finances, business deals – but they just kept smiling, kept laughing, kept praising! They cheered up!

Now let’s be very clear – they were not praising God for what satan was doing! They were not saying “Praise the Lord, thank you Jesus the devil just wrecked my car!”, they were not saying “Praise the Lord, I have cancer!”. I have encountered people who do this and teach this, and it is normally based on a misunderstanding of 1 Thess. 5.16-18.

Read 1 Thess. 5.16-18. It clearly says “in everything give thanks”, not “for everything give thanks”. There is a big difference. If you have cancer, do not praise God for the cancer, but praise God in the cancer, do not let the cancer stop you praising God, but do not praise God for the cancer – it did not come from Him, it came from satan. If you have poverty, you do

not let poverty stop you praising God! You do not let your enemies stop you praising God! You do not let anything stop you praising God. God is good no matter what is going on – and if you praise God for His goodness, that is the deep, rooted joy that will always lead to victory. Praise stops the avenger, so don't praise the avenger!

It's not God's will you are sick, it's not God's will you are struggling financially. YOU PRAISE HIM IN EVERYTHING NOT FOR EVERYTHING! If you are praising for the problem, you are praising satan – who is the author of the problem – you are not praising Jesus Christ. Last week, we looked at Jeremiah 33.11, and found out the voice of joy is not thanking God for sickness and poverty, the voice of joy is saying "The Lord is good, and His mercy endures", that is the voice of joy, and the other thing about the voice of joy is that it laughs too.

We learned that the voice of joy is the sacrifice of praise – sometimes you have to praise God and shout and dance when you do not feel like it! Joy that only praises when things are HAPPENING – that's the devil's counterfeit joy! But true joy rejoices and praises and laughs no matter what is going on. It's not easy – the game of life is rough, you need to stand your ground, your opponent is a cheat and a liar – you need to be determined, be strong! But keep standing until you win!

The devil doesn't know what to do with a happy Christian, deep down joy. The joy of the Lord – makes you so strong! Read 2 Cor. 12.7. Paul was a total mystery to the devil. He had an angel of satan assigned just to push him around. A demon whose full time job was to hassle Paul. He gets on a ship, the devil wrecks it. He preaches the gospel, the devil gets people to throw him in jail. He is left for dead, stoned, beaten, rejected. Then Paul tells the Corinthians that this was his "light affliction" (2 Cor. 4.17). What can the devil do with someone with that kind of perspective? What can the devil do with a praiser like Paul?

NOTHING! The devil has planned a "plan stopping plan" to stop you – pressure, affliction, persecution – to make you sad and depressed, to make you walk out the ring! But you are going to stay in the ring, and you are going to start singing, and the devil does not know what to do now. You cannot defeat praisers, it cannot be done.

A couple of weeks ago, we had a prophetic roar in the church. The roar of the lion of the tribe of Judah. Do you know Jesus is the lion of the tribe of Judah? Do you know that Judah means "praise"? Jesus is from the tribe of praise, and as his brother, so are you! Your tribe is praise! THERE IS STRENGTH IN PRAISE, there is POWER IN PRAISE! THERE IS STRENGTH IN JOY, there is POWER IN JOY!

When the devil throws HIS ATTACK AT YOU – and you just sing and praise and have joy – HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.

Another voice of joy is laughing. Remember the Psalm we started with, it told us "our mouths were filled with laughter". Laughing has so much power! Christians must learn to laugh. One of the things that attracted me to Dave Duell was he laughed, he said funny things, he was full of joy. That man could laugh! A minister who laughed! Pulled people out of wheelchairs and didn't look constipated!

He made God's WORD come alive to me! There is so much more to laugh about as a Christian – than when you are owned by satan! Everyone in this room – you need to learn to laugh. You have to!

Read Job 5.22. You shall laugh at destruction and famine. Now, I don't feel like laughing when there is destruction and famine! And I am sure no one does, but we are not those who are moved by what it feels like – we are moved by faith in the Word, and the Word says to laugh.

Someone might say that's overboard, laughing at destruction, laughing at famine – we need to be serious here, but I did not write this, the Bible did – the Bible tells us to laugh in the face of trouble. If anyone had a reason to not laugh, it was Job! This man had serious problems. We are not limited by the natural, we are living the higher realm. God made Job wealthy, and satan – the thief – stole the goods. Job gave satan an open door by his poorly controlled imagination, which is another teaching, but it was the devil who stole it. The way out of the mess is to laugh.

The way out of this mess – LAUGH!

The way out of the famine – LAUGH!

The way out of the debt – LAUGH!

The way out of the sickness – LAUGH!

The way out of the destruction – LAUGH!

Joy will put satan in such a mess he doesn't even know which way to run from you. Satan wants to make you depressed, get you into self-pity “no one cares” – that's a lie – God cares. You can easily get into a pity party – BUT THE JOY OF THE LORD IS INSIDE YOU – and you can release it with PRAISE, you can also release it with LAUGHING. Hahahaha!

Read Habakkuk 3.17. That's some problems there – going on. I mean that is a tough day. The fig tree isn't blossoming, so there is no fruit and no figs, so now he is hungry. There is no fruit on the vine, so that's no grapes, so that's no wine, so now he is thirsty. No oil, so no cooking, no meat – hungry! All his sheep and cows have disappeared. Habakkuk is having a bad day - all his businesses are failing, doesn't have more in his pockets than he thinks, he has less. Everything has failed. The guy is a multi-business man, multiple streams of income, and they all stop. He is facing tragedy, destruction and famine.

Maybe he has read Job 5.22, certainly the devil was trying to make him a modern day Job, but he was made of sterner stuff. Read Hab. 3.18. He will rejoice – notice, joy comes from the will. It is in our spirit, but a choice of the will releases it into our soul. Where Habakkuk says he will rejoice, the Hebrew word is “alaz” which literally means to jump for joy, and when he says joy, the word is “giyl” which means to spin around for joy.

Imagine Habakkuk's morning. He fancies a fig for breakfast – oh the tree is dead. That's a shame, I like figs, and I sell some down the market, makes me good money too. But that's ok, I will get some grapes instead! Oh, the vines are dead too – all the vines are dead.

That's the wine income gone! Well, that's tough, but I have a few streams of income, let's get some olives, get some oil together and make a nice salad. No olives – no oil, no cooking – can't eat my meat! I am hungry and broke – goes to the stalls and all the sheep are gone, stolen, taken, run away. So he goes to the stalls and there are no cows in the stalls – they are gone too. Everything is gone in his life, and he has lost it all. The devil has stolen it all.

And how many of you know that when the devil steals from you, he hangs around to whisper in your ear. "Hey Habakkuk, you are a total failure, you are a rubbish businessman, you are the worst prophet in the world, you loser, you wimp, you muppet, you are the world's worst business man, you deserve this, you are such a bad dad, bad husband, bad Christian, you are hated, no one loves you..."

And the devil is right there waiting for Habakkuk to fall apart, to cry, to scream, to wail, to quit. The devil is already excited that there is another prophet gone, another voice piece of God shut up, but Habakkuk looks around at all the destruction and famine, the loss, the stolen goods, and he decides from his will not to fall apart, he decides not to be moved by what it looks like.

He decides to do what David did all those years ago, and encourage himself in the Lord. He starts to jump up and down, he starts to praise the Lord. He starts to declare "the first report is not the last report", he starts to speak the voice of joy "God is good, His mercy will never fail, it is new every morning!" He starts to spin around, he is so happy with the salvation and the mercy and the goodness of God. He starts to shout his praise: "GOD YOU ARE MY SAVIOUR, MY SALVATION, MY HEALER, MY PROVIDER, MY GOODNESS, MY HERO, MY COMFORTER" The devil was trying to make this guy a second Job, threw everything at him, but he decided to keep praising God, to keep the joy inside his soul. He determined this was not going to get him down, He determined he knew how this fight would end. He determined to trust God, and His goodness.

Read Habakkuk 3.19. Habakkuk knew he was going to walk all over this, with his super-powered feet. He was going to leap right over this problem!

Listen – the devil might have lined up his best army against you – you look and feel outnumbered – you are surrounded by walls on every side, and it looks like you have nowhere to run, nowhere to win, nowhere to go – YOU ARE GOING TO HAVE FEET LIKE A DEER – YOU ARE GOING TO WALK IN HIGH PLACES! You are going to rejoice! You are going to look at all the adversity in the face and SAY "I AM GOING TO PRAISE JESUS!" That will take some discipline, some strength, some meditation – it's not immediate joy – the satanic copy joy that anyone can have in a meeting – this is real joy – spirit, flowing through your renewed mind into your body

Some of you, your mind is so weak and undisciplined – you are going to have to grab hold of yourself and say – hey, you are a child of God – stop whining like GOD has fallen off the throne, as if Jesus' name doesn't exist or ran out of fuel... BENJAMIN, what is WRONG WITH YOU? THE WORD OF GOD IS REAL, it has SPOKEN AND IT SAYS YOU ARE GOING TO MAKE IT. NOW REJOICE"

And then you are going to have to grab your body and make you JUMP UP AND DOWN, and MAKE YOU SPIN AROUND – I WILL REJOICE!

People will look at you and go you are NUTS – you talk to yourself! You should talk to yourself, it's better than listening to yourself! When you listen to yourself, you find out you are saying "you are unloved, no one likes you, you can't do it, you work so hard, no one appreciates you" So stop listening to that, and start praising God! Be of good cheer!

Remember that laughing in the midst of trouble is godly. Read Psalm 2.1-4. Read Psalm 37.12-13. The devil has plans to take us all out, but those plans just make the Lord laugh. Every time the devil makes a plan to destroy you, God thinks it is hilarious. During the darkest day of my life, I phoned Dave Duell and told him how bad it was and how I was going to lose my ministry and my credibility and that it was all over. There was no blossom on my fig tree! And Dave laughed down the phone, it was so powerful. It was anointed. It helped me see my problem was tiny in God's eyes. Right now, the Lord is laughing at the devil's plans to stop you! (Dave probably is too!). The devil is trying to push you over and make you quit, but he will not succeed, and his attempt is making the Lord laugh! You need to join in the laughter!

1. Where is the joy of the Lord?
2. What do people who dream look like? How can you recognize them?
3. What is the counterfeit joy? What are the three marks of the counterfeit joy?
4. Have you ever had the counterfeit joy? You were excited about the Word then there was a problem or affliction and you immediately offended and angry?
5. What did Jesus say should be our response to the great trouble we will have in the world?
6. Should we thank God for the great trouble that we have? Give a reason for your answer.
7. How did Paul describe being beaten with sticks, being stoned, being left for dead, being imprisoned, being hungry and thirsty, and being shipwrecked?
8. Do you describe your troubles the way Paul does, or do you magnify your problems more than you magnify God?
9. What was Habakkuk's response to a ridiculously tough day?
10. How do you feel about Habakkuk's response?
11. Habakkuk was not just praising God, he was moving his body and using his body to jump and spin for joy. How often do you get up and move when you are praising God?
12. Do you talk to yourself on a regular basis? If so, what benefits have you had from this, if not – what stands in your way?
13. The devil's plan is to make you quit because he cannot win. What are you going to do to make sure that you stay in the Word and stay in the joy of the Lord this week?