

The Joy of the Lord
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Intro: Lyrics to the hymn: *The Joy of the Lord*

A. What brings us joy in this life?

1. Do the things of this world really bring us joy?
2. Where are we seeking fulfillment?
3. Real joy is only found in the Lord. **Nehemiah 8:10**

I. What is real joy?

A. Real joy is not the same as happiness.

Ex. Billy Joel – “It’s all about joy that comes out of sorrow”

1. Joy is not what happens when everything is going right in our life.
2. Joy has a much deeper and more fulfilling meaning.

B. Real joy lasts where happiness does not.

1. The joy of the godless is momentary! **Job 20:4-5**
2. The joy God gives lasts beyond the suffering that precedes it.

Psalm 30:5

C. Real joy costs a great price.

Ex. Last cross country race—gave everything. Gained great pain and great joy.

1. What has your joy cost you? **Hebrews 10:32-34**
2. Have you lost the joy you once had?

II. Where does the joy of the Lord come from?

A. Real joy comes from seeing what God has done for us.

1. God has forgiven us! **Isaiah 44:23**
 - a. We should be the most joyful people on earth!
2. God provides for us and protects us every day. **Psalm 5:11**
3. God has provided us with promises greater than this life.
Hebrews 10:23
4. God has given us one another to walk with in truth. **3 John 1:4**

B. Real joy comes in the presence of God.

1. Our greatest joy should come from God Himself. **Psalm 16:11; 43:4**
2. We take joy from worshiping in God’s presence. **Psalm 27:4-6**
3. The joy of heaven will be because of the presence of God!
Psalm 21:6; 63:7
4. The very words of God and His law bring us joy.
Psalm 119:111, Jer 15:16

C. Real joy most often comes through suffering

1. Suffering takes self out of the picture.
2. When God breaks us, then He can bring us true joy. **Psalm 51:8,12**
3. When we keep His commandments, though world will hate us, we will be blessed with joy. **John 15:8-11,18-19**
4. Though it doesn’t seem joyful, discipline leads us to joyful results.
Hebrews 12:11
5. Trials should be one of our greatest sources of joy.

James 1:2-4; Acts 5:41

III. The Joy of the Lord is our strength and motivation.

A. What happens when a Christian loses his joy?

1. He often begins drifting and doubting.
2. He becomes cynical and negative.
3. He loses His sense of purpose. He's just going through the motions.

Revelation 3:15-16

4. We need to examine ourselves!

B. The Example of the early church

1. Paul proved God's ability to bring joy out of despair time and time again. **2 Corinthians 7:4-7, 8:1-2**
2. The Thessalonians also followed this pattern of joy out of suffering.

1 Thessalonians 1:6

C. The Example of Christ

1. Jesus set His face toward Jerusalem. **Luke 9:51**
2. Joy was Jesus' motivation at the cross. **Hebrews 12:1-2**
3. Paul's joy also came from pouring himself out.

Philippians 2:2-8, 17-18

D. Do you want this joy?

1. It's going to cost you everything! **Luke 9:23**
2. However, what we suffer is *nothing* compared to what we gain.
Romans 8:18
3. We will be persecuted, but that is just another cause for joy.
Luke 6:22-23
4. We can joyfully give up everything we have to gain the kingdom of heaven! **Matthew 13:44-46**

Conclusion: Do you have the joy of the Lord in your life?

A. God has shown us how we can have this joy, but it will cost us everything!

B. You can bring God joy today. **Luke 15:10**

C. God is the only one who is able to cleanse you and give you this joy.
Come to Him today! **Jude 24-25**