

Joy

Where Does Your Joy Come From?

Ps. 4:7 - *"You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound."*

Where does your joy come from? Does it come from the superficial circumstances of life or from something more substantial? This week as you read Psalm 4 consider David's declaration in the closing verses valuing the joy of a growing relationship with God. As David sought to be close to God during a difficult time in his life, he compared the physical prosperity his antagonists were experiencing with the vibrant spiritual relationship he had with God (Ps. 4:6). After observing the differences, David said that the joy he received from being close to God was worth more than the material wealth his opponents valued.

Because David's joyful relationship with God did not rely on physical circumstances he was able to finish his Psalm with the comforting imagery of verse 8.

"In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety."

If David were describing you or I today, which group of people would he

Joy - cont.

place us in? The group whose joy was connected to temporary prosperity, or in the group whose joy rested in personal relationships with our eternally good God? May we all come to find joy in our nearness to our Father through Jesus!

- Jeremy Dehut -

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

Learning About Humility and Gratitude At the Gas Station

Exodus 17:3, 7 - *“Why do you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst...Is the Lord among us or not?”*

Wow! I remember a time as a child when my family was making a weekly 1-hour trip in the car and we stopped at a gas station for fuel and snacks. This was a routine stop, it happened every trip. As my father went into the station I flip-pantly offered an entitled request for a specific snack and questioned if he would recall it. The reason that trip stands out in my memory is because of my father’s hurt and frustrated response to his consistent grace. We made that trip weekly. We stopped weekly. Even though we didn’t deserve snacks, almost without exception my parents budgeted for them and provided them. I had selfishly taken my parents’ grace and goodness for granted and believed I someone merited them.

When I read the Israelites’ response in Exodus 17, my heart sank and I called to mind how I felt all those years ago when I realized how I had treated my father. I am now a father, and I understand the hurt parents feel when their children take them for granted (even

unintentionally). Think about what these two questions revealed about the broken thinking of the nation and what we can learn from their mistake.

“Why do you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us?”

What a stinging thing to think, let alone say about someone! Despite the wondrous good that God had miraculously and repeatedly done for them, they imagined the worst about Him. They maligned Him. Their broken thinking was that God meant them harm. But what about the incredible provision and protection God offered Israel during the plagues? What about sparing their firstborn during the Passover? What about the amazing wealth that was showered on them when they were finally set free? What about the successful crossing at the Red Sea or the daily provision of Manna? We could go on. It didn’t matter. Like Israel and like myself during that car ride as a child, when we begin to value the gifts more than the Giver we wrongly understand His motives. As soon as the gifts disappear, like ungrateful children we complain about the Giver because we arrogantly believe we deserved them and impugn the motives of whoever we believe disrupted the delivery of what we are "owed".

In just a few pages God revealed that His desire was not for their death, but to make them princely, priestly and His (Exodus 19:5-

6; cf. 1 Peter 2:9-10)! When we don’t understand what is happening around us, we need to remember what God has revealed about himself, especially his inherent goodness toward us (Romans 8:28).

“Is the Lord among us or not?”

Their second accusation is revealed at the tail end of the event in Exodus 17. Really, they were questioning God’s presence. If things didn’t go perfectly from their perspective, it must have meant that God wasn’t there and that He didn’t see and didn’t care. Using a trendy saying, “That escalated quickly!” The instant things became difficult they questioned God’s presence and power? But we do the same. Whether things are easy or hard, God sees, He knows, and He is still there! The text rightly points out that they were testing God. Instead they should have trusted Him. We need to do the same.

Just like I needed to humbly appreciate my father’s goodness, grace and presence as a child, we need to humbly trust in God’s goodness, grace and presence as His children right now. When we find ourselves in less than desirable circumstances, we need to fall back on what God has already told us about Himself, what He has already done for us, and trust Him. - *Jeremy Dehut*