

Soul Winning - Part Three

Matt 4:19

19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

Two of the most important characteristics of a soul winner are:

1. Compassion for souls.
2. The Joy of the Lord.

Compassion for souls is what moves us.

The Joy of the Lord is what moves them.

Tonight I want to speak about the joy of the Lord!

In one of the most popular of all scriptures...

Nehemiah 8:10

Don't be sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

To better appreciate this scripture, we need to understand the context of the writing...

- The walls of Jerusalem have just been rebuilt.
- But there was something lacking.
- They found out that life was more than brick and mortar.
- Their lives were in shambles.
- They had forgotten their spiritual heritage.
- They couldn't even speak their native tongue.
- But most of all, they had forgotten their God!
- They could see that it was sin that had gotten them into this mess.

...and the word from the Lord came...The joy of the Lord is your strength.

- Don't worry about anything else, start praying for the joy of the Lord!

- These walls aren't going to mean a thing if we don't have the joy of the Lord.
- A rebuilt temple won't do us any good without the joy of the Lord!

That is what is going to get us through...if you can grab hold of that, you will make it!

Without the Lord's joy...we will be too weak to do anything...His joy is our very strength!

For the past few summers our kids have been going to camp for a couple of weeks...last summer before they left I told them how much I would miss them when they are gone...they wanted to know why...and so I told them that they bring me joy, they make me happy...they don't even really have to do anything...it is just their presence when I come home from work that makes me happy...I went on to tell them that just a little hug from them gives me energy, and renews my strength for another day...and so when they are gone for two weeks it makes it tougher!

Earlier this summer when camp time came, Barrett, who is the hardest to get hugs from came up to me and said.... 'Daddy if I give you a hug it will make you strong right! I said yes it will!'

And the joy that we get from the Lord works the same way...we need it renewed every chance we can...

We can't do anything for the kingdom without the joy of the Lord!

Can I get a witness of that tonight?

There is an interesting scripture in the book of Romans that I want to share with you tonight...

Romans 14:8

8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord ; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

Before I had ever preached from this scripture, it always made me sit back and think about my relationship with God!

There are some scriptures that do that...they require a self examination of our relationship with God!

When you first came to the Lord...baptized in Jesus Name, filled with the Holy Ghost...God could at that very moment have chosen to take you straight up to heaven to be with Him!

Why didn't God do that?

- Is there really anything that requires that we stay here on Earth!
- We are saved at that moment, and so why not go and be with the Lord?
- There is really no need for us to stay here and struggle through this life!
- God could change us from imperfection to perfection in a moment!
- God could just choose to take us straight to heaven without death just like Enoch and Elijah!

So why does God choose to leave us here?

Why are we on this Earth when we could be in Heaven with Jesus?

Why are we still here fighting this fight, and walking this walk?

The answer is found in our text...that we may live unto the Lord!

Paul is instructing the church to live unto the Lord!

What does that mean...to live unto the Lord?

- It means that we are to be the salt of the Earth!
- And the light of the world!
- We are to be the ones who change the world, without being changed by the world!
- We are to show forth God's love to this world until He comes?

- We are to 'live unto the Lord' in everything that we do so that we can fulfill the great commission!

That is the whole reason that we are still here!

It is easy to say tonight, but not always so easy to accomplish.

Even though the early church had great revival, they struggled to fulfill the great commission...

During the first ten years of the church we see tremendous growth...

- There were 3,000 people in Acts 2.
- 5,000 men in Acts 4.
- Multitudes of men and women in Acts 5.
- A great company of Jewish priests in Acts 6.

BUT IT ALL HAPPENED INSIDE JERUSALEM!

Jerusalem might have been enjoying the blessings of the Lord, and many souls within her walls may have come to salvation during that ten year span...

- But what about the 99.9% of people alive in the world at that time who did not live in that city?
- What about the other cultures that God specifically told them to reach?

The real issue here is this: **How much blessing does the church have to receive before she is willing and ready to fulfill the Great Commission?**

One of the great dangers we face when we go from a struggling small congregation to a successful larger congregation is that we lose our dependence on God's power.

We become self-centered instead of God-centered, more focused on ease than on evangelism.

In many of our conferences and camp meetings, our focus is mainly on “our Jerusalem,” that it may grow and prosper, so that it may continue to minister to **US!**

That is not what Jesus had in mind...

The last words that Jesus spoke to His disciples on this Earth are found in...

Acts 1:8

8 But **ye shall receive power**, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: **and ye shall be witnesses** unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and **unto the uttermost part of the earth.**

We are instructed to go beyond our Jerusalem...into Samaria...into the uttermost parts of the Earth!

There are two promises given in this verse...

We have “received power” (the first promise of Acts 1:8) but we have not “become witnesses” (the second promise of Acts 1:8).

And the second promise is much more significant than the first!

The real test of any visitation of God is if we go out to become witnesses for Jesus!

It seems like a natural thing to do...to stay in the confines of the church, but God has blessed us so that we can go out into the world... He desires to lead us outside of our four walls to become witnesses!

Thousands of Christians use the baptism of the Holy Spirit for purposes other than the purpose it was given! **For that, we will have to answer to God!**

How many of you know that we receive some things from God when we are filled with the Holy Ghost?

- **Romans 14:17**

17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

- **Romans 15:13**

13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

- The fruit of the Spirit.
- The gifts of the Spirit.

Each and every one of these will bless our lives, but there is much more to it than that...

WE ARE THE STEWARDS, NOT THE LORDS, OF HIS BLESSINGS! The baptism of the Holy Spirit is so exciting that we think that the experience is all there is to it. Not so!

It is exciting for more than one reason...it is powerful for more than one reason...

That reason is...

- **AND YE SHALL BE WITNESSES UNTO ME...**in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the Earth!

I believe that this is the main reason that the Holy Ghost experience is so exciting...so that it will stir us and motivate us to witness!

If we just sit on the Holy Ghost, and keep it all to ourselves it will eventually die out because that is not the primary reason that it was given!

I get really nervous when people come to me and say, I miss that small family feeling that we used to have, we were so close and unified and together!

I've got news for you...God wants this whole world to be saved...if you have a problem with crowds you are in trouble!

- We can't keep this Holy Ghost to ourselves...it is for the whole world.

- We can't put a muzzle on this power.
- We can't suppress this joy because if we do God will take it from us!

It is not just for us, but it is for them...God is not willing that any should perish!

It was the heartbeat of the early church.

- They started out right, but they stopped too soon.
- They wanted to reach out in Jerusalem.
- AMONG THEIR OWN KIND.
- **But they did not want to go to the ends of the Earth.**
- **In fact, they didn't even want to go to Samaria.**

Two verses previous to our text, in...

Acts 1:6

6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

They were only concerned with the kingdom being restored to Israel...they wanted to sit in their own state of spiritual blessing in Jerusalem.

But Jesus wanted them to leave behind the comfort of Jerusalem and go to the ends of the Earth!

- That is the main reason that Jesus gave us the power.
- That is why we are given joy, when we receive the Holy Ghost!

...so that we can go out into the world, and the world can become affected by that joy and that power!

The early church finally figured that out after much persecution,(that is another message) and when they did, the revival went beyond Jerusalem!

Acts 13:52-14:1

52 And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

14 And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.

There is something about the Joy of the Holy Ghost that draws people!

Paul said it takes more than words to win people...he had it figured out...

1 Thess 1:5-8

5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:

7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

8 For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.

Paul told the church at Thessalonica, that the gospel came in power, joy, and the Holy Ghost!

That is how they won people to God.

Then those people became examples to the people of Macedonia and Achaia...

...in fact Paul didn't even have to go there because the power and joy of the Holy Ghost was so strong...it was contagious and it spread abroad.

The Bible says...

Isa 12:3

3 Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

How do we draw water out of the wells of salvation?

With Joy...joy is our strength.

Have you ever tried to pull a bucket of water up from a well....it is a pretty hard thing to do...it takes a lot of strength!

If we want to lead people to salvation...it takes joy!

Joy draws people to you...that is just the way it is!

I had a friend in Bible College whose name was Chuck!

I actually knew him before I got there, but my point tonight is Chuck wasn't that All American, good looking, super athletic guy that the girls just fall in love with!

- Chuck didn't have a lot of money.
- He didn't even have his own car.
- But Chuck was always happy and smiling.
- He always had a positive upbeat joyful way about him.
- On top of that he was funny.
- All the girls at college just loved him.
- In fact, everybody loved him.
- He was the most popular guy at school.

...if I could attribute that to anything, it would simply be that he was happy and full of Joy!

People were drawn to that, they wanted part of what it was that he had! They wanted to be around him!

He is still that way today!

In the same way, the joy of the Lord draws people to you...if you let that joy shine out...people will be drawn to you!

They will be drawn to God, through His Spirit joyfully manifesting itself through you!

We cannot win souls without the Joy of the Lord in our hearts..it is impossible...

David learned the hard way...

- At one point in David's life, he was full of the joy of the Lord.
- When King Saul was at his lowest points, he would send for David to come and play the harp for him...the joy of the Lord would fill that place, and the King's heart was refreshed.
- But when David fell into sin, the joy of the Lord was taken from him.

David knew that he had sinned, but he also knew that something was missing.

Listen to his prayer...this is one of the purest prayers of repentance you will find in the entire Bible...

Ps 51:8-12

8 **Make me to hear joy and gladness;** that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.

12 **Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation;** and uphold me with thy free spirit.

David knew that he could not go any longer without the Joy of the Lord...that was his strength....that was a defining factor in his life!

At the end of his prayer of repentance, David makes a statement that rings so clear and true to me tonight...

Psalms 51:12-13

12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.

13 **Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.**

We will never be able to win a soul to the kingdom unless we have the joy of the Lord in our hearts!

- David understood it.
- The disciples had to learn it the hard way.

- And when Paul figured it out, great revival followed!

Come and ask the Lord to restore His Joy in your life tonight!