

## How to Have the Joy of God in the Last Days I

Fred R. Coulter—September 5, 2009

With the death, doom and gloom sermons that have been given, someone said, ‘Can’t you give a sermon on joy?’ So I took up the challenge and today we’re going to cover joy, also love and peace. I think this becomes important, especially in the days that we are living, because we’re going to face a lot of difficult things and this is how we’re going to be able to face them, because *we have the joy of the Lord*.

Let’s come first of all to Romans 8:28. We’re going to start here and we’re going to finish here. It’s something to always remember. Let’s also understand, as Jesus said: that even though you die or someone even martyrs you, don’t worry about it. They can’t do anything more to you, because God’s going to resurrect you. So we need to always keep that in mind. This doesn’t mean that we’re going to stand up and be silly and jump up and down, and clap our hands and stamp our feet and have praise music like a lot of people do for hours on end. That is an artificial joy because what we’re going to talk about is a spiritual joy which comes from the Holy Spirit and it comes with understanding.

Romans 8:28: “And we know... [So this is what we have to know. This is something that needs to be with us all the time.] ...that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.” So this is also how we keep our eyes on the goal, our mind on what we need to keep it on, and when something difficult comes along we don’t let it overwhelm us and take us down. Because

- we go to God
- we ask Him for His help
- we ask Him for His strength
- for His Spirit
- for understanding

—and to claim the promise that ‘all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose.’

“Because those whom He did foreknow... [Now that’s us. God has given us His Spirit. That’s what’s important to realize.] ...He also predestinated... [Now this is our goal.] ...*to be* conformed to the image of His own Son... [To be like Jesus Christ. This is how we can have love and joy and peace, in spite of what’s going on around us, and in spite of what’s happening in the world, because what’s going to happen in the world is going to be a roller coaster ride. If you live and die mentally and emotionally by what goes on in the

world, you’re going to be up, you’re going to be down, you’re going to be up, you’re going to be down. The way it’s going now, you may to be down more than you are up, so you need something internally. That comes from God’s Holy Spirit.] ...*to be* conformed to the image of His own son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Now whom He predestinated, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified... [That means in right standing with God. That’s why regardless of what happens, going back to v 28, ‘all things work together for good,’ ***because you are in right standing with God***. And how does that right standing with God come? *Through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and His shed blood*, for the justification.] ...and whom he justified, these He also glorified” (vs 29-30). Well, we’re not yet glorified, but ***we will be***. Also remember this, having the Holy Spirit is the down payment or earnest of glory.

Let’s talk just a little bit about right standing with God. Come here to Luke 11:1; let’s see something that we need to do on a daily basis, every day, every day. This is why the most important thing is prayer and prayer on your knees. I’ve heard of some people who take prayer walks. They hardly ever get on their knees and pray. Well, yes, you can pray at anytime, but there’s a special thing that takes place when you’re on your knees, because you are humbling yourself before God. You’re recognizing that:

- He is God
  - He is the Author of life
  - He has called you
  - He has justified you
  - He has given you the Holy Spirit
- and you’re looking to Him
- to guide you
  - to lead you
  - to direct your life

Luke 11:1: “Now it came to pass *that* as He as praying in a certain place, when He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, teach us how to pray... [So then He gives the outline prayer. One of the best ways to amplify that is by studying and praying the Psalms on your knees to begin your prayers. You will find that the Psalms (and we’ll cover a good deal of them today), covers every aspect of your spiritual and emotional life and your relationship with God.] (He said): ...Lord, teach us how to pray, as John also taught his disciples.’ And

He said to them, ‘When you pray, say, “Our Father Who *is* in heaven...”’ (vs 1-2).

We’ll see a little later that Jesus gave the permission. We pray directly to God the Father because He loves us. Sometimes we get so overwhelmed in a problem or difficulty that we are in, we forget the love of God, we forget the joy that comes from having this relationship and to understand that very few people in the world really fit into the category of the things that we have just covered so far. “...hallowed be Your name; Your Kingdom come...” (v 2). Which is coming, but also ‘Your kingdom come’ means *the rule of God in your life*, because we are under the Kingdom of God. What did Jesus say when He was preaching? He started out the Gospel by saying, ‘Repent and believe the gospel, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.’ We have been transferred from the kingdom of this world, run by Satan the devil, to the Kingdom of God. We are not *in* it, but we are *under* its jurisdiction. When the resurrection takes place, we will be *in* the Kingdom of God.

“...Your will be done... [Now for us this means, ‘Father, lead us with Your Spirit, guide us in what we need to do, rather than our own will, our own ways, our own self, Your will be done.] ...as in heaven... [Everything in heaven is run according to the will of God, nothing is against it.] ...so also upon the earth” (v 2). You can take the broad view of it: meaning everything on the earth. You can take the individual view of it: in my particular life where I am on the earth.

“Give us our bread *as* needed day-by-day” (v 3). As we go down the road, this is going to be more important to realize and understand. Today, with everything right at hand, some people think that it’s almost superfluous to ask God concerning that; however, let’s add this to it. Since they have modified so many foods, genetically engineered. I’ll have to tell you what I heard just today that a woman purchased some mash to feed her chickens. The chickens wouldn’t eat it. So she sent it to be analyzed and they said it was genetically engineered. Now genetically engineered food, in most instances, is not good for the body. So we can take this part of the prayer today, ‘God, help us to obtain the best food possible.’ You can always remember, even a stupid chicken knows what to eat, but men don’t!

Verse 4, here is *the key*: “And forgive us our sins... [That’s not hard to come by. Most of us are willing to admit our sins and repent of them. Here is the hard part:] ...as... [That is, in the same manner.] ...as we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us...” As I mentioned recently in a sermon concerning emotions and healing, a lot of

healing does not take place because of this part of the verse right here—too many things from the past, too many hatreds, too many bitterness, too many resentments, too many of these things. So in that, when you’re asking forgiveness for yourself, and everyone that you know of, what you have to do, even though it may have occurred a long time ago and even though that person may be dead, what you do before God is forgive in your heart, because that forgiveness releases the constraint within your mind and in your emotions that block the functioning of your body and your mind and the use of the Holy Spirit. We are to hate sin, but not the sinner. What did Jesus say concerning sin? ‘Every sin that man may do against the Son of Man, every blasphemy shall be forgiven.’ Even when Jesus was hanging on the cross, He looked down at those who had just nailed Him to the cross, dividing His garments, casting lots over it, seeing the chief priests out there and the scribes jeering and wailing at Him, ‘Come down off the cross if You’re the Christ, and we’ll believe You!’ What did He say? ‘Father, forgive them for they don’t know what they are doing.’

Now, for us as human beings and the experiences that we go through, it’s very difficult to really honestly do that. Because the human mind likes to keep a little corner in the back of the mind of where you store all of these things, and periodically they’ll come up and what do they do? *They defile you spiritually*. So keep that in mind.

“...and lead us not into temptation, but rescue us from the evil one” (v 4). And with the way the world is now and Satan deceiving the whole world, boy, we really need to understand that and do that. So this is important in our prayers.

Another place in Ephesians 4 it says, ‘Be angry and sin not,’ which means you can still have anger, but don’t let it become sin. And part of the sin is you remember the anger forever. And ‘don’t let the sun go down on your wrath,’ because when we hold things in our minds too long, what does it do? It becomes part of the way that we think.

Now let’s look at how Jesus handled all of this, because:

- He is the One Who shows us the way.
- Jesus is the forerunner
- Jesus is our Champion
- our Hero
- our Redeemer

—and you talk about a hero. Kids get all excited about Superman, Spiderman, and in our day Captain Marvel and the Shadow, and all of that sort of thing. When we were kids without television we would come home from school and turn on the radio and we would listen to *The Shadow Knows*, and *Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy*. Now today

they've got all of these monstrous video games and cartoons that are so hideous that I don't even like to watch them. But I flip through the channel once in awhile just to see what's polluting the minds of the young people, so that at least I know what's going on.

All of these things affect us. Now let's come to Hebrews 12 and let's see how did Jesus, as our Hero and Savior, handle all of these things. And this is to inspire us, not only to have endurance, but

- to have hope
- to have faith
- to have joy

in spite of what goes on. That doesn't mean we sit around and laugh and we are garrulous. No, we can still be of a sober mind, but still have joy within because we understand how God is dealing with us.

So here in Hebrews 12:1, Paul is summarizing all the eleventh chapter, and you go through and see how every one that God has called had to have faith and had to have works, had to have obedience. So always remember this: ***faith requires obedience***. You can't say, 'I believe,' but not do. You have to believe and then act, so he says: Hebrews 12:1: "Therefore, *since* we are surrounded by such a great throng of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight..."—every trouble, every depression.

There was a young gal recently who wants to become a fire fighter. She's tall and thin but not very strong. So she went to try out here recently for the first phase of qualifying to get into the fireman's or fire persons—as the correct political words would have it today—program. They put the clothes on her that they had to wear and they put the 50-pound pack on her and they gave her all of this equipment. And here she is, she probably is about 5-foot-11 and she doesn't weigh more than 130 pounds. If you look at the firemen and you look at her, you think, hmmm. She said that after she went through all the routine that she had and everything that her legs were shaking, her arms were trembling. She was weak all over, because she had what? *So much weighed upon her, more than she could handle.*

So likewise, we need to 'lay aside every weight,' all of these things that come along, the problems and difficulties that cloud our thinking, that weigh and down—and depression weighs you down. When you're depressed, how do you feel? *Weighted down and shaky*. It's too much to carry. So you lay it aside and let Christ take it. "...and the sin that so easily entraps us... [Because sin is right there to get us and we still are fighting the sin within, are we not? *Yes!* So that gets into another whole area of the way that you overcome these sins is to 'bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.' That's every thought! Every

day! You've got to struggle between your carnal mind, the world out there, the Holy Spirit within you, and your choices, and we have to fight against the sin.] ...*and* let us run the race set before us with endurance" (v 1).

Now here's how we endure and endure with joy: "Having *our minds* fixed on Jesus, the Beginner and Finisher of *our* faith..." (v 2). He's the One Who called us. He's the One Who brought us to the Father. He is the One Who is going to finish it. We are to be faithful unto death, faithful unto the return of Jesus Christ—if we're fortunate enough to live to that point—'our minds fixed on Jesus.'

Now what does this also tell us? How are you going to get your mind fixed on Jesus but by studying the four Gospels. Sometimes we get so busy studying different things in the Bible, we forget the four Gospels. Go back and make that a reading project or study project for yourself. That's why we have the *Harmony of the Gospels*. That'll make it easy. Everything is laid out in sequence. If you don't have a *Harmony of the Gospels*, be sure and write for one; we'll send it to you.

So, if we're going to have our minds fixed on Jesus, 'Who is the Beginner and Finisher of our faith,' we need to know

- what He said
- what He taught
- how we are to behave ourselves
- how we are to live our lives

and keeping this focus of faith. "...Who for the joy... [Now if any other human being had to go through that, they would not have the same perspective, because as human beings we know it is not joyful to go through difficulties and problems, but here with our minds fixed on Christ, we know]: ...Who for the joy that lay ahead of Him endured *the* cross, *although* He despised *the* shame, and has sat down at *the* right hand of the throne of God" (v 2).

Now notice v 3 because this tells us what we are to do, and how then we are to approach all of these situations. "Now meditate deeply on Him... [Having your mind on Christ. That's why studying the Gospels is important. Today a lot of evangelical so-called Christians claim that the Gospels were only for the Jews and that Paul preached a better Gospel. Well, no, Paul says everywhere that he preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ.] ...meditate deeply on Him Who endured such great hostility of sinners against Himself... [Sometimes we get very easily offended. Then we hold on to that offence. Well, Jesus didn't.] ...so that you do not become weary and faint in your minds.... [Now when you're weary and faint in your minds, there's not much joy. So let's see how we maintain that joy then.] ...You

have not resisted to the point of *losing* blood in your struggle against sin” (vs 2-4). So this shows us how then we can do these things.

Let’s come to the Gospel of John since we said study what John said. And especially study the words of the New Covenant, John 14, 15, 16, and 17, because within those four chapters, notice inclusive counting: 14, 15, 16, 17, that’s four. Now let’s notice how all of these things have to do with the outcome of joy in spite of the circumstances. That joy will lead to what? *Peace of mind, rather than troubling and unsettling thoughts*. There are going to be a lot of things that’ll come along that will unsettle your thoughts, but when you deeply meditate on Him and realize you’re standing with Him, that you have the Spirit of God, that He has called you and your destiny is above and beyond anything that this world can think of, v 7: “If you dwell in Me, and My words dwell in you... [We could also translate that *live*. ‘If you live in Me, and My words live in you,’ and remember we’re to have the laws and commandments of God written in our hearts—right? How about all the words of Jesus? *Yes!* Notice.] ...you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you.”

Now we can add to that: *according to God’s timing, and God working it out*. And over the course of time that I’ve been in the Church, I’ve seen that through whatever difficulties that we’ve gone through, and we’ve had our share of them. You can ask Dolores and our family, and you’ll know that we’ve had our share. Every one of you have had your share. But nevertheless, God works it out. I can look back and see how many times were we confronted with insurmountable problems, that looked like: How are we ever going to get around this? And yet, God saw us through everything and opened the way, and opened the door, some through just small things, some through very large things that were miraculous in changing the events and working things out.

So it shall come to pass, and remember this: Every prayer that is needful, even if it is a daily need, you need to pray about it, because it’s needful—correct? Isn’t it necessary to eat every day? *Yes*, good example. Now the difference between a vain repetition and a needful repetition is this: A vain repetition is like the heathen. If you go on the Catholic Hour, you can hear it. ‘Hail Mary, mother of God...blessed be Jesus, the fruit of your womb. Hail, Mary, mother of God...’, etc.

I got an unidentified email from some nun in some nunnery. She got a little upset because I said, ‘Catholics are not Christians.’ So she sent this, she said, ‘We’re more Christian than you and may you rot in hell.’ Didn’t even put her name on there. It was Holy Mary Convent somewhere. So I emailed

her back and I said, ‘Thank you for your email. I appreciate your comment and your words actually prove that you’re not Christian, because Jesus said, “Love your enemies and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.”’

Verse 8: “In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit...” Now He’s talking directly to the apostles. We need to say this: since we have the written word of the apostles down to our day, they are still bearing fruit—are they not?—and don’t even know it! Now let me tell you a little insight about publishing Bibles. I think it is astonishing. Don Junevich, who is the man who is our representative over there in LithoPack. He’s an American, he lives in China. He has been checking out another company in India which does printing on thin Bible paper. Now the regular printer we use in the United States, Thompson Shore, back in Dexter, Michigan, cannot print on anything less than forty-pound paper. This is about half. The forty-pound is different than the copy paper poundage definition. The Bible paper that you have is about half of forty-pound paper. So they can’t print the Bibles here. It’s too expensive and everything has been moved overseas. You’ve heard me talk about the printing plant in western China, which the United Bible Society has contracted for ten years for 800-thousand Bibles a year and they’re printing them.

Don located this company, and I forget the name of it, but he’ll send it to me. He went down there, visited them, watched how they do everything, and he’s going to send me a sample Bible that they could do and hopefully get lower costs than what we have. They have web-fed, that is it comes off a roll continually printed and then collated and folded and ready to be bound. Whereas in China, they do sheet-fed and then they have to—it’s a much slower process. So he’s over there checking out for the future because if we sell out this printing in a year, like we did the other one, then we’ll need some more. He said that they are printing hundreds of thousands of Bibles every year. He said, ‘Would you like one in Russian?’ I said, ‘Well, I don’t speak Russian.’

“...you bear much fruit...” (v 8). The reason I’m bringing this out is because the fruit of the apostles is still being produced, and also fulfilling the prophecy that Jesus said in Mark 13, ‘And this Gospel shall be published in all the world before the end comes.’ Guess what? *The Bible is the Gospel*. This company right now is in the midst of negotiating with some people in Brazil to produce 1.2-million Bibles in Portuguese. He also asked me, ‘Would you like to produce a very small Bible, with very small print?’ I said, ‘Well, if we give the glasses magnifiers, maybe we could probably do

that.' I have a little Bible that's probably no more than three and half by five and a half and it's the whole Bible, fine print. I can still read it. He said, 'I can get those for \$1.00 each.' I say this: This is not a sidetrack from the point of view that it doesn't fit in, this fits in because this tells us that we produce fruit and that fruit goes beyond our particular lives to carry out what God wants. It affects other people then, which affects other people, which then affects other people. So never think that just because you're alone or by yourself that you can't produce fruit which is going to help someone else, which will help someone else, which will help someone else.

It also shows two very important things: when Christ said the gospel's going to be published in all the world, it surely was not 8-million copies of one little magazine by one little church. When God talks about things that big, He means gigantic.

Verse 8: "...so shall you be My disciples.... [Now here's the key. This comes down to the joy that we need to have.] ...As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you... [And this should bring us joy. Never forget **God loves you**. As a matter of fact, that's the first sermon in the Love Series that we have. **Never forget when all else fails, God loves you!** Regardless of what the circumstances are, what you're going through, if you turn to God in your distress, He will help you because He loves you. Why did He give Jesus as the Savior of the world? Because 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.' That's why. God loves you, the Father loves you, Jesus loves you.] ...As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; live in My love'" (vs 8-9).

That's the foundation of joy and peace, as we will see here a little bit. Verse 10: "If you keep My commandments... [What is His commandment concerning prayer? 'Forgive us as we forgive others in the same way,' and then the teaching of Matthew 18 on top of it. That's part of it. Not only does this mean the Ten Commandments, but this means **all** of what God has given us to do.] ...If you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and live in His love."

This is in spite of the slipups of human nature. That's why we repent every day. Because as Jesus said, 'Seek first the Kingdom of God, and all of these things shall be added to you. For sufficient for each day is the evil of that day.' Whatever may happen. I don't know if any of us yet have ever had an absolutely 1000% perfect day. God knows that! However, if you are of an attitude of repentance and loving God, focusing in on the goal, your day is a thousand percent. That's how God looks at it, because you have been justified.

Let's go forward here. "...you shall live in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and live in His love. These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you, and *that* your joy may be full'" (vs 10-11). Which means that if you're going to have the joy that comes from God through His Holy Spirit, then you need to put out all the other things in your life which causes no joy. If you do, then you will be able to handle the circumstances as they come. You will be able to understand that what's going on in the world is going to happen, and that God loves you and has called you and there is nothing, **nothing** which can change your relationship with God, if you love Him and keep His commandments and trust in Him at all times. That can give you peace of mind. That can bring you the joy.

Now notice: "...that My joy..." (v 11). Jesus... 'for the joy that lay ahead' That's why He went through everything. That was His joy. And the joy is the completion of God's plan, and all, as many as possible of all human beings through all time, entering into the Kingdom of God. So you go to the back of the Bible and you read the very last page that we have here. *God's Promise of Eternal Life Fulfilled*. You read that. This shows the conclusion of everything of the plan of God and how we get there is contained in the rest of the Bible up to this.

Dolores is the one who said when we were looking, 'How are we going to fill up this last page, we have one page left.' After fourteen hundred and some pages, you don't want to have a blank one. She said, 'Why don't you put in there, because these are my favorite verses.' Another thing. If you get discouraged and down, go read these, study these. Get on your knees and pray about them. I won't read it here, I'll let you do that. I just direct your attention to it.

Verse 11: "These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you... [So we have the love dwelling in us, the joy dwelling in us.] ...and *that* your joy may be full. This is My commandment: that you love one another, as I have loved you... [And this perhaps is the greatest problem within the Churches of God today. So why don't you take it upon yourself as a committee of one to help change it in your life and everyone who does it to help change it in their lives, will then make a difference all the way around.] ...as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends, if you do whatever I command you'" (vs 11-14).

Now let's look at another aspect of this. Let's come back to John 14:23. Here again I want you to notice how many times that Jesus says this in

John 14, 15, 16, and 17. That's why these are the words of the New Covenant.

(go to the next track)

Let's come back here to John 14:23. We're going to find love and peace, which are also connected, as we will see in just a bit, with joy. "Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word.... [There again the message of Jesus Christ. Whenever you see 'My word' that's not talking about a single word, this is talking about His entire message.] ...and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.'" So this shows that when He speaks of the Holy Spirit, and tie that in with Romans 8, that there are two aspects to the Holy Spirit:

- The begetting by the Father
- The Spirit of Christ, which develops the mind of Christ.

That's why it says: "...We will come to him and make Our abode with him" (v 23). Because we become a temporary tabernacle for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God. That's something to be joyful about. That Christ dwells in you, the Father dwells in you, and you—with the Holy Spirit of God—are a child of God, so that you're going to live with Him forever in peace and love and joy. Keep that in mind.

Now here's the contrast, v 24: "The one who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the Word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father's, Who sent Me." Because Jesus spoke everything that the Father wanted Him to say and to teach and to do. So here we find a relationship now (that we will see in just a little bit), establishes direct connection between us and God the Father and Jesus Christ. They are the source of our joy. They are the source of our love.

Verse 25: "I have spoken these things to you while I am yet present with you, but *when* the Comforter *comes*... [And it's the Holy Spirit which brings comfort and love and peace and joy. Because those are the beginning fruits of the Holy Spirit.] ...But *when* the Comforter *comes*, *even* the Holy Spirit, which the Father will send in My name, that one shall teach you all things... [That is, all things you need for salvation.] ...and shall bring to your remembrance everything that I have told you.... [So that later they could write down all the important things so that we have it here today.] ...Peace I leave with you.... [Now this is the spiritual peace which comes from God through His Spirit.] ...My peace I give to you.... [Which means that regardless of whatever is going on, the peace of God is going to rule in your mind and in your heart.] ...not as the world gives do I give *it* to you. Let not your heart be

troubled, nor let it fear" (vs 25-27). So this is telling us what?

- Don't be anxious
- Don't be troubled
- Don't be upset
- Don't be depressed
- Don't let things get you down
- Don't let fear rule your life, though fearful things take place

—because there is hope beyond the fear. There is hope beyond the difficulties.

"...**nor let it fear.** You have heard Me say to you that I am going away, and *that* I will come to you *again*. If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced that I said, "I am going to the Father" because My Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it happens, so that when it comes to pass, you may believe" (vs 27-29).

Now let's look at something else. Come over to John 16, talking about prayer, talking about the love of God. This is a special blessing that has been granted to all who pray, and particularly to those who have the Holy Spirit of God. Those who have the Holy Spirit of God are in a special relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ. Notice what He says: John 16:26: "In that day, you shall ask in My name... [That's why all prayers are asked in the name of Jesus Christ.] ...and I do not tell you that I will beseech the Father for you..."

Now let's just interject something here. It is very important to understand. And all of you ex-Catholics realize it and Catholics who don't, listen up, which is this. You are told by the Catholic Church that you pray to Mary. Now Mary has not ascended to heaven, but you're told to pray to her, and she will intercede for you to the Son, who will intercede to the Father. Now that, as righteous as it may appear to some people, is a blatant lie and a denial of Jesus Christ and God the Father. Here's why: God gives you direct communication to Him. ***He doesn't need anyone else.***

"...I do not tell you that I will beseech the Father for you, for **the Father Himself loves you**... [God has direct personal interest

- in you
- your life
- your thoughts
- your mind
- your circumstances
- your spiritual growth
- your understanding

—all of that.] ...the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that

I came forth from God” (vs 26-27). So we are to pray directly to the Father. Isn't that something?

Let's come back up here to v 22 and see how He emphasized this. “And likewise, you indeed have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and no one shall take your joy from you.... [Now this is to the apostles. Remember what happened after Jesus rose from the dead. He all of a sudden appeared in the room. This gave them a special joy that only they could share, as well as with all that He appeared to, including the five hundred that He appeared to at once on the mountain in Galilee. This served two things: As to be witnesses of the resurrection, you've got to see Him, and they saw Him and He taught them for forty days and forty nights.] ...and no one shall take your joy from you.... [Don't surrender it. You can surrender it:

- through sin
- through neglect
- through bitterness
- through hatred
- through resentment.

Don't surrender it! No one can take it from you.] ...And in that day you shall ask Me nothing... [let alone Mary] ...Truly, truly I tell you, whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He will give you” (vs 22-23).

Now if you need some encouragement in prayer that God will answer your prayers, then you go through and study all the places where we are told to pray and ask and God will provide. We are told to 'ask, to seek, to knock, and it shall be given.' So claim those promises.

Verse 24: “Until this day, you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.” So God wants us to have that joy and it comes from Him. The joy is there to be received, but too many times we let circumstances and thoughts crowd it all out. When that happens that means:

- We need to spend more time in prayer.
- We need to spend more time in study.
- We need to have our minds fixed on Christ.
- We need to meditate on Him.

We've covered it here. Let's come down here a little bit further to v 31: “Jesus answered them... [When we said, 'By this we believe that You came forth from God.' After three and half years of training, after seeing everything that was done.] ...Jesus answered them, 'Do you now believe? Listen, the time is coming, and has already come, that you shall be scattered each to his own, and you shall leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone

because the Father is with Me. These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation. But be courageous! I have overcome the world” (vs 31-33). The *King James* says, 'good cheer.' So showing that in spite of what happens, don't let these things overtake you.

And here's Jesus' prayer for us. Let me ask you a question: is this not a continuing prayer for everyone who believes? *Yes, for us.* John 17:11: “And I am no longer in the world... [He's praying to the Father.] ...but these are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, those whom You have given Me, so that they may be one, even as *We are one.*” ***That's the goal!***

Just as a sidebar: the *We* identifies who? God the Father and Jesus Christ—correct? *Yes!* And He talks about *Us*, we'll see here in a little bit. So when you read Genesis 1:26 when it says, 'Let *Us* make man in *Our* image,' it is referring to the Father and to Christ, the *We*. Just a little sidebar here as we go along.

Verse 12: “When I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. I protected those whom You have given Me, and not one of them has perished except the son of perdition, in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to You; and these things I am speaking *while yet* in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in them” (vs 12-13). This is why we are to keep our hearts and minds on Christ. And the spiritual inner joy is going to be reflected in spiritual growth in a positive manner, in understanding the Word of God, in handling circumstances as they come along.

Verse 14: “I have given them Your words, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You would take them out of the world... [Sometimes you feel like that. Like the Psalm said, 'Oh, that I had the wings of the bird that I could fly to the top of a mountain.' Escape and get away from it all.] ...but that You would keep them from the evil one” (vs 14-15). That's why we are told in model prayer in Matt. 6 and Luke 11 to 'deliver us or rescue us from the evil one.' Who is Satan interested more than anybody else? He's interested in those who know God, who have the Spirit of God, and so he's going to try and devise as many devices as possible to put stumbling blocks in our way. So we pray every day, 'Rescue us or deliver us from the evil one.'

“They are not of the world... [Because we have the Spirit of God; know the Word of God.] ...just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in Your Truth; Your Word is the Truth” (vs 16-17).

Now sanctify is a very important thing. That means to be made holy, and that is by the Spirit of God. Sanctified means to be set aside by God for a special purpose. Just like He sanctified the seventh day and blessed it and made it Holy. So likewise with God's Word and God's Spirit, when we have the Spirit of God in us, we are sanctified. In 1-Thess. 5 Paul writes that you be sanctified in body, in soul and in mind, meaning your whole being. It's through the Truth of God.

Now let's go on just a few more verses here. So this is how we keep our mind focused on the goal, focused on the purpose, focused on what Jesus did. And remember, this is part of what Jesus told us just before He was arrested and led off to be tried and crucified. Verse 18: "Even as You did send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, so that they also may be sanctified in *Your Truth*" (vs 18-19). Now it also talks about in Eph. 1 of being sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. That's how we're sanctified.

Now notice v 20. Here's a perpetual prayer for all that God calls. "I do not pray for these only, but also for those who shall believe in Me through their word..." That's why the works and the fruit of apostles is still going on today through the Bible, through the preaching of the Gospel. Through what we're doing here right now is part of the fruit of the apostles for what Christ gave them to do and to write. Can you imagine that? Then, this in turn, goes back to God the Father and Jesus Christ and then, this in turn, gives us a relationship with God continually. We'll see that here in just a little bit.

Here's the goal. This is what Christ kept His mind on, 'for the joy that was set before Him.' This helps us to be able to handle the problems and difficulties. "That they all may be one, even as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us... [Gen. 1:26, Us.] ...in order that the world may believe that You did send Me" (v 21). Now the world has not yet believed, so in order to fulfill this, 'in order that the world may believe that You did send Me'—what does that imply? That implies everything concerning the plan of God—correct? Does the world believe now? *No!* Has the world ever really truly believed? *No!* So this talks then about the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles, the Kingdom of God on earth when we rule and reign with Christ. This then also includes the meaning of the Last Great Day—the Great White Throne Judgment—when all who have ever had an opportunity for salvation will have their opportunity. That's when the world may believe.

When you read the events in Revelation, you see the world doesn't believe. They're fighting,

they're rejecting, they're killing, they're following Satan the devil, and so forth. *No!* So this prayer not only for us, but even here He's praying for the world. Now v 22: "And I have given them the glory that You gave to Me... [Now they weren't yet glorified—were they? That means the Holy Spirit, the Truth of God, the calling of God, the understanding that has been given.] ...in order that **they may be one, in the same way that We are one; I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected** into one... [And being perfected is a process. That's what you call overcoming day-by-day, living by every Word of God. That's how you're perfected and through all the circumstances that we go through. That is perfecting us.] ...and that the world may know that You did send Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me" (vs 22-23).

Now notice, here is Jesus' desire and the very purpose of His prayer. So if you stop and ask the question: what does Jesus want of me? Here it is: "Father, I desire that those whom You have given Me may also be with Me where I am... [And where is that? *When Christ returns, He's going to come and set up His capital city in Jerusalem* and all the saints will be resurrected and rule and reign with Christ. Where else does 'where I am' include? *New Jerusalem*—right? And the Almighty God and the Lamb are the light of it. So you see when we read these words, we need to think way beyond just the immediacy of these words. What did Jesus say of the words that He spoke to them? **'They are spirit and they are life.'** This means since they have the spiritual meaning and they bring life, this also shows that His words extend way beyond the immediate application that we're reading about here.] ...where I am, so that they may behold My glory, which You have given Me; because You did love Me before *the* foundation of *the* world" (v 24).

So let's just finish off these other two verses here. "Righteous Father, the world has not known You... [Which then proves up here that the world may believe that that includes the whole plan of God.] ...but I have known You, and these have known that You did send Me. And I have made known Your name to them... [Which is the Father—isn't that correct? It's not a Hebrew name. I just did a short sermon on *What are the Sacred Names of God?* If God created all the languages, then whatever God is called in whatever language, that's the sacred name of God, because God created the languages—correct? *Yes.*] ...made known Your name to them... [And in the New Testament, He is called what? *Father.*] ...and will make *it* known; so that the love with which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (vs 25-26).

God wants us to have the very love which comes from Him in us and it's to live in us, it is to dwell in us, it is to give us the active relationship that we need with God the Father and Jesus Christ on a daily basis. Joy just doesn't come like drinking a glass of wine or champagne. And you feel real good because the wine and the alcohol gives you a little effervescence and you have a little bubbly in you and whoopee, you're feeling good. It doesn't come that way. The joy, which comes from God, comes from a relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ on a daily basis and through the study of the Word of God, and living by the Word of God, thinking and meditating on Christ.

Let's come to 1-John 1:1. Let's understand how we are to be connected with God with His Spirit and what this connects us to. What it is, it's greater than what we think, because it's eternal and it is spiritual and we have been predestined to this before the foundation of the world if we answer the call of God. 'Many are called, but few are chosen,' because few repent and answer the call.

1-John 1:1: "That which was from the beginning... [This is what we are connected to. Let me ask the question: Is God eternal? *Yes, He is!* Is God's Spirit from God then part of the eternity of God? *Yes, it is!* Which means then what? *We are connected by God's plan back to what He first conceived and planned through Jesus Christ.*] ...that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our own eyes... [You are to be witnesses of the resurrection.] ...that which we observed for ourselves..." Now the Greek word for 'observe' means *intensely gazing upon*.

Have you ever seen someone just look at something almost as if they are staring? Now you see this with babies. Babies, when they look, don't look around with flashing eyes, they look and stare right at you—don't they? That's what this means. They were intently staring or gazing upon what Jesus was doing, everything He did. Imagine what they thought when they saw Jesus take the fish and take the bread—five loaves of bread and two fish; feed five thousand. Imagine what they thought when they saw Jesus bless it and He said, 'You take this and you take that and you feed them.' With this little bit? So they go the first man or woman or children, whatever, and they break off some of the bread, they break off some fish and lo and behold, it's still there. As a matter of fact, it's a little bigger than it was before.

I imagine that when the disciples were passing this out, and remember, He had the twelve plus the seventy, so there were plenty disciples to do it. They all experienced this. I imagine that they were thinking in themselves, 'How is this possible?'

And they stared at the bread, stared at the fish, looked back at Christ and thought, 'Man, look at this.' The people receiving it were flabbergasted and they came and chased Jesus down because they wanted to always have bread and fish. 'If He could do this once, man, He could do this all the time and we wouldn't have to fish and we wouldn't have to bake bread. So let's make Him king and He can feed us.' Doesn't Obama wish he could do that? But he can't.

They were all filled and they picked up twelve baskets of fragments left over. Imagine how it was when Jesus said, 'All right, now that they're all done eating, you get some baskets and you go pick up, you get all the leftovers.' That means as the people were eating it, it still increased—right? How can you start out with five loaves and two fishes, feed five thousand, and end up with twelve baskets full of fragments left over? Now, does this tell us something? *Yes!* This tells us that God will give us above and beyond what we expect. I wonder how the news media would handle the filming of such an event? All of those as recorded there in John 6, the first part, that saw Jesus do this, wanted to come and make Him king. They also wanted to be associated with Him, so they could help dispense this kind of thing and they would be important. You know if a politician saw that and he figured out a way that he could use that, that would keep him perpetually in office—*wouldn't it?* Every aspect of all these things are there. So when you read and study the Bible, think of things beyond just of the few words that you're reading. Let's go ahead.

"...which we observed for ourselves... [gazed upon] ...and our own hands handled... [When Jesus said, 'See the holes in my hand and in my side?' *Yes.* What did He say to Doubting Thomas, who was not there when Jesus appeared and he came in later and they said, 'We've seen the Lord?' 'I won't believe it until I see His hands and put my finger in His hands and my hand in His side, then I'll believe it.' Well, eight days later Jesus appeared again. As a spirit being you can walk through walls and doors, doesn't even phase you. So Thomas was there and Jesus appeared, and He said, 'Thomas, come here.' He repented instantly and he said, 'Oh, Lord, I believe.' He said, 'Come here, put your finger in My hand and your hand in My side.' He said, 'Lord, I believe.' He said, 'Blessed because you have believed, but blessed are those who believe and have not seen.' Which means we, because we believe, receive that extra blessing from God.] ...concerning the Word of life" (v 1).

Christ in 'the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God,' etc. "(And the life was manifested, and we have seen, and are bearing witness, and are reporting to you the

eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us;) **That which we have seen and have heard we are reporting to you in order that you also may have fellowship with us...** [We are today reading the apostles words, having fellowship with them through the words and through the Spirit of God, and fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ.] ...indeed, our fellowship—*is* with the Father and with His own Son, Jesus Christ.... [That's the source of everything spiritual: **love and joy and peace**, which comes from God.] ...These things we are also writing to you, so that your joy may be completely full” (vs 2-4). And this kind of spiritual joy comes through the exercise of

- the Spirit of God
- the love of God
- praying to God
- serving God
- studying His Word
- living by it, as a whole way of life

—because we have fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ. ***That is the source of our joy.***

Scriptural References:

- 1) Romans 8:28-30
- 2) Luke 11:1-4
- 3) Hebrews 12:1-4
- 4) John 15:7-14
- 5) John 14:23-29
- 6) John 16:26-27, 22-24, 31-33
- 7) John 17:11-26
- 8) 1-John 1:1-4

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Ephesians 4
- John 14, 15, 16, 17
- Mark 13
- Matthew 18
- Genesis 1:26
- Matthew 6
- 1-Thessalonians 5
- Ephesians 1
- John 6

Also referenced:

Sermons:

- *Love Series*
- *What Are the Sacred Names of God?*

Books:

- *A Harmony of the Gospels* by Fred R. Coulter

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