



## Hard Times – Real Joy!

Sermons Presented By Stephen McIntyre  
Posted online by A New You Ministry  
[www.anym.org](http://www.anym.org)

---

What is joy? According to Webster's dictionary joy is described in this way: "A feeling of happiness that comes from success or good fortune." Do you think that God's explanation of joy would be the same as Webster's? Obviously not. Webster's definition is a classic example of how the world sees joy. The more money we have, the more joy we have. The more prestigious our job, the more joy we will have. The more material things we accumulate, the more joy we will have. More, More, More means Joy, Joy, Joy. **Wrong, Wrong, Wrong!** The master deceiver has succeeded in misleading the whole world into believing such nonsense. This concept of joy has led to more misery and heartache in millions, yes billions of lives since the foundation of the world. What is true joy? What is **God's joy?** The word joy is mentioned 165 times in the Bible! Joy is important to God. He wants all of us to experience His joy. God is pleased when His people experience joy. **Romans 14: 17,18, "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and JOY in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men."**

So, how can we have this type of joy? God's Joy? Let's read the last part of **Romans 14:18, "because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God..."** We are to turn our lives over to Christ. A whole hearted commitment is needed. We are to believe in Him, we are to depend on Him, we are to trust Him in everything we say, do or think. It is a whole hearted soul-searching commitment to Jesus

Christ. Once we commit our lives or recommit our lives to Jesus, He will give us Joy in the Holy Spirit. **Romans 14:17, "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and What? ..JOY in the Holy Spirit."** Paul expands further on this thought in **chapter 15:13, "May the God of hope fill you with Joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."**

We often talk about the fruits of the Spirit. Joy is one of them. When we wholeheartedly turn our lives over to Christ, when the Holy Spirit is indwelling in our hearts-it is then that we can experience true joy. God's joy. But can we experience God's Joy in the face of hardships, trials, persecution, loss- death? Yes, we can!! By relying on His promises, by reflecting on His life, we can experience joy in trying times. Many times in my life-when things weren't going MY way, I suffered the Doom and Gloom syndrome that many of us may experience from time to time. Why did this have to happen to me? What did I do to deserve this? Did I do anything wrong to have this come upon me? When I experienced this frame of mind, Joy was not a word I wanted to think about. Doom and Gloom was. I now realize that is not God's way. But what makes the Doom and Gloom so serious is the effect it has on the lives of those around you. Doom and Gloom is an insidious poison that attacks those around you. It's effect is alarming. If I were to go around complaining about all the trials that I might have to face, do you think that this would have a positive effect on those around me? Do you think I would be a true follower, a true representative of Jesus? If I were a true representative of Jesus, don't you think He would give me the right frame of mind as I passed through these pressing times. Even JOY? All we have to do is study, pray and meditate on Christ's life when He walked among us in human form. We will know the answer. Christ suffered for us. Christ was humiliated for us. Christ was beaten for us. Christ was crucified for us. But throughout this whole hideous experience Doom and Gloom were held in check. **Joy was victorious!**

I would like you to turn with me to **John chapter 17**. This is the prayer that Jesus offered for us during the time He was betrayed. He knew what lay ahead. His thoughts were not selfish. His thoughts were on His disciples, his followers and yes - on His followers today! **John chapter 17: 1 - 13, "After Jesus said this, He looked toward heaven and prayed:'Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted Him authority over all people that He might give eternal life to all those you have given Him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. I have revealed you to those whom you gave Me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they now that everything you have give Me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name-the name you gave Me- so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you game Me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled. I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my JOY within them."** It is shameful to think Doom and Gloom when trials came upon us! Instead of thinking Doom and Gloom, we should be experiencing joy! Joy because my Saviour overcame my trials for me! Joy because He prayed for me! Joy because He loves me! Joy because

Jesus has given me that glorious hope for the future! **Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you," declared the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."** Wonderful promises! And in **Romans 8:28, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose."** How can we not experience joy when we take hold of these precious promises. We should never lose sight of the fact that Jesus is a wellspring of joy. He does not delight in the misery of human beings, but loves to see them happy! Jonathan Ng, author, once stated, **"If Christ came that we might have joy and the fullness of life, if the Holy Spirit is at work in us to produce joy, then it is certainly a contradiction of God's purpose for us when we are not joyful."**

I ask you, can we choose to be joyful, even if we don't feel like it? Can Jesus give us joy if we pray for it? Joy is a frame of mind. It is possible to experience joy not only in good times but in trying times as well. Joy is good for us both physically and spiritually. It is my prayer that all of us will draw ever nearer to Jesus, to take hold of His life giving power, to take hold of the joy that He gives us, that He wants us to have, to experience God's Joy all through our walk with Christ until He comes to take us home!