

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Our Greatest Joy

(Jerry Fite)

What is your greatest joy? It could stand out above many innocent pleasures in life, such as a birth of a child, a beautiful sunrise, or a tasty dinner. For many, the greatest joy may be sinfully satisfying the lusts of the flesh. Whether we are enjoying the fruits of our labor, as God directs (*Ecclesiastes 2:24*), or indulging in the pleasures of sin, such joy is only temporary (*Hebrews 11:25*).

David speaks of another joy. He acknowledges his joy through prayer to God: “*Thou wilt show me the path of life: in Thy presence is fullness of joy; in Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore*” (*Psalms 16:11*). Complete satisfaction is the fullness, like eating grapes “*to thy fill*” (*Deuteronomy 23:24*). The joy is eternal, or for evermore. The strength to endure ensures joy’s perpetual glory. A joy characterized as complete satisfaction which endures for evermore rivals any joy man can experience.

David derived his joy in following the path of life pre-

scribed by God. Jesus is the exclusive living and true way of God (*John 14:6*). God’s word lights up the general path to follow, providing divine illumination for specific steps along the way (*Psalms 119:105*). Partaking of Jesus’ life giving word, we find eternal sustenance (*John 6:35*). Walking as Jesus walked, we continue to abide in Christ (*1 John 2:6*). Life in God is therefore a specific path to follow, not a nebulous concept to imagine.

In this life we come before God in worship. We can come before His presence with thanksgiving in our hearts and a song on our lips acknowledging Him as our Creator (*Psalms 95:2, 100:2*). But David seems to speak of being in the immediate presence of God following the resurrection from the dead. “*For Thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol; neither wilt Thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption*” (*Psalms 16:10*). Did not God’s Holy Son rise from the dead to sit with God on His throne in heaven (*Revelation 3:21*)? Was not entering heaven

with glory a joy Jesus contemplated (*Hebrews 12:2*)?

Prioritizing being with the Lord in Heaven our greatest joy, we can work back from the ultimate goal of heaven, and put our walk on earth in proper perspective. Like Jesus, we can endure any persecution or personal injustice, for we look at the joy that lies ahead. Like a mother giving birth, we can blot out the temporary pain, as we see the sorrow turning to sustaining joy (*John 16:20-21*).

We can to worship God not only as our Creator, but as our Saviour with “*unspeakable joy*” and “*full of glory*” (*1 Peter 1:8-9*).

Focused on the joy of Heaven, we can overcome the temptation to be lazy and unproductive in the work of the Lord. We can stay focused on what will be said to the Lord’s productive servant: “*Well done...enter thou into the joy of thy Lord*” (*Matthew 25:23*). What a moment! Being in the immediate presence of the Lord for ever has just begun! His prescribed joy was our greatest joy all along!