

## Suffering Yet Joyful



Jim Cymbala March 7, 2020

When we walk in the Spirit, when the Holy Spirit controls us, he produces joy in our lives just as he produces love. Luke described Jesus as “full of joy through the Holy Spirit” (Luke 10:21). All joy comes from the Holy Spirit. We can’t manufacture it, call it up, or make it happen on our own.

Many of us walk around with scars that no one can see, but Jesus says that we don’t have to lose our joy when life is painful or when people act ugly toward us. Joy isn’t promised only to those with the least pain in their lives. Joy is for everyone willing to be controlled by the Spirit. Jesus said, “Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven” (Luke 6:22-23). To suggest that past suffering somehow gives us the right to be joyless is just one way to avoid the truth.

Even Jesus knew what sorrow was, and he knew what it was to weep. Isaiah prophesied that Jesus would be a man of sorrows (Isaiah 53:3), and that prophecy certainly came true. He suffered both on the cross and off the cross as he was mocked, beaten, and humiliated. But that is only half the picture.

In Hebrews we learn that God anointed Jesus with the oil of joy (1:9). Oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, and as we saw in Luke 10:21 above, Jesus was full of joy through the Holy Spirit. So Jesus was a man of sorrows who bore the cross, yet he was anointed with joy. And his joy, like ours, came from the Holy Spirit. To truly understand Jesus, we can’t see him only as a mournful Savior but we must balance that with the truth that he was filled with joy and spent much of his time rejoicing.

The basis of spiritual joy is in our never-changing relationship with Christ. We “rejoice in the Lord” (Philippians 3:1) by remembering and claiming all the benefits he has provided now, and in the hereafter.

Jim Cymbala began the Brooklyn Tabernacle with less than twenty members in a small, rundown building in a difficult part of the city. A native of Brooklyn, he is a longtime friend of both David and Gary Wilkerson.

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