

# **Finding Joy in Life**

## **“True Joy is Found through Surrendering Our Pleasure”**

### **I. QUOTATION**

**“Find out where joy resides, and give it a voice far beyond singing. For to miss the joy is to miss all”.**

**Today’s quote is from the famous Scottish author: Robert Louis Stevenson. The late R L Stevenson wrote several famous books, including Treasure Island and The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. Although Stevenson left his father’s Christian faith when he went away to the university, never to return back to it... I nevertheless think that Stevenson was on to something when he wrote these words: that we “find out where joy resides” and “give it a voice far beyond singing”. For “to miss the joy, is to miss all”. I believe that if Stevenson, who died at the young age of 44 in the South Pacific, had found “The True Joy” that begins with a capital letter J, whose other name ironically also begins with a capital letter J –Jesus, then he would not have missed out on “the true Joy” that is to be found in the “all” of eternity.**

### **II. FINDING JOY IN WORSHIP**

**I made the comment this week to a couple of you that services over the last few weeks felt more like showing up at a morgue rather than a praise and worship service, to the honor and glory of our King, and celebrate Him.**

#### **A. FINDING JOY IN MUSIC**

**In this body – the body of Jesus, or so we claim – you will notice that we begin each week’s worship service with Praise Songs. Well, what does praise look like? If our hearts are full of joy, then shouldn’t we “give it a voice [that is] far beyond singing?” For isn’t it that “to miss the joy” in our worship, is “to miss all”? And shouldn’t we pump up the volume a little bit when we praise YAHUAH [God]? For aren’t we told to “make a joyful shout [noise] to ELOHIYM [God], all the earth!”? To “sing out the honor of His name”? To “make His praise glorious!”? To “say to ELOHIYM [God], ‘How awesome are Your works!’”? And, “through the greatness of Your power, your enemies [our enemies] shall submit themselves to You”? The**

answer dear friends and family is “Yes!” “Yes!”, and “Yes...!” For it is written that “all the earth shall worship You and sing praises to You; they shall sing praises to Your name!” O ELOHIYM [God]. (Psalm 66:1-4)

Yes, “shout joyfully to YAHUAH [the LORD], all the earth; break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises. Sing to YAHUAH [the LORD] with the harp, with the harp and the sound of a psalm, with trumpets and the sound of a horn; shout joyfully before YAHUAH [the LORD], the King. Let the sea roar, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell in it; let the rivers clap their hands [comment]; let the hills be joyful together before YAHUAH [the LORD], for He is coming to judge the earth. With righteousness He shall judge the world, and the peoples with equity” (Psalm 98:4-9).

## **B. FINDING JOY IN ELOHIYM [God]’s HOLINESS**

After we find our music, in singing, in making a joyful “noise”... we then begin to give our true “joy” a voice that is “far beyond singing”. You will notice that after our music and announcements, we begin to “solemnize” the worship service. Now that we have given YAHUAH [God] ... given YAHUSHA [Jesus] ... Their rightful honor and praise, through *our* joyful noise, it is now time to hear Their response to us. By this time in the service, our hearts and minds and mine should open... yes, open vessels to be filled with His RUACH HA’QODESH [Holy Spirit].

Have you ever self-assessed your own attitude by this point in the service? Are you ready to hear His voice? Or, are you still rather wanting to hear your own voice? Are you ready to act upon His thoughts, rather than find pleasure in your own thoughts? Rather than the voice and thoughts of the Most High ELOHIYM [God]? Are you in-sync with The Almighty by this time? Have you considered what the thoughts and attitude of the heavenly beings are when they are near to The Most High YAHUAH [God]? Have you considered their joy in the presence of the Almighty? Before hearing His word, after we sing and pray an invocation, an invitation to The Almighty, to the RUACH HA’ QODESH [Holy Spirit] to join us... we begin to reflect on and try to assimilate the nature and attitude of those that continually dwell in His presence... we sing the song, “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence” as “rank on rank the host of heaven spreads its vanguard [as it makes its way to us], as Light of light descendeth from the realms of endless day... [so] that the powers of hell

may vanish as the darkness clears away.”

We solemnly consider that “at His feet the six-winged seraph, Cherubim, with sleepless eye, veil their faces to His presence as with ceaseless voice they cry: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Lord Most High!”

Dear brothers and sisters in MESSIAH [Christ], there is great joy, a joy “far beyond singing” ... to be in the presence of YAHUAH [The Lord] Most High! Yes! As we draw closer, we are compelled to praise YAHUAH [God] our Father! To praise God YAHUSHA [Jesus] our Savior and brother! And, to praise God the RUACH HA’QODESH [Holy Spirit]!

So I dare say, that if you’re not feeling it, the heavenly joy during the most holy service, then you are not properly prepared!

In His vision of heaven, Isaiah writes “I saw ADONAI [the Lord], high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above Him were seraphim, each with six wings: with two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: ‘Holy, holy, holy is YAHUAH TSEVA’OTH [The LORD Almighty]; the whole earth is full of His glory.’ (Isaiah 6:1-4)

In Ezekiel's vision of heaven, there are cherubim in YAHUAH [God]’s presence who are clearly related to the seraphim in Isaiah's vision. Like the seraphim, the cherubim are the attendants on YAHUAH [God] as He is seated upon a throne high and exalted; they are also winged creatures: with twain they cover their faces, and with twain they cover their feet, and with twain they fly. Like the earthly The Body below, they sing a hymn of adoration: "Holy, holy, holy, is YAHUAH [God] of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory." Do you dare wonder: how can the heavenly principalities and powers find so much joy being eternally in YAHUAH [God]’s presence, and I have so much trouble finding joy in an hour or two? I think: I become bored, and I want to think my own thoughts, and do my own pleasure instead.

In the apocrypha, the cherubim, seraphim, and ophanim (wheels), and all the angels of power constitute the "host of God," the guardians of His throne, the singers of praise ascribing blessedness to "the Lord of Spirits," with the archangel Gabriel at their head. And so we should be, as the

Body of MESSIAH [Christ], learning to be in-sync with the seraphim, cherubim, and the "living creatures" now that constitute the heavenly choir, as we will one day do in the renewed eternal world. With whom, as the elect co-ministers of the Living YAHUAHG [God], we are ready to do the will of our Maker... and with fear and trembling stand.

### III. PREPARING TO ENTER YAHUAH [God]'s PRESENCE

"At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke". "Woe to me!" [Isaiah] cried. 'I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, YAHUAH TSEVA'OTH [The LORD Almighty].'

Then one of the seraphim flew to [him] with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched [his] mouth and said, 'See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.'" (Isaiah 6:5-7)

In the presence of the King, YAHUAH TSEVA'OTH [The LORD Almighty], like Isaiah, we *will* be in a frame of mind where we cry out "Woe is me! I am ruined oh YAHUAH [God]! For when my eyes see you, I am a man, a woman of unclean words, and I live among a people of unclean words!" And now "I cry out to You that you will touch my lips and take away my sin and guilt."

### IV. PREPARING TO RECEIVE THE JOY OF THE WEEKLY SABBATH [LORD'S DAY]

Of the Sabbath, Isaiah quotes YAHUAH [God]'s promise that "you shall delight yourself [find your joy] in Him..." (Isaiah 58:14), "if you turn away *your foot* from doing *your pleasure* on [His] holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of YAHUAH [God], honorable; and shall honor Him, not doing *your own ways*, nor finding *your own pleasure* [joy], nor speaking *your own words*" (Isaiah 58:13). Yes! Attending Church each week... joining together in fellowship with your brothers and sisters, aka your fellow "saints"... is not about you, except that you will definitely find your True Joy in Jesus [YAHUSHA]! It is not about doing your own pleasure! It's not about going your own way! It's not about speaking your own words! It is about Him instead.

Everyone will agree that the quality of an occasion and the success of it is usually determined by the amount of preparation that goes into it.

**Did you know that the Jewish people call the day ahead of the weekly Shabbat [Sabbath] “Preparation Day”? (Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54; John 19:31).**

**We learn from YAHUAH [God]’s original people that all provisions, stores of goods to last over till the next time available to purchase them, needs to be undertaken beforehand. As business activities are prohibited, foresight may be needed to care for events or payments due on the day to avoid such transactions that involve handling money. The concern of our loving Heavenly Father embraced both the male and female in their respective need of rest when He ordained the Sabbath, instructing that there should be no 'work'.**

**The Sabbath, or the “Lord’s Day” keeper, should make every effort not to work on the seventh day by being *kindly* communicative with employers about their wishes and/or looking for an alternative vocation depending on the situation. If a person cannot avoid regular work on the Sabbath [Lord’s Day], they definitely should be praying and seeking for an alternative arrangement of some kind unless one's occupation is in the vital services of care for the sick or maintenance of law and order.**

**As a result of many generations of keeping the Sabbath, the Jewish people set apart the time starting from the evening sacrifice, from about 3 pm on Friday, to "wind down" from the week's affairs and concerns, and prepare their hearts and minds to embrace Shabbat [the Sabbath]. Many believe that it is not possible to have this time free in our lives, but it is of benefit, biblically speaking, to put this principle into practice whenever possible, to do whatever is possible ahead of time and finish any last-minute preparations to be sure that we are ready to have “joy” on this special day, to be on-time for the weekly service, including being on time and prepared for each of the various service components: 1) fellowship time, 2) making a joyful noise time, 3) entering YAHUAH [God]’s holy presence time; and 4) study of His word.**

## **V. PREPARATION DAY – GETTING STARTED**

**One of the best sermons I heard on how to begin a “preparation” mindset for the Lord’s Day [Sabbath] was given some years ago. It was broadcast on Pilgrim Radio. I believe it was given by Pastor Brian Borgman of Grace Community Church in Minden, Nevada. He was saying that in order for us to**

be properly prepared to come into God's presence during the Sunday service, that we should probably start eliminating those things the day before that will distract our minds and hearts from being able to see and receive God's presence. For example, if I remember him correctly, he asked what condition we felt that our minds and hearts would be on Sunday morning in church, if the night before we watched the Terminator movie series, or maybe watching or doing something even more secular. The idea is that if we come to church with our minds polluted by violence, by horror, by blasphemous words, by adultery and fornication, and all things of "the world", how can we be prepared to receive the holy, spiritual things of "heaven"?

As we consider preparing ourselves for the next day's Sabbath or Lord's Day service, we should strive to have an attitude of heart wherein we "delight [i.e. find joy] in the Sabbath". This is important so we will inherit the promised spiritual blessings of this special weekly day (from Isaiah 58:13-14 wherein we are promised that we will find our true joy in Him if we surrender our own pleasure).

As we begin to prepare ourselves, as part of the process, we will need to advise our friends and relatives of our intention to keep the Sabbath [Lord's Day] to avoid them embarrassment or offence if they expect us to continue our previously accepted "worldly" activities on that day.

Maybe as a next step, we can learn from the Jewish preparation cycle as part of our own spiritual preparation, that we take a cleansing bath on Friday [or Saturday as your case may be], to be followed by prayer and reading of The Word, so we can learn to draw closer to YAHUAH [God] before the next special set-aside Day arrives.

Family activities of the night before Sabbath [the Lord's Day] are now centered on the reading and study of the scriptures and singing psalms and hymns. It is a time of celebration, a holy convocation which can include praise and worship, singing and dancing and whatever honors the Most High, about Whom we are celebrating. (Discuss Independent Senator Leber

If possible, we should avoid fasting on Shabbat. It is a time to center on YAHUAH [God], our family, and the time of rest and rejuvenation in Him. It is a time of drawing aside from the things of this world and its activities for livelihood, and focusing on the spiritual aspects of life, to grow and develop relationally with YAHUAH [God] and with one another.

Sabbath is meant to be a celebration of rest. It should be joyful and fun, while totally respectful and thoughtful of the Most High YAHUAH [God], Whom we are worshiping. It should not be centered in the satisfaction of self. Children should know that YAHUAH [God] loves their playfulness, but it should be balanced with a mind toward Him.

## VI. DANGER IN LEGALISM

YAHUSHA [Jesus] set us an example of keeping Shabbat [the Sabbath] according to the spirit of the Law and not the letter. He rebuked the legalistic traditions of His day with all their prohibitions in keeping the Sabbath which made it a burden on the people.

It is not right to make a lawful issue of keeping the day and making the Sabbath a heavy burden on those who do not wish to observe it, who might begin to go through some ritual form of observation to avoid the disapproval of what they perceive to be an angry deity who is demanding something burdensome of them. This type of observance always becomes a form of religion that cannot please YAHUAH [God]. But, it is not legalism to teach that observing the seventh day Sabbath is profitable for all members of His Body. It becomes legalism when we try to force observance in some particular manner, or to observe it without it being a thing which comes from the heart. It is also legalism when we impose and enforce rules about observing the Sabbath. The real issue is balancing a sense of awe and deep respect for YAHUAH [God]'s word, and to be properly prepared to find our **“delight [our joy] in Him...”** (Isaiah 58:14).

For if we get it right now, if as it is written and we learn to keep **“away our foot from doing our pleasure on [His] holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of YAHUAH [God], honorable; and honor Him, not doing our own ways, nor finding our own pleasure [joy], nor speaking our own words”** ... (Isaiah 58:13) ... then we will begin to experience a little heaven on earth in our weekly services, and start becoming prepared for the true ultimate eternal joy in the new heaven and earth...

**“for as the renewed heavens and the renewed earth which I will make shall remain before Me,’ says YAHUAH [the LORD], ‘so shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,’ says YAHUAH [the LORD].”** (Isaiah 66:24-24)

Let us prepare and practice now, to join together as His family and as heirs to eternal joy, so that we will each be able to look toward one another one day... in the renew heaven and renew earth, where we will have learned to live in the perfect joy in the presence YAHUAH [our Lord], through the Grace and Love of our Savior YAHUSHA [Jesus], through the working of the RUACH HA'QODESH [Holy Spirit] within us.

**VII. BENEDICTION (adapted from Ephesians 3:20-21)**

“Now, to Him Whom we submit, now and forevermore, Who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or think... to Him... according to the Power, the RUACH HA'QODESH [Holy Spirit] that works within us... to Him be glory in The Mysterious Body by MESSIAH YAHUSHA [Christ Jesus] to all generations, now... and forevermore.

Amen.

**Credits:**

- 1 “The Sorrows of Fathers and Sons”, John Piper, Desiring God; <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-sorrows-of-fathers-and-sons>
- 2 “Cherubim (1)”, Bible Study Tools; <https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/cherubim-1/>
- 3 “Hebrew Roots/Weekly Sabbath/Preparation”, Wikibooks; [https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Hebrew\\_Roots/Weekly\\_Sabbath/Preparation](https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Hebrew_Roots/Weekly_Sabbath/Preparation)
- 4 “Lieberman’s Sabbath Guide Worth a Look”, John Bicknell, August 17, 2011; <https://www.rollcall.com/2011/08/17/liebermans-sabbath-guide-worth-a-look/>