

## Joy for Mourning

When Jesus died on the cross the disciples and Christ followers were so sad. They had given up all hope because the only hope they had was crucified. It was a blowing crush to them. Death seemed like the end, but it was only the beginning of eternal life, joy and peace for the world.

When hardships come your way, they could cause a release of doubt, fear, hate and anger. Or it could cause a release of love and grace. Do you give up hope when problems come into your life? Which one do you release when it seems that all hope is gone? Is it doubt and fear, hate and anger or love and grace?

In **Isaiah 61:3**, Jesus says **“He will give you beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.”**

The pain in your life could be used by God for His glory. If you are facing a hard time right now, give it to God. And trust that God will bring something beautiful out of your pain. Trust that He will give you joy for your sadness.

## Patience

Everyone has had moments when their patience just run out. You say something that you wish you hadn't. You try to keep a lid on the rising temperature, but like a volcano your frustration blow and you wish you had been more patient.

Well, God doesn't have those moments. He's very patient. **Exodus 34:6 says, And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering [patient], and abounding in goodness and truth.”**

Where would you be if God were not patient? And aren't you glad He is very patient? He puts up with our failings again and again. He sees our mistakes; He knows our weaknesses and our hard heartedness and yet He continues to call us to Him.

We can easily judge God based on our own selves. A lot of people feel that God won't bother with them simply because if it were them, they wouldn't bother with them, either. But that is not God's way. He is God and we can be grateful today that He is very patient with us. If you need patience today, go to God in prayer, right now and He will abundantly give what you have asked. And when He does be patient with others just as God has been patient with you.

## That Marvelous Light

Hundreds of years ago bible believing Christians would risk their lives just to study the word of God. They hid in dark caves with little or no lighting. They would hide when facing suffering and persecution. Some of those caves exist today. It is an inspiring place but a very dark place, and even in the cave if you turn on a light the darkness would disappear.

So, what would cause spiritual darkness to disappear? **John 1:4 says, “In Him was life, and the light was the light of men.”** This verse is referring to Jesus as the light. The inspired writer stated

that Jesus brought light into the world. With Jesus in your situation it brings light and assurance that everything is going to be alright.

On the first day of creation God said, "Let there be light." But sin drove the light virtually from the world. Jesus came to restore that light in the heart of man. Without this light we are in the dark. Jesus had the light that will lead us into the brightness of God's eternal Kingdom.

Today you can tap into this marvelous light. It will restore your soul and make life worth living. Allow God today to take your heart and remove any darkness that may be within. You can do that in prayer right now.

### **Practice**

In our day-to-day lives, consistently practicing what we preach is very important. Jesus is our greatest example of that. He knew the Old Testament scriptures, He led a perfect life, and everything He did brought glory and honor to God. He introduced us to a new heavenly way of living, a way completely opposite of what feels natural. And His way yields supernatural results.

**1 Peter 2:9 - But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of him who had called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.**

Being a *peculiar people*, living according to the Spirit is what makes us different and sets us apart from the world. The Christian lifestyle should stop people in their tracks. It should be the most attractive thing in us that others see. And as we live lives opposite to the world's way of interacting and responding, we can begin to turn the world upside down. Jesus did this when He didn't follow the expected. He turned the natural things that people hold so dear upside down and caused people to see a different point of view. He acted in a completely foreign way to how most in His time did and He did so with such simplicity and kindness that even children could grasp these new concepts. He loved instead of hated. He gave instead of taking. He served instead of expecting to be served. He forgave instead of seeking revenge.

God calls us to live unlike the world and to live as Jesus did. Maybe we can introduce peace instead of blame and doubt to the world. Maybe we can become the solution to the world's decaying problems. Maybe, just maybe, if we live the opposite of how the world is living, like Jesus did, there would be many who would come to know Him through you. Maybe, just maybe, that can be done through you today.

### **The Right Response**

How do you respond to adversity? You don't really know until you come up against it. And according to the bible, adversity is guaranteed. You may not know how you will respond going forward, but you can look back and see how you did in the past. If you fell short of what your walk in Christ should have been, don't be discouraged. You can move forward by keeping your eyes on Jesus while trusting His power by staying in His word and you will be ok.

Jesus said in **John 16:33 - "In the world you will have tribulation."** It may sound cliché to say this, but God promises that you will endure tough times. And He also promised to be with you in those

tough times. Having the right response in tough times is important. But you must include the Savior in all that you do to achieve that goal.

You can trust God today even though things are not going the way you would like them to. Even if your back is against the wall, God is there. Even when you have done all that you can do, God is still there. Today, you can remember that Jesus has overcome the world and that means you can too.

### **Don't Be Provoked**

In 1 Corinthians 13: Paul writes about love. **1 Corinthians 13:4-5 - Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked.**

If most of us were honest we would have to admit that we have fallen a long way short of that. How easily provoked are you? To some it would be someone in traffic. To others it would be those behind the counter in a store. And to most it would be a simple word or look from a spouse or child and they are provoked. God is in the business of changing people, and He puts space between you and your enemy so that you can see Him standing there reaching out His hand to you to help you through what you are facing.

Sometimes we tend to make excuses for others poor behavior, by saying, "O she's a lovely lady, they just have a bit of a temper. That Mr. Smith is a nice man, and he only blows up occasionally. But we can learn from those who fall short of what God offers. We can know and understand that the reason people are provoked and are what they are is because they need Jesus. Only Jesus can change a heart. Only Jesus can change a thought and only Jesus can give you His power, so you won't be easily provoked. Ask Him today for power from the Holy Spirit and it is yours for the asking.

### **Serve God in Truth**

The prophet Samuel was addressing the people. They had demanded a King and Saul was now reigning over them. The people had an utter lack of cooperation with God. Samuel said, "Your wickedness is great." And for all that, he still gave Israel a way out or a way forward. He said in **1 Samuel 12:24 - "Only fear the LORD, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you."**

Serve Him in truth, with all your heart. Those words apply to all of God's children. Even though we may have blown it, again and again, God offers us a way forward. Serve God in truth with all your heart. How is that working out for you today? When you do what Samuel suggested, things work well as you remember all the great things God has done for you. And when things don't work out so great in your life, you are close enough to God that you will trust Him anyway.