



THE VICAR WRITES

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THE JOY OF THE LORD

“For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands” (Isaiah 55:12).

Are you lacking joy in life especially about the things of God? John Piper in his book “Desiring God” says, “The pursuit of joy in God is not optional. It is not an “extra” that a person might grow into after he comes to faith. It is not simply a way to “enhance” your walk with the Lord. Until your heart has hit upon this pursuit, your “faith” cannot please God. It is not saving faith. Saving faith is the confidence that if you sell all you have and forsake all sinful pleasures, the hidden treasure of holy joy will satisfy your deepest desires. Saving faith is the heartfelt conviction not only that Christ is reliable, but also that He is desirable. It is the confidence that He will come through with His promises and that what He promises is more to be desired than all the world.”¹

The word “joy” is used 93 times in the Old Testament. It’s a Hebrew word that means gladness and rejoice. The context of

Isaiah 55 is about the Israelites who were in exile in Babylon. The author used symbols like mountains and the hills – a language common in the book of Isaiah to encourage the people of God on the promises of God in bringing joy to the temple that even nature will rejoice. It is a promise that God’s people will be filled with joy despite the bleak future and challenges they face in life.

Perhaps you too are facing challenges. God’s desire is to fill you with His joy despite what you are going through. To rediscover God’s joy, make effort to spend time in God’s presence. Daily enter His gates with thanksgiving, praising Him for His incredible kindness and mercy, and celebrate how great is the love of God. God loves you more than can you imagine, for He is more than ready to pour out His joy.

“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” (James 1:2-4).

¹ John Piper, Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist.