

Zahakiel: Let's begin with an opening prayer. Father in Heaven, We thank you for this holy Sabbath day, in which we gather together to rejoice before you. May the words you have given to your servants tonight be a savor of life for now and in the days to come, for we ask it in Yahshua's name. Amen.

Adriel777: Amen

Elyna: Amen.

daphna dee: Amen

Barb: Amen

Lucan: Amen

Zahakiel: Happy Sabbath to everyone. A couple days ago, I noticed that Pastor "Chick" posted a question on the CSDA Church forum, regarding the joy of Yah's salvation. I am watching the post, hoping that some continuing discussion will be generated from it, but interestingly, just the day before Yah impressed on me to speak about joy for this Sabbath's study.

This week's topic is entitled "With Thy Might," and it comes from this passage in Ecclesiastes: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." (Ecc 9:10)

So, what is the connection to joy? It has to do with the idea of doing something with our "might." If one is doing physical labor, of course physical effort must be expended. When it comes to sanctification, to spiritual development, the Scriptures say that our labor is coming to a place of rest in Yah's providence, as it is written: "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." (Heb 4:11)

This is almost the exact language used by Yahshua in His great invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Mat 11:28)

Both of these statements are using the idea of "labor" to represent spiritual toil, work of the mind and inner self, neither of which accomplish anything apart from the Savior's Sabbath, which He offers in the verse from Matthew. In a very real sense, it is the Sabbath Rest that gives value to the work (of any kind) that Christians do.

The weekly cessation from labor allows us the opportunity to reflect on how our work has been the occasion of receiving blessings, and bringing them to others. It also provides us with fresh stores of grace to take into the coming week. Thus, it is the "high point" of the weekly cycle, spent before the Throne of our Father before we depart to "occupy" until Yahshua's return. (Luke 19:13)

Because we are Sabbath-keepers, every experience of our lives is seen through the lens of our Father's love toward us. I do not say, "Because we are Christians," or "Because we

obey the Bible." Those things are certainly true, but it is the Sabbath specifically, that aspect of our faith, that defines much of our world view.

This is especially the case with regard to our experiences on the other days of the week. Many are Christians by name, but have never entered into the spirit of rest that the Sabbath provides. Many cease from labor between the sunset hours that border the seventh day, but "there remaineth a rest," a keeping of the Sabbath, that they have never yet known. (Heb 4:9)

Inspiration has revealed to us that if everyone had always been a faithful Sabbath-keeper, the world would never have known a murderer, or thief, or adulterer. The way we think about our time and our experiences, as "ours" to do with as we will, or "our Father's" in which to serve Him between divine appointments...this will obviously alter our entire mind set in every way.

Yahshua invites the world, "Put down the burden you carry. Come and partake of the rest that I offer." Where there is true rest, there must also be peace. Where there is genuine peace, there must also be joy. When we have Yahshua's rest, we carry it with us, so that everything, every action, and every labor, is done with a spirit of peace, and in an atmosphere of joy. Where there is pure joy, let me add this, there is also victory over sin.

James describes temptation and sin in this manner: "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." (James 1:14, 15)

This is a key scripture for understanding the difference between temptation (which everyone experiences) and sin (which the born-again do not commit). But consider how the process of temptation begins... it begins with a lust, a desire for something unlawful. It begins with the sinner recognizing that there is something he wants, but does not currently have. He becomes discontent, and as inspiration has also revealed, this is how sin first entered the universe among the angels – with a loss of contentment... a loss of the spirit of the Sabbath rest.

When someone is joyful in Yahshua, even if he recognizes there may be things he wants and does not have, the joy of what he currently has, the blessings he is currently receiving, and the promises by which he is living, these absolutely prevent those desires from becoming an enticement to sin.

The apostle says, "But godliness with contentment is great gain." (1Tim 6:6) That word "gain" means acquisition, or the means to acquire things. You may recall from Bro. Luke's study last week, the means to obtain things can be elevated to idolatry by the worldly mind, so that the worship of Yah Himself is disregarded.

But among the saints, "godliness with contentment," or joy in the things that are holy, utterly derails the process that James describes. The desire for food, shelter, or some useful object never becomes an occasion for more than a fleeting and immediately

rejected temptation, for we either work toward acquiring our desires, or we wait for Yah to provide it, content that our Father knows we have need of these things. (Luke 12:30)

It is joy in the Father and Son that maintain the spirit in holiness. This is a light that the tempters (both demons and their human agents) cannot abide. A joyful thought banishes the troubling ones that are insinuated upon us by fallen spirits, and by recalling the promises our Father has made to us, as we are counselled in many ways and on many occasions to do, we nourish the mind set on the sacred.

Similarly, if someone comes to us, commissioned (often unknowingly) by Satan to disturb us, the most powerful reaction is the joyful, unmovable testimony of faith. We are instructed to give that testimony, to speak and act as though our faith were invincible...and what does "invincible" mean? It means to be completely unstoppable. It means to have an infinite amount of strength.

Some time ago, I gave a study for which the central theme was as it is written in this verse: "the joy of Yahweh is your strength." (Neh 8:10) Can we, then, give an invincible testimony, a testimony limitless in strength, if it is not also a testimony of the "joy of Yahweh?"

The joy of Yahweh is our strength; this is true in two ways...Our Father's joy in us, in our faith, facilitates the fulfilment of His many promises toward us. By faith, those who were touched by Yahshua were healed. By faith we enter into the Kingdom of Yah's Dear Son. By faith we please the Father, as it says in Hebrews 11:6; He takes joy in us by our faith, and it is His pleasure that accomplishes the works of omnipotence through our fragile frames.

In another sense, as I am describing tonight, because we are joyful in the presence of our Father, no dark thought can long intrude into this spiritual sanctuary of the Mind of Christ. No temptation can survive the moment it is recognized and then immediately rebuked. No sin can be conceivably entertained, for our joy, our contentment, protects us from even that which brought down the mighty angels.

Solomon says, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Whatsoever work we set upon to accomplish, we do it whole-heartedly. This is not merely good advice from an employee's standpoint, for this kind of attitude will certainly impress our human bosses, but it is also a necessary component of that invincible testimony we are called upon to give.

Consider that testimony carefully. It is not merely the words, "I do not sin. I always please my Father in Heaven." That is the testimony of Yahshua, to be sure, which He has given us to bear to the world as witnesses. But it is not a testimony that comes forth only from our mouths. Yes, out of the mouth men speak, (Luke 6:45) and thus give a testimony of their heart's natures, but the heart (in a spiritual sense) also dictates the fruits of our labor in every other sense as well.

The fig tree brings forth figs, and the olive tree brings forth olives. A man who testifies of good things with his mouth, but does not labor with joy, is like a fig tree with the right leaves, but no fruit. The first two aspects of the fruit of the spirit, in fact, are listed as "love" and then "joy" right after. One who has no joy, one who does not do everything with joy, does not have the fruit of the spirit, and cannot give that invincible Adventist testimony.

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," and "the joy of Yahweh is your strength," your might. What is the necessary conclusion, then?

Whatsoever you labor at doing, whatsoever you put your hands to accomplish, do it with the joy of Yahweh. Do it because He is pleased with your faithful service and do it because you are rejoicing in His presence. As you do this, your heart will be at peace, resting always in the Sabbath to which you have been invited by Yahshua. Visible progress and apparent setbacks alike will be seen through the Lens of Blessings, and an invincible testimony will inevitably come forth, as olives naturally come forth from the right kind of tree.

Let me conclude tonight, then, with three of Yah's precious promises to His holy and happy people. I want you to prayerfully consider these words, full of rich imagery and deep love, for us to both receive and share with the world:

"This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it. I will abundantly bless her [my People's] provision. I will satisfy her poor with bread. I will also clothe her priests with salvation, and her saints shall shout aloud for joy." (Psa 132:14-16)

"Behold, Elohim is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid, for Yah, Yahweh, is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." (Isa 12:2, 3)

"Yahweh thy Elohim in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing." (Zeph 3:17)

What great love is revealed in these verses! May the fullness of Yah's joy, the joy of His salvation, be your dwelling place this Sabbath and on into endless ages.

Are there any comments or questions about tonight's study?

Adriel777: Amen.

Zahakiel: If there are none, then I'll ask Bro. Luke to offer a closing prayer.

Elyna: Amen

Lucan: Dear heavenly Father. We know that your Son was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. As we are often called upon to the same, we are blessed and comforted to

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know that your joy is not abated by such experiences. But, we give you thanks that we have your joy given us in its fullness and perfection, through your Spirit. May that Spirit continue to unite and bind us together in your love, joy, peace, and all of its inevitable fruits. In the name of Yahshua we pray, amen.

Zahakiel: Amen.

Barb: Amen

Adriel777: Amen.

Ruthline: Amen

Pastor Chick: Amen

Elyna: Amen.

Barb: Amen

daphna dee: Amen