

Zahakiel: Pastor, please offer an opening prayer.

Pastor Chick: Dear Father in Heaven. We are blessed by gathering with you and your family and we thank you for your presence as we seek a deeper breath of your Spirit. In Yahshua's holy name Amen.

Adriel: Amen

Elyna: Amen.

Daphna: Amen

Lucan: Amen

Barb: Amen

Zahakiel: Amen.

Naraiel: Amen

Gadriel: Amen, Amen

Victoria: Amen

Zahakiel: Happy Sabbath to everyone. Tonight, I wish to speak about the role of joy in the life of the believer. In fact, I will state right up front that being joyful is an actual, direct commandment that our Father has given to His people. As such, tonight's study is called "Thou Shalt Be Joyful."

We have, in previous studies, examined the Ten Commandments from a variety of perspectives. One of the more interesting ones that I can recall was looking at the very first, worded by the Son in the following way, "And thou shalt love Yahweh thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment." (Mark 12:30)

It is interesting that the original wording in Exodus does not include "love;" nevertheless, Yahshua gives us the right understanding of having no other Gods before Him. The only legitimate relationship between a human being and a god is one of reverence, one of worship. Our service to Yahweh, our trust in His promises, these are all elements of what the Savior describes as "love." This is what love looks like to the Creator, and although "good feelings" invariably accompany true devotion, it is a decision of the mind and soul, as well as the heart, that reveal the presence of agape.

Significantly, we have seen that "love" can be commanded. When understood correctly, love is a choice and a commitment. We cannot necessarily make ourselves "feel" something, but we can make the decision to be committed to something, and as we do this with a clear conscience, as we do this with a pure motive, this love becomes all the world thinks of AS love from an emotional perspective, only better, unconditional, and with all those wonderful characteristics that Paul lists out: long-suffering, kind, without envy or pride, trusting, hopeful, and never-failing.

We are commanded to put Yahweh first, to become His worshippers. We cannot do this, however, and therefore in a very real sense, we are instructed to be born-again, to leave behind the carnal "self," and to partake in the divinity of the Father and Son. In describing the new life that results from this, Paul says the following, "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh [...] but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law." (Gal. 5:16, 22, 23)

Joy is a critical element of the fruit of the Spirit. In fact, and I do not believe this to be any coincidence, it is listed second in the list, right after agape itself. If, as Yahshua says, we shall be known to the world and other believers by our love, then I believe it is reasonable to say that we shall be known almost as well because of our joy. It will be our second most-significant defining characteristic.

Brethren, how is it with you? What is the state of your joy? In countries that speak Hebrew, a customary greeting is "Mah shlomcha?" This means, "What is the state of your peace?" You might see in that second word the root for "shalom," or peace. Perhaps we ought to have a greeting amongst our people, "How is your joy?" Peace, by the way, is third in that list that Paul gives... after love, and after joy. I do not want to make too much of the order of elements. They are all important, and one might even consider them to be different manifestations, different faces of the same principle. Nevertheless, joy is a huge part of the mind of Christ, of the character of Yahshua.

To be sure, inspiration has called our Savior a "Man of sorrows;" however, this statement must be evaluated in its proper context. The Son of Man was sent to us to be the Bearer of our sin and suffering. He came to us from infinite glory to be our Sacrifice, and as such, when He was a Man, He was a Man of Sorrow. In Spirit and in Truth, however, the Christ whom we seek to emulate in all ways, is a God of Joy. His Father is the Creator of every good thing. His Spirit is called the Comforter. One of His first acts in the New World will be to wipe away all our tears.

We know that the flesh and the spirit are "contrary the one to the other," (Gal. 5:17) and there is no compromise between them. What the flesh is, the spirit is not, when it comes to characteristics. What, then, are characteristics of the flesh? What have we left behind in our watery, spiritual graves? We have left behind negativity, having a negative outlook on life. We have left behind mutterings and murmurings, complaints and discontent. In Galatians 5, Paul speaks of hatred and wrath, but those are only the "older brothers" of sorrow and dissatisfaction.

Those of you who have read what I have written of the very first moments of the war in Heaven may recall that the conflict began, not with wild accusations thrown back and

forth, not with a sudden, dramatic betrayal. It did not begin with the great and prideful boasts of Lucifer at the height of His rebellion, "...I will be like the Most High." (Isa. 14:14) Lucifer wanted to be Micha-el (Like El), yes... but it began with discontent. It began when he lost his joy. With joy gone, peace could not remain, and without peace, love could not be maintained.

The first created angel fell. We are commanded to stand fast. We are commanded to be at peace. We are commanded to hold our joy close, for our own good, and reject entirely anything that would cause us to develop a mournful, critical spirit.

As I have said, Yahshua was a Man of sorrows while He was on the earth. There is much here that would make a pure soul react with dismay. In this last generation, it is practically a requirement that one who has seen the principles of Heaven in action will "sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst" of the world, and especially in the Churches that claim to be Christ's. When we look around, we are sorrowful. When we see how much control Satan has over humanity, to keep them dazzled, confused, and ignorant, yet so sure of their own understanding and knowledge... we might be tempted to despair how they might be saved at all. And yet, brethren, we were all like that once. We were all once so sure of ourselves, so content with discontent. We thought we were doing just fine with Yah, or at least, that we would deal with "that issue" when the time was right. But we who are now of the Covenant woke up. Through trial, or tribulation, through conviction after hearing a messenger of the Gospel, we came face to face with Yahshua, and He welcomed us into His Kingdom.

Adriel: Amen

Zahakiel: We were as the world now is. How, then, can we give way to the sorrow that tempts us? We know what the miracle looks like. We may be people of sorrow, because we see, and reflect, the suffering of those around us at times, and yet, as the Messiah said, "...Let not your heart be troubled..." (John 14:27) Let our eyes fill with tears. Let our voices tremble with sympathy for the lost and dying. Let us mourn with those who mourn. But do not let our hearts, those innermost parts of ourselves that press close against Yah's own Heart, be troubled. We are to be optimists, always, for while we encounter and endure trials, some of them severe to the mind and the flesh, we have a hope that sustains us, and a faith – an expectation of things not yet seen, but about which we are very sure.

All of us have different trials, and perhaps for some a "feeling" of joy is more difficult to sustain. There are differences even among our small group, of age, and gender, and body chemistry. And yet, these things are all anchored in the "matter" of the world. They may be in conflict with the Spirit, but they cannot overcome the Spirit, for we shall not permit them to do so. It is to be seen as our duty, our positive duty, to identify and account for the effects our bodies are having on us, and to act in such a way that these effects are not

spread to others, potentially tarnishing our testimony before the world. Let the world see us mourning, if there are things to mourn, but then let it see us rise up, with the strength of divinity, and overcome.

Satan will use injury, sickness, the death of loved-ones, to try and shake the saints. He has said to our brethren of ages past, "How could a God whom you serve let this happen to you/your family? Where is His love for you, and His perfect care?" Against such accusations against the character of our Father, we have no "reasoned" defense. We cannot argue with the devil and "win." He has tried and true methods of outmaneuvering the human mind that we are not even permitted to know. But what we have, what we always have, is the example of Yahshua before us.

Do you not think that if He wished, Yahshua could have out-argued Satan in the wilderness, when He was tempted with hunger, and a release from His humble ministry? He could have called upon the wisdom of infinite ages, and left His opponent confounded. But He did not do this. Instead, He called on what any of us may call upon at any time, the very same weapons to which we have access in defense of our joy: the precious promises of the Father.

Adriel: Amen!

Zahakiel: Yahshua was hungry in the wilderness, but He had the Father's love, and therefore everything He needed. He had the testimony of the Spirit, and therefore had no need to "prove" that He was chosen by jumping to His apparent death. He had contentment with the path that He had chosen, and therefore the promises of riches and earthly authority had no claims on His affections.

How is it with us? Do we have the peace, and the joy, that causes us always to overcome the visions placed before our eyes? In Yahshua, we have all things pertaining to both life, and godliness. (2Pet 1:3) In Him, we have everything we need, and if our spiritual eyes are fixed upon Him, there is nothing of either the mind or the flesh that can diminish the fruit of the Spirit in us, not the love, not the peace, and not the joy.

Adriel: Amen!

Zahakiel: I said this already tonight, but it bears repeating. Yahshua was a Man of sorrows, because of what He found on the earth. Nevertheless, He came from glory, and when His time of trial was over He returned to glory. So it is to be with us. We are walking on streets of Gold. In the New Birth, we came forth from glory, and even if the world and its principles cause us to reflect its sorrow for a time, and even if we go through our own Gethsemanes on occasion, we return to glory. We return to joy, naturally, for that is who we are in Christ. This is the Sabbath Rest Principle. When we have the Mind of Christ, when we are living the Sabbath rest, the thoughts that come from us are holy, and just and true...without exception, regardless of circumstances. The thoughts that come TO us may come from the flesh, the world, and from Satan.

I hope you see the distinction there. There are thoughts that we have, some of which come from us, (or rather, from Christ through us) and some of which come to us. The ones that come from us, we know come from the Father and Son, in whom we abide. The ones that come to us must be filtered, carefully, before they are accepted as our own, before they are allowed to influence our character. The process of filtration is actually quite simple. Any thought that would cause us to lose the fruit of the Spirit, (for example, to lose joy) must come either from the world, the flesh, or from

Satan himself. Whichever the case, it must be rebuked, either as being irrelevant in the long term, (in the case of the world) dead, (in the case of the flesh) or defeated (in the case of a demonic origin). It is our positive duty to do this. We must not wait passively for good thoughts to come to us, and pure, and joyful. We must choose to cultivate this mind, this personality, to receive the thoughts from the mind of Christ, and let that be our guiding principle. It is necessary for our salvation. We do not prepare for everlasting joy with sorrow, frustration, or a sense of loss, and these things, if cherished, will not lead even to a satisfying life on the earth. There can be nothing worse than living a miserable life on earth, and then going into the other world without a hope for an everlasting inheritance.

The ideal, and the life to which we are called, is one of contentment now, even "...with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life." (Mark 10:30) This is our experience as Biblical Christians. This is how we understand the Providence of our Father. After all, things will not always go as we anticipate. If our first plans, if our first choices, do not come to pass as we expect, then we know we will find joy in our second options, or our third, for this is what our Father is allowing us to have. It is what He has chosen for us to experience. An optimistic outlook finds blessings in what we encounter, and what we do not.

Adriel: Amen

Zahakiel: Finally, brethren, heed the commands of our Father. He has commanded us to love with agape. He has commanded us to remember the Sabbath day, not only as a physical ordinance, but as a principle of peace. He has commanded us to be joyful, for this is the fruit of the Spirit that reveals by its presence in our hearts that the Savior is there, and that we have overcome the world.

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

Adriel: Amen

Adriel: C

Elyna: Amen

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Adriel: I praise Yah for this study, and for His blessings and to know that we can trust Him in all circumstances good or bad. End

Zahakiel: Anyone else? All right, then I will ask Bro. Luke to close with a prayer.

Lucan: Dear heavenly Father. As we continue through the little time of trouble, we know that there is little to encourage feelings of joy. We are blessed to understand intimately the manners in which Yahshua was a man of sorrows during His ministry. More than this, we are blessed with the sure testimony of your Word to encourage and guide us through perplexity. We know that, by your Word, we shall not fail or be discouraged. We know that, by your Word, our labors are not in vain, but will see the harvest. And we thank you, as we prepare ourselves for the sacred time pointing to that harvest, for our part in its gathering during these final hours of earth's history. In Yahshua's name we pray, amen.

Pastor Chick: Amen.

Zahakiel: Amen.

Elyna: Amen

10-7-2016 Thou Shalt Be Joyful

Barb: Amen

Gadriel: Amen, Amen

Naraiel: Amen

Daphna: The Joy and peace that passeth all understanding because we know Him. Amen

Adriel: Amen

Naraiel: Amen

Kim: Amen