

"Brokenness, Humility, and the Secret to Joy"

"From Self-Righteous Saul to Wretched Paul" - Romans 7:24

Joy -- I've been thinking about "Joy" lately. This joy in Christ that I am experiencing...

Honesty is required to recognize our wretchedness...

Paul was a great example of a man who was honest with himself about his human condition when he said in Romans 7:24, "Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?"

In humility, we should then turn to God with gratitude...

"Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe."

- Hebrews. 12:27-29

This gratitude should then turn to joy because of how blessed we are! Even if our lives are very difficult or we have had to endure much pain. -- Remember, God owes us NOTHING...

"Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things To Him be the glory forever. Amen"

- Romans 11:35-36

"But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all."

- Philippians 2:17

"Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials." - James 1:2

The Secret To Joy — The secret to joy is gratitude that comes from a humble recognition of God's mercy and kindness! -- James 1:17 says, "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow."

As I meditated on these thoughts, I thought of two men from the Bible:

The first was Saul (AKA Paul) -- Acts 9:1-9

The second was Nebuchadnezzar - Daniel 4:29-30

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About This Issue:

In this issue I share with you what I have been learning about "Joy." The joy that I have been experiencing in Christ Jesus.

Truly, "If you have not met me, you have missed little. If you have not met my Savior, you have missed everything."

Also, checkout the feature post by Mikey. He is from Miami Florida and his a good personal friend of mine. I think you will be challenged by his thoughts...

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CCA Featured Post: "Severity of Sin"

By Mikey (05.21.08) -

I wanted to share something that had been on my *mind* throughout the past week: the dangers of compartmentalizing (it sounds so boring as I write it here). But, I got this e-mail from Casting Crowns, which put a strong desire on

my *heart*. It is a music video of the song "Slow Fade." Please, if you have 5 short minutes, watch it! [You can find it on YouTube.com].

This really got me meditating on the severity of sin, and our tendency to view sin so loosely. When we are in the

moment of temptation, we do not properly understand how much God detests sin and how strict the possible ramifications could be. It took a music video like this for me to be reminded of this. I see a man who has the potential to decimate his family because

he wants to live in and seek out sin. Check out this verse: "For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; No evil dwells with You. The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; You hate all who

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The most important question you will ever answer is...

"Where will I spend Eternity?"

To find out the answer to this question, visit: www.jjsierra.com/theanswer



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"If you have not met us, you have missed little. If you have not met our Savior, you have missed everything."

"Brokenness, Humility, and the Secret to Joy"

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From Self-Righteous Saul to Wretched Paul" - Romans 7:24

Paul's example and his secret to a life of Joy was having a heart of gratitude towards God.

Before Paul encountered God, he was killing Christians! How would you feel if God in a blinding light pointed out your evil deeds? Talk about a humbling!

The Conversion of Saul:

"Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do." The men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they

brought him into Damascus." - Acts 9:1-8

After his encounter with God, Paul recognized that he was "wretched" and he EVEN counted himself unworthy to suffer for Christ! That's how broken and humble he was before the Lord as he recognized His amazing mercy. I think Paul was a great example of a man who was HONEST about his human condition as a sinner, but even greater still, he recognized God's mercy that saved him. In turn, he gratefully gave his life to the only one who is worthy of our all, Jesus Christ.

"Pride goes before the fall!" - Daniel 4:29-30

"...Twelve months later he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon. The king reflected and said, 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?' "

In Nebuchadnezzar's case, he failed to recognize God in His life and he became proud in his heart. "Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built..." Wow, may my heart never become so proud. I think that like Nebuchadnezzar, we are all susceptible to become proud.

"Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall." - 1 Corinthians 10:12

My greatest weapon against pride in my life has been GRATITUDE! - I continually count my blessing; this in turn reminds me of God's mercy in my life and that all that is good has come from Him.

"Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow." - James 1:17

Constant humility and brokenness should lead us to a heart of gratitude towards God who gives generously and is merciful.

John 15:11 -- "These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full." - May you be able to experience the joy that only can come from God! - Amen!

"Severity of Sin"

(Continued from Pg. 1)

do iniquity. You destroy those who speak falsehood; The LORD abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit." (Psalms 5:4-6, NASB).

I think, at least in part, that this is because we tend to define good and evil relativistically; we base it on the cultural standards, and not on God's standards defined biblically. We see ourselves as "good," so long as we are better than the secular of this world (whatever that means?). So, as society liberalizes and deteriorates, our morals and values take a plunge as well. "Oh no, we are still good, though, because we are better than the world, and can still be an example." LIES! All

lies!

God's standard is His standard. It is immutable and not contingent upon the morality of this world. We are subject to this standard (it was in the fine print of that little contract we signed to save our soul), whether we like it or not.

Nonetheless, we need to check our view on sin. Every defiance of God's standard is considered sin, and it has stark consequences. *No evil dwells with Him and He hates all those who do iniquity.* Remember, sin is punishable by death, we are exempt because we are gracefully redeemed by Christ. How dare we abuse the grace given us!

To read more of Mikey's posts, visit: CoffeeCupApologetics.com

Here are a few more verse on Joy...

Joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit... "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness." - Galatians 5:22

"and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory." - 1 Peter 1:8

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