

New Year 2011 – Filled with joy

2011 is to be a year of fruitfulness

If we start by focusing on our inner world, it is impossible for our outer world to remain unaffected. Focus today on joy.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience (longsuffering), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness (meekness) and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (Gal 5:22-23)

Of the 9 fruits of the Spirit: 1 has to do with how we manage our inner world – self control; 6 have to do with the positioning of our hearts towards God and towards other people – love, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness (meekness); 2 have to do purely and simply with the state and the well-being of our inner world – joy, peace.

Jesus was (and is) full of joy!

You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy. (Heb 1:9)

The message of the angels at Jesus' birth was of good news and great joy to all people.

Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:10-11)

Jesus was the perfect reflection of the Father – and in His presence there is fullness of joy.

He who has seen Me has seen the Father; (John 14:9)

In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Ps 16:11)

... looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Heb 12:2)

Jesus is now in a position of joyful authority – seated at the Father's right hand.

And He wants you to be filled with HIS joy!

These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. (John 15:11)

In his great prayer for his disciples Jesus prayed that they would have **“the full measure of my joy within them”** (Jn 17:13). One of the primary aims of Jesus' ministry was to bring people into an experience of joy.

*“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them **beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the***

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garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified." (Isa 61:1-3)

Beauty for ashes – God’s comfort for all who mourn – releases his beauty into our lives – that’s why Jesus said *“Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted.”*

The oil of joy for mourning – we’re not to remain in a position of mourning - we have received the oil of the Holy Spirit to release joy into our hearts and lives. In the context of persecution we read:

... and the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 13:52)

The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness – lighten up! – speak to yourself – rejoice in the Lord. David knew how to stir up his spirit in joyful praise.

Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance. (Ps 42:5)

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thess 5:16-18)

You can be filled with joy even in the middle of difficulties and trials – but it’s a choice you have to make!

Consider *it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. (James 1:2-4)*

Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. (1 Peter 4:12-13)

The word “consider” is a strong word meaning to count, to reckon, or to determine with authority... so stir up joy – be strong – *“for the joy of the Lord is your strength” (Neh 8:10)*

The kingdom of God is released through joy

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, (Rom 14:17)

We are to know the joy of answered prayer

In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete. (John 16:23-24)

So take your medicine ...

A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones. (Prov 17:22)

... and don't let Satan rob you of your joy!

“no-one will take away your joy.” (John 16:22)