

Empire Church of the Brethren

## *Sunday Service Sermons*

**17 September 2023**

The Joy of the Lord

Is: Your Strength, yes? We sing it so we must believe it. It is a true statement!

Text: "For by grace you have been saved through faith ; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God, not because of works, lest any man should boast." *Eph. 2:8-9.*

As Paul wrote his letter to the Ephesians, he was rejoicing over the blessings of God that had come upon them as a result of their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.

*Ephesians, the second chapter*, points out some of the new relationships that make indescribable joy possible in the heart of each one who receives Jesus Christ as Savior, Lord, Teacher, and friend.

Through Jesus Christ we are made alive with a new kind of life. *Eph. 2:1, 4-6.*

A spiritual resurrection takes place when we receive Jesus Christ as Savior.

Up to this moment, we are in spiritual death and darkness because of sin.

We do not have the divine life of God.

Physical nonbelievers are walking, living, spiritual corpses in need of a spiritual life implant.

This new life comes in the miracle of the new birth when we respond to Jesus The Christ by faith.

To be alive from the dead is a joyous experience for those who know Jesus Christ.

We are brought near to God and to others through the blood of Jesus Christ. *Eph. 2:11-13*

Man in his natural state is alienated from God.

Alienation from God results in alienation from other human beings.

Sin not only separates a man from his better self and from his higher nature, but it also serves to separate him from his fellow humans.

Paul spoke of Gentiles who were separated from Christ as being "alienated from the commonwealth of Israel . . . and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world."

Man is a lonely creature unless he has established a relationship that makes fellowship possible with other human beings.

Paul was rejoicing over the fact that now those "who once were far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ".

Through Jesus Christ we experience the peace of God and peace with God. *Eph. 2:14-15*

In repentance we yield to the rule and the will of the Creator God.

By faith we put our trust in him and signify that we are no longer rebels.

Following this response of faith, we experience the peace of God and peace with others.

We are no longer the enemies of God.

The child of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, can know an inward peace that passes all human understanding.

Through Jesus Christ we now have access into the presence of God by the Holy Spirit. *Eph. 2:18*

Until we come to know Jesus Christ as Savior, we are

Outsiders and do not feel close to God.

We do not have access to the throne room of the Eternal, where it is possible to address God as "our Father."

Paul rejoiced in this new relationship that he and all of us have through faith in Jesus Christ.

This is one of the supreme joys of being a follower of Jesus Christ.

Through Jesus Christ we become citizens of the kingdom of God. *Eph. 2:19*

The privilege of citizenship in a great country is not properly appreciated by those who live there.

The same can be said concerning those who are no longer strangers and sojourners but are now fellow citizens with the saints in the kingdom of our dear Lord and Savior.

Paul spoke of this transfer of citizenship in his letter to the Colossians.

He praised God and said, "He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." *Col. 1:14*

The joy of citizenship is one of the joys that comes as a result of knowing Jesus Christ.

Through Jesus Christ we become members of the family of God. *Eph. 2:19*

Being a creature made in the image and likeness of God is marvelous.

Yet it is even more spectacular to experience a spiritual birth that makes us the sons and daughters of God and brothers and sisters to each other through Jesus Christ.

Membership in God's family is a joyous experience around the world.

You can meet total strangers who have something intensely wonderful in common with you.

The joy of being a member of God's family comes to us through faith in Jesus Christ.

Through Jesus Christ we become part of the living temple of God. *Eph. 2:22*

Salvation is something more than a legal relationship with God.

This dynamic experience in which God himself comes to dwell within the heart of each believer individually and in all believers collectively.

We become a living example in which God dwells.

We become the meeting place where others can come to know God and where God comes to minister to a needy world.

Rich beyond words is the person who comes to know Jesus Christ as Savior.

Joyous indeed is this privilege.

The joy that springs up within us is due to being his person and having him working in and through us.

Inspiring us to new heights and bringing in others to join us in our life with the living God.

Each week we pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Well and good, but what does this really mean?

It is a petition for the present rule of God in each of our hearts.

It admits to God that we know how important he is and that we want him to be in control of our lives.

We want his light to rule our darkness.

To do so we must relinquish control over to God.

We are asking that God be the center of our lives, now and always.

Even though we have acknowledged Jesus as Lord of our lives, we find ourselves struggling with the application of his lordship.

These words acknowledge this struggle and request God to rule more completely in our lives.

It is submitting to God's rule in our lives.

We are asking God to rule in our hearts, in our business, in our home and all that we do.

It takes authority away from Satan and gives complete authority in our lives to God, and God alone.

It is a prayer for the King to come and bind Satan and put him in the bottomless pit, to dethrone all enemies of God and to make them his footstool, and to close down every power that is opposed to God.

This kingdom's coming will also involve the enthronement of the Lord Jesus Christ and his people.

Jesus will rule over the earth for he is the Prince of Peace.

If we could begin to comprehend what this means, we would make it our earnest appeal each day.

We would pray without ceasing for this to become a reality.

The coming of the kingdom is the hope of the whole creation.

The coming kingdom will mean the removal of the curse and the restoration of the earth.

This coming kingdom is the hope of all people and nations.

Only when it comes will all people live in peace.

And it will end all trials, illness, death and evil that plagues each person on earth.

Are you really ready for the kingdom of God to come to earth?

It will be a glorious day for sure.

The day of the Lord's coming!

May God give us a heart for the coming of the King and His Kingdom ruling on earth as it does in Heaven.