# The Joy of the Holy Ghost

**How Do You Get Christian People Happy?**

**Romans 15:13**

Sep 3, 2017 AM

Pastor Craig Ledbetter

Bible Baptist Church, Ballincollig, Cork, Ireland

[www.biblebc.com](http://www.biblebc.com)

1. **Introduction (Romans 15:13)**
	1. **What a statement (Romans 15:13)!**
		1. *Now the God of hope* – THAT’S the God I know!
		2. *Fill you with ALL JOY!*
		3. *And peace* – that’s a lot of joy and peace!
		4. *In just believing*
		5. *That ye may abound in hope*
		6. *Through* (GET THIS) *the power of the Holy Ghost*.
		7. What the Holy Ghost offers is not just joy, but ALL joy!
	2. **Joy is THE most elusive feeling of the human heart**
		1. Most of us settle for a desire just to be HAPPY for a while
		2. But expect to be disappointed most of the time!
		3. Happiness is not a bad thing to seek and to have – nothing wrong with being happy
		4. We usually wish people “all the happiness”
		5. But “happiness” CANNOT last, and will not enable you to endure life
		6. Disappointments, frustrations, depressions – all spring out of a lack of real, solid, substantial JOY
	3. **Joy is a substantial work of God’s grace in your heart.**
		1. Substantial means *seriously strong* – like a sailor’s rope compared to a sewing thread
		2. Joy is higher, better, longer lasting than passing happiness
		3. Which is why it is harder to find
		4. By the way, the kind of Joy I am talking about is found only in a Person – and it is not who you normally think it is
	4. **Happiness versus Joy**
		1. Happiness is a brief feeling of pleasure or excitement – and I mean brief
		2. JOY is a prolonged sense of satisfied contentment - repeat
		3. Happiness needs people, the economy, health, and the weather to all be right
		4. Joy only needs the presence of God
		5. You see, happiness depends on so many things going right before it is active
		6. But Joy needs nothing to go right in the present because it only has a view towards the future, which is solidly in God’s hand!
	5. **How is it that Christians don’t know what joy feels like? How can it be that so many don’t have joy, and don’t know how to express joy?**
		1. All the cultures of the world crave more than “a bit of fun and happiness” – they crave joy!
			1. 391,603 medical card holders in Ireland were prescribed anti-depressants in 2016 – that tells you just how desperate people are in their search for joy
			2. 13% of all Americans (men, women and children) are on antidepressants – that’s 43 million people!!!
			3. 20,000 heroin users here in Ireland (mostly young men) testify to a nation empty of joy
			4. There is an almost constant search by people for entertainment, a reason to laugh or smile
		2. Psychologists, social workers, counsellors, politicians, and priests, all mean well, trying to help people find happiness!
		3. But that is not what a heroin addict needs. It’s not what depressed, or stressed out people need
		4. Our world needs JOY!
		5. And surprisingly, there is more than enough joy available, in Christ!
			1. You see, I think Christians lack joy because we have no idea what has been made available in abundance to us as believers
			2. None of our Christian homes or hearts should be lacking in the joy that has been made available to us by Christ!
	6. **First century Christianity was marked by JOY**
		1. They rejoiced when they got SAVED (1Thes 1:6) – weren’t just happy for a bit, and then depressed for the rest of their lives!
		2. The first century Christians rejoiced when they were PERSECUTED (Act 5:41)
		3. They were GLAD TO JUST BE TOGETHER (Acts 2:46) as believers! Nothing fancy! But their get-togethers were amazing!
		4. And they LOVED GIVING out of their deep poverty (2Cor 8:1,2)
	7. **What could have enabled such a supernatural way of life?**
		1. Joy!
		2. More specifically, *The Joy of the Holy Ghost!*
	8. **Turn to 2Cor 8:1**
	9. **Do you remember what I said first? That, JOY is a substantial work of God’s grace in your heart?**
	10. **Let’s follow along with Paul in this brief part of Scripture as he explores where joy is found, what it looks like, and how to have it dominate your life!**
2. **Background (2Corinthians 8)**
	1. **Joy is for Believers who Bond Together as a Church (8:1)**
		1. Real ***Holy Ghost Joy*** is
			1. Not available to individual Christians too proud to work alongside other Christians…
			2. Not available to simple spectators in the gallery who just sit and watch
			3. It is NOT available to people who just pass through – and stay as far back as possible
		2. But Real Holy Ghost Joy is
			1. For those who invest their time and hearts in other people who name the name of Christ
			2. It is for those who gladly join a church full of imperfect people!
			3. When we become like a human body – each person doing their part ministering to the others in the body
		3. THAT is where joy will always be found!
		4. Not in GETTING, but in serving one another!
		5. Don’t disregard all that God has for us when we glue ourselves together as a Church. Your TV, your buddies, your tiredness, hobbies won’t give you joy like assembling together will
	2. **Joy is usually BEST Experienced in the Hard Times**
		1. In the midst of great trials and afflictions and deep poverty…
		2. THAT’S where we find Holy Ghost JOY!
		3. It was in the midst of such awful circumstances these Macedonian Christians had JOY – and it was ABUNDANT joy (James 1:2; 1Peter 1:6-8)
			1. Smiles and Rejoices in troubles and trials
			2. Rests and Rejoices in times of heaviness
			3. Rejoices when facing battles and enemies – see young David excited to fight Goliath
		4. That is the PURPOSE of joy!
		5. To hold you up, and push you forward when everything else is crushing you down, or holding you back!
		6. Review
			1. You will experience joy when you are committed to other believers in a church
			2. And you will be surprised to *discover joy* as a believer RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE of the worst of situations
	3. **Joy Affects Us in Awesome Ways (8:2-9)**
		1. It turns poor Christians into GREAT givers
			1. It doesn’t make sense!
			2. These poverty-stricken Macedonian Christians wanted to be a blessing to others – willing/yearning to give (8:3)
			3. Joyful people abound in
				1. Faith – they just easily believe God, and trust in Him with all their heart
				2. Utterance (find it easy to talk about the Lord to everybody)
				3. Knowledge (They easily GROW in their study of the Bible – never bored)
				4. In all diligence (grew in their efforts to live for the Lord)
				5. In their love to other Christians (find it easy to love each other)
				6. And they sought to abound in their giving when the need arose (even though they had absolutely NOTHING to give… their JOY enabled them to find something to give for those in need)!
				7. They proved their love for God and Christians by their personal sacrifices – with no complaints
			4. And their joy to do all that resulted in even greater joy!!!
		2. Turns selfish Christians into great servants
			1. They gave not just their money, but themselves (cf Rom 12:1,2)
			2. Joyful people LOVE serving others
			3. Bitter people complain about not being served well!
		3. Turns defeated Christians into singers and grateful men and women – see Paul and Silas SINGING and PRAISING God even though in shackles and in a dark prison!
		4. The Joy of the Holy Ghost does that!
		5. All in response to the example of the Lord Jesus (8:9) – who was FILLED with the Holy Ghost without measure!
			1. Think about it
			2. Jesus did spend every day telling jokes, and laughing and making people happy
			3. But He was full of JOY, and gave joy everywhere He went
			4. Even at the cross - “for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross” WOW!
	4. Let’s keep going…
3. **Message – What More Is There to Joy?**
	1. **Such Joy is designed *For* the HEART**
		1. Joy does not come naturally FROM the heart, but is designed by God FOR the human heart!
		2. It is not for the mind – it cannot be analysed, explained, memorised
		3. But to endure life for very long, it MUST exist in the heart!
		4. 1Chron 16:10  Glory ye in his holy name: **let the heart** of them rejoice that seek the LORD.
		5. Psa 13:5  But I have trusted in thy mercy; **my heart shall rejoice** in thy salvation.
		6. Psa 19:8  The statutes of the LORD are right, **rejoicing the heart**: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.
		7. Psa 28:7  The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: **therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth**; and with my song will I praise him.
		8. Psa 33:21  For **our heart shall rejoice in him**, because we have trusted in his holy name.
		9. Psa 105:3  Glory ye in his holy name: **let the heart of them rejoice** that seek the LORD.
		10. Psa 119:111  Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for **they are the rejoicing of my heart**.
		11. Zep 3:14  Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and **rejoice with all the heart**, O daughter of Jerusalem.
	2. **A Christian’s Joy does NOT mean there is never any Sorrow**
		1. There are many times to weep, get agitated, and to crumble under the weights of life
			1. At losses, disasters, troubles, pains, defeats
			2. Christians are not immune to sad feelings!
		2. Those times WILL come – but so also will JOY (John 16:20; Ps 30:5,11)
		3. So, It is okay to have sorrow – even manifold heaviness at times (1Pet 1:6)
		4. But behind the weight and the dark clouds of this world, is the Joy of Christ (John 15:11; 17:13), waiting to be drawn upon by every believer!
		5. So don’t be so hard on yourself when you can’t laugh sometimes!
	3. **A Christian’s Joy Centres around the PERSON of the Holy Ghost (1Thes 1:6)**
		1. THIS IS THE MESSAGE!
		2. ***Quote*** “Joy is not necessarily the absence of suffering, it is the presence of God.” Sam Storms
		3. ***The source for the most joy in the believer is the Quiet Person of the Trinity!***
			1. Holy Ghost His title – His name. A *ghost* is the **presence** of someone not there!
			2. Holy Spirit refers to His work – spiritual instead of physical
			3. So, When it refers to Him as the Holy Ghost, it is referring to His Person/His presence
		4. ***Joy is the work of God the Holy Spirit in us***
			1. Psalm 4:7 *Thou hast put gladness in my heart..*.
			2. He plants joy in you, and nurtures it until it bears fruit (Gal 5:22)
			3. As long as we don’t interfere with His farming methods! Can you imagine if the seed, and the tender plant constantly fought the farmer’s efforts to nurture that stalk to maturity?
			4. He has plenty joy to give (Rom 15:13)!
		5. ***Just His very presence in your life gives joy, comfort, rest, peace, strength***
			1. **Folks, Real Joy is just HAVING the presence of the Holy Ghost of God in us!**
				1. Ps 9:1,2 I will praise thee, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works.  **I will be glad and rejoice in thee**: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High.
				2. Act 13:52 And **the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost**.
				They go together!
				3. Rom 14:17 For **the kingdom of God is** not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and **joy in the Holy Ghost**.
				The kingdom of God is not just joyful, but joy found IN the Holy Ghost!
				4. Rom 15:13 Now the God of hope **fill you with all joy** and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, **through the power of the Holy Ghost**.
				ALL JOY??? How? Through the POWER of WHOM??? The Holy Ghost!
				5. 1Th 1:6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, **having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost**:
				These believers were in troublesome times, yet when they believed, they instantly had the JOY “OF” the Holy Ghost in them!
				6. Psa 16:11 Thou wilt shew me the path of life: **in thy presence is fulness of joy**; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.
				No wonder I am so burdened for us all to spend loads of time in God’s presence in prayer, and listening to Him speak in His word! Because it is THERE we access JOY!
			2. It is great to get answers to prayers – AMEN?
				1. Someone in a car accident… all of us go to prayer, and they recover! AMEN
				2. Someone is battling a health problem, and we all go to prayer, and they recover
				3. A wayward child has gone astray, and so God’s people come together and pray them back home! Amen!
			3. But having **the ANSWERER** to our prayers is far better!
			4. That’s why we are commanded to be FILLED with HIM (Eph 5:18)
				1. You got the presence of the Holy Ghost when you got saved – sealed Himself inside every believer! Eph 1:13 says, "*after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise*"
				2. But you probably have not been FILLED with Him! (Eph 5:18)
			5. Filled with the Holy Ghost - What does that mean?
				1. Filled with the PERSON of the Holy Ghost, not the gifts, or the power (which is what we usually only want), but full of HIM (Acts 2:4; 4:31)
				2. Filled means no room for sinful thoughts, lustful hearts, and wicked desires!
				3. Seek Him to fill your thoughts, your heart, your desires with just HIM (Ps 37:4). Get your desires from HIM!
				4. Controlled by the Holy Spirit – listening ONLY to HIM (imagine a car full of back-seat drivers)
				5. Barnabas was a man full of the Holy Ghost (Act 11:24) and he was such an encourager
			6. So, One of the best evidences of His presence in your life will be JOY!
			7. And one of the proofs that we are NOT filled with the Spirit is our LACK of joy!
	4. **God’s Joy Needs Some Work Done in our Hearts FIRST – like plowing the soil**
		1. **Repentance** (Ps 45:7; 51:8,12)
			1. Guess what is the ONLY thing that hinders Joy? Hidden Sin
			2. So… a believer needs to constantly evaluate their sin tolerance and repent of it
		2. **Allow Replacements** (Isa 61:3,10) – when I *LET* God exchange my old life for His new one!
		3. **Seek Personal Revival** (Ps 85:6) Bring life back to me. Revival MUST come first before a believer experiences JOY! “*Wilt thou not revive us again: THAT thy people may rejoice in thee?*”
		4. **My own Rigorous work** (Psalm 126:5,6; Gal 6:4). Joy comes AFTER the tears and hard labours (Psalm 126:5).
			1. Working a job, being busy, paying bills
			2. Lazy people will NEVER experience real joy!
			3. That’s why joyful people are Soul-winners
			4. That’s why joyful people are Praying people
			5. That’s why joyful people are Study their Bible, page by page, day after day
			6. Because hard work allows for a soft heart for God to place JOY in!
		5. **Resilient Belief** / Strong, unwavering belief (1Peter 1:8) in the words of this Book (1John 1:4)
		6. **A Desire** for JOY more than excitement, than popularity, than success, than reward, than for happiness
		7. That’s when something marvellous happens in your heart. **That’s when REAL Joy supernaturally springs up in you**
			1. In your words, in your thoughts, on your face, and in your step
			2. Because it has been planted there by the Holy Spirit
			3. Because it has been wanted, yearned for by the believer
			4. Because it has been accepted in the place of the search for happiness and pleasures
	5. **WARNING!**
		1. To pursue joy, results in losing it – DON’T work to find joy…
		2. To pursue the GIVER of joy, results in its fullness – yearn for the presence of God!
4. **Probing Questions and Conclusion**
	1. **What does *Happiness* NEED to be Active in Your Life?**
		1. At least SOMETHING to be going right
		2. At least SOMEONE loving you and putting up with you and giving to you
		3. Tell me… does that happen very often? Hmmmmm?
	2. **What does *JOY* need to be Active in Your Life?**
		1. Just the unhindered presence of the Holy Ghost of God
	3. **What are Tell-Tale Signs of JOY in the Christian’s Heart?**
		1. Not that there won’t be tears, or sadness, or sorrows, or disappointments
		2. An ability to ignore those things and instead focus on others - A buzz out of serving others
		3. A love for sacrificially giving to the needs of others
		4. Excitement at being saved, and seeing others get saved
		5. Praising God when persecution turns up the heat
		6. Enjoying just being with other believers at church and in each other’s homes
		7. Unaffected by just how burdensome things are in the world around them
		8. An expectation that things WILL be just fine – because you are trusting GOD and not circumstances
		9. Looking forward to heaven most of all!
	4. **What Kind of Soil does JOY Grow Best in?**
		1. **Repentance** – remember, the biggest hindrance to joy is hidden sin!
		2. **Allows Replacements** – when I let God exchange my old life for His new one!
		3. **Seek personal Revival** - Revival MUST come first before a believer experiences JOY!
		4. **Do Rigorous Work** - Joy comes AFTER the tears and hard labours
		5. **Have Resilient Belief** / Strong, unwavering belief in the words of this Book
		6. **Desire JOY** more than excitement, than popularity, than success, than reward, than for happiness
	5. **Do you have that kind of heart?**