

Jesus and the Fruit of the Spirit (2)

Ponder: Jesus as a joyful person

Scripture: “. . . 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” (Hebrews 12:2, NKJV).

If you had but one word to describe Jesus, what would it be? Many would choose “loving.” And it would be an excellent choice! But how many do you suppose would select “joyful”?

From a worldly perspective, not much in the earthly life of Jesus would produce joy. Even as a small child, people were trying to kill Him! And His ministry was characterized by strong opposition, both verbal and physical (sometimes violent)! Isaiah prophesied that Messiah would be “a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief” (53:3). And yes, in Gethsemane Jesus told His disciples, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful even to death” (Matthew 26:38).

Nevertheless, Jesus was joyful! Just as an apple tree produces apples by nature, so Jesus produced the fruit of the Spirit by nature, including joy (Galatians 5:22). He knew that the Father loved Him, and that He had kept the Father’s commands. This brought Him joy, which He wanted to share to the fullest with His disciples (John 5:9-11).

The knowledge that His sacrificial death would make salvation available to multitudes brought Him joy, as seen in today’s Scripture from Hebrews 12:2. Jesus is that Good Shepherd who goes to the mountains to seek the one lost sheep. “And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’” (Luke 15:6, 5).

Does your obedience to the Heavenly Father bring you joy? When the lost come to salvation in Christ, and when those who have strayed repent and return, do you rejoice? As we learn to think like Jesus and have His spirit, it will be perfectly natural for us to be joyful, even in the midst of difficult circumstances.

Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, rejoice! (Philippians 4:4)

Song: “Rejoice In the Lord Always”

Prayer: Gracious Father, we praise You for our joyful Savior. We marvel that He would endure that awful ordeal at Calvary because the prospect of saving us brought Him joy. Help us never to doubt His love for us, and help us to love Him and obey His will. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

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