**Faith and Joy**

July 7, 2022Martha RodmanEdit"Faith and Joy"

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. Romans 15:13*

Sometimes I forget about joy. I get focused on the routines of life, my to do lists, the concerns for my family and others and the thought of joy gets lost in the muddle. I am so grateful when the Holy Spirit reminds me that joy is available to me through the power of the Holy Spirit. We don’t have to limp along with an near empty joy level, but we can be filled with His joy. What a difference it makes!

Biblical joy is available to every believer. Jesus gives us clear instruction and direction in John 15:9-11*I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father’s commandments and remain in his love. I have told you these things so you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow.* His promise to us, if we remain in his love and obey his commandments we will be filled with his joy. There is something that happens when we are walking with Him, doing our assignment, keeping His commandments. Peace happens, and joy comes.

Trusting obedience is crucial for us to receive his joy. Often, like children we question the wisdom of the instruction, or we flat out don’t want to do it. If it doesn’t make sense to our natural mind, or it interferes with our fleshly wants, we justify disobedience. What happens is we begin to lose our joy. Submitting to his ways and his will opens up our understanding of his perspective and purpose. Even when things are difficult, his presence (including his joy!) comes into our lives.

This last week, I followed a simple Holy Spirit request. I deleted a game from my phone that I had been playing for a long time. It was a hidden adventure game, where I would find hidden objects. There was a story line, that I really ignored. It took a disturbing turn and I felt the Holy Spirit said, “No, more.” So I uninstalled it. It was a simple request. I do miss it. I haven’t replaced it, so it is evident how much time I wasted with it. But the blessing of obeying the Holy Spirits request was immediate. Peace and joy was multiplied in my heart way bigger than the small obedience.

We find some great advice and instruction in Paul’s letter to the Romans in Chapter 12:9-13. *Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.* In the middle of this passage we find the phrase: *be joyful in hop*e. When joy is present, life is easier. It truly is the strength giver we need to walk through hard places. I encourage you to take a joy assessment. Are you walking in his joy? If not, take the time to refresh yourselves in his presence. Ask him to show you any areas you need to make changes. Do not be afraid of his commandments to you. He truly cares and they are for our good. Remember *Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.* Hebrews 12: 1-2 ESV.

There are many who are enduring this race. Let’s not be drop outs, but let us be strengthened by his joy, remain in his love and experience his peace. Weariness is real, but so is the joy of the Lord, let’s access it!

*Father, I ask you to fill us with your joy today. I thank you that along with that joy comes your strength in every area where we may feel weak and weary. Help us run the race you have set before us, in Jesus Name, amen.*