

**A CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP
PSALMS OF ASCENT
JOURNEY INTO JOY - JOY**

Text: Psalm 126

Key Word: Joy

Key Thought: Joy Can Link the past with the Future

Joy is one of the main characteristics of a Christian's pilgrimage. It is one of the authentic signs that we are on the right road in our travel through salvation. Paul lists it as the second in the nine fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). **Joy is not so much a requirement of Christian discipleship as much as it is a consequence. Joy is the by-product of the abundant life that God overflows into our hearts.** Joy cannot be commanded, purchased or arranged. There are many things that happen in our Christian pilgrimage that offer us something to laugh about.

****** In Phyllis McGinley's book titled "*Saint-Watching*" she tells a humorous story.

"Martin Luther's close friend was Philipp Melanchthon, author of the Augsburg Confession. Melanchthon was a cool man where Luther was fervid, a scholar opposed to a doer, and he continued to live like a monk even after he had joined the German reformation . . .

*One day Luther lost patience with Melanchthon's virtuous reserve. "For heaven's sake," he roared, "why don't you go out and sin a little? God deserves to have something to forgive you for!"***

This is a Psalm of conversion - conversion from captivity. The word "***turned***" or "***brought back***" is the keynote of this Psalm. **When captivity is great so is the deliverance.** Their joy was so full that could hardly contain themselves. They sought out an avenue to proclaim their abundant joy.

This Psalm makes it very clear that this was a work of God.

"When the LORD brought back the captives to Zion

. . .

"The LORD has done great things for them . . .

"The LORD has done great things for us . . ."

Psalm 126:1,2,3

Joy always follows a history. **Joy not only builds upon the past it also borrows from the Future. Several Keys Thoughts Are Displayed in this Psalm That Link the past with the Future.**

I. A SOJOURNING

II. A SORROWING

III. A SOWING

Which Brings Forth . . .

I. A RETURNING

II. A REJOICING

III. A REAPING

I. A SOJOURNING

Most of the children of Israel's sojourning were due to their disobedience. God had planned that they settle in the land of promise and raise their families in peace. They chose to disregard the laws and statues set before them. They were troubled by the tribes that they did not remove from the land.

Yet a greater danger rose upon the horizon. The Assyrian army was gaining power. The kings of Israel became more and more wicked. Ahaz was followed by Hoshea. The Bible gives us a history lesson so we do not follow in their footsteps.

"All this took place because the Israelites had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of Egypt from under the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. They worshipped other gods.

8. and followed the practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before them, as well as the practices that the kings of Israel had introduced.

9. The Israelites secretly did things against the LORD their God that were not right. From watchtower to fortified city they built themselves high places in all their towns . . .

18. So the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them from his presence. Only the tribe of Judah was left,

19. and even Judah did not keep the commands of the LORD their God. They followed the practices Israel had introduced."

II Kings 17:7-9,18,19

II. A SORROWING

There is always a cause and effect in God's kingdom. Paul called it the "**law of sowing and reaping (Galatians 6:7-10).**" A journey which is brought about by sin always brings sorrow. Tears are an expression of that godly sorrow.

"He who goes out weeping . . ."

Psalm 126:6

"Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

11. See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing what concern, what readiness to see justice done."

II Corinthians 7:10,11

III. A SOWING

Tears can soften the pathway of our return to God. All our suffering, pain, emptiness, and disappointment is seed to be sown. **God can use it to bring a crop of joyfulness.** **Only God can do such a miracle.** We reap what we sow. If we sow tears - we reap tears. If we sow discord - we reap discord. If we are sowing anger - we produce anger.

But God is a God of miracles. **He can take our seeds of sorrow and turn them into joy.** **He can take our lost hope and offer us an assurance that all will go well.** **He can turn disasters into situations that offer comfort to others.**

We do not usually consider tears and sorrow as good seeds. But this psalm tells us that it is.

"carrying good seed to sow . . ."

Psalm 126:6b

Look at what this GOOD SEED can bring forth.

I. A RETURNING

"He shall doubtless come again . . . "

Psalm 126:6c (KJV)

No nation had ever been given permission to return to their homeland after being taken captive except for the Israelites. They returned under the watchful eye of Pharaoh; they returned under the edict of King Darius of the Medes; and in our day and age we have seen them return from the terrible bondage they suffered under Hitler and also the Russian tyranny.

God is not limited by the walls that men set up to confine each other. He still delivers those like Peter from the cells of King Herod (Acts 12:1-11).

Not only will we return but better yet Jesus will return. Jesus left us His Word that He would also return. No host of hell will prevent that event from happening. He will doubtless come again. Nothing and no one will prevent that great day from happening. When He comes He will take His church with Him. We will be changed in a twinkling of an eye.

** The story is told of a time ago when an old farmer brought his family to the big city for the very first time. They had never seen buildings so tall or sights so impressive.

The farmer dropped his wife off at a department store and took his son to the bank - the tallest of all the buildings. As they walked into the lobby, they saw something else they had never seen before.

Two steel doors opened. A rather large and elderly woman walked in, and the big doors closed behind her. The dial over the door swept to the right and then back to the left.

The doors opened and a beautiful young lady came walking out. The farmer was amazed. He turned to his son and said, "*You wait right here. I'm going to get your mother and run her through that thing.*" **

"At the Rapture, we will be taken up. But we will be transformed and come back with resurrection bodies."

Michael Green
#1111

II. A REJOICING

Psalm 126 was used throughout the time of Ezra when the children of Israel returned from their Babylonian captivity to rebuild their temple. The people were delirious with joy. Their miraculous return to their homeland was more than they could stand. This Psalm begins with a dream and ends with "sheaves" much like the life of Joseph.

These people returned like those who have recovered or been restored to health. With one voice they raised their declaration of freedom for their captors to hear. It offered hope for those who had not yet received their liberty. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

The Psalmist likened it to the streams in the Negev. These streams were more like channels that were most often dry. The Negev was the desert area south of Israel. If you were ever given an aerial view, you would clearly see a network of ditches cut into the soil by wind and rain erosion. For most of the year they are baked dry by the heat of the torturous sun. But when the rain came, it did so in torrents. The desert would respond with a blaze of greenery and blossoms. What appeared to be dead quickly sprung into abundant life.

III. A REAPING

Seeds of sorrow can offer a great crop of rejoicing. There is a great of deal of difference between the quantity of a seed compared to that which it produces. The Psalmist encourages the people to sow in tears and weeping in order to reap a harvest of joy.

"songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him."

Psalm 126:6

*** The story is told of a labourer who was a mature Christian and gave solid testimony before all who knew him. His boss came to him one day and said,

"You know whatever you've got, I want. You have such peace, joy, and contentment. How can I get this?"

The labourer said, *"Go to your home, put on your best suit, come down here, and work in the mud with the rest of us - and you can have it."*

"What are you talking about? I could never do that I'm the boss, you're the worker. I can't do that. That's beneath my dignity."

The boss came back a couple of months later and said, *"I ask you again, what is it that you have and how can I get it?"*

"I told you, go put on your best suit, come down and work in the mud with us, and you can have it." Again the boss became furious and walked off. (Contd.) ***

*** Finally, in desperation he came back to the labourer and said, *"I don't care what it takes! I'll do anything."*

The labourer said, *"Will you put on your best suit and come down and work in the mud?"*

The boss finally agreed that he would do even that. Then the labourer said, *"You don't have to."* The labourer knew what was standing in the way of him finding joy.

God allowed the trials to come to Israel in order to soften their hearts. He never meant for them to wallow around in the mud of difficulties they faced. They chose to follow that path due to their disobedience. **They found that Joy is not found in the escape of sorrow. Joy was rather something that God produced in their lives in response to their returning in obedience to Him.**

Isn't it time for some of God's people to dream? God wants to pour His blessing upon us like the rains that fall upon the desert in the Negev.

C:\My Documents\WPWin(X7)\Sermons.2016\Psalms\Ascent\Psalms 126.wpd

Date: May 29/16

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: Sing Unto the Lord a New Song - Em

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Introduction: *Galatians 5:22; Psalm 126:1,2,3*

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I. A SOJOURNING - *II Kings 17:7-9,18,19*

II. A SORROWING - *Galatians 6:7-10; Psalm 126:6; II Corinthians 7:10,11*

III. A SOWING - *Psalm 126:6b*

Look at what this GOOD SEED can bring forth.

I. A RETURNING - *Psalm 126:6c (KJV); Acts 12:1-11*

II. A REJOICING

III. A REAPING - *Psalm 126:6*