***Grief? Sorrow?***

***From Where?***

**Lament. 3:22-33 &**

**1 Peter 2:11-20**

Jubilate – 04.30.2023

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Jubilate – “make a joyful shout (noise) to God” Sunday. Where is your joy?

You are in God’s house this morning! You are gathered in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit – in the house of your God as His children! You have been loosed from your sins, the absolution Christ commanded to be spoken in His name has freed you from them, covering you with the robe of Christ’s righteousness, granting you forgiveness – peace with God. You have praised and thanked God for the gracious gifts He has given you.

And that’s only the beginning!

Now you are hearing the Word of Christ proclaimed to you in the sermon, leading you to repentance for the forgiveness of sins. God’s peace, which surpasses ALL understanding using this Word to keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

And the best part of the service is still coming! God, who came in our flesh to be the unblemished Lamb of God, the sacrifice for our sins, gives to us to eat of the very flesh which He allowed to be pierced for us – He gives us to drink of the very blood He shed unto death for the forgiveness of our sins.

This is the most joyful day of days – every single week! This is ***THE GREATEST OF CELEBRATIONS!!!*** And we are invited to be recipients of these incredibly gracious gifts – every single week!

And before you leave, God sends you out of His presence with His Word of promise upon you. He places His name upon you from the lips of His pastor. God declared to Moses that when His servants speak His name upon His people in this particular manner – He blesses them. The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.

But in the midst of all this, on JUBILATE Sunday, we have these Scripture lessons which many think are not all joyous. In our Lamentations text we have this:

*It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. Let him sit alone in silence when it is laid on him; let him put his mouth in the dust—there may yet be hope; let him give his cheek to the one who strikes, and let him be filled with insults. For the Lord will not cast off forever, but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; for he does not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men.*

It is good that a man bear the yoke?

We should sit alone in silence?

We should put our mouth in the dust?

We should give our cheek to the one who strikes? We should allow ourselves to be filled with insults?

God casts off and causes grief?

And while He doesn’t do it willingly, God does afflict and grieve the children of men?

Then comes Peters first letter and we read this:

*For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure; this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.*

We are to suffer for doing good? And if we do, it is a gracious thing in the sight of God?

I am guessing this does not make a whole lot of sense. I get it because it is not what you hear if you tune in to Christian radio or watch TV preachers and Bible Study teachers. If you are like I am, every once in a while, you surf the TV channels to find something to watch. I did that the other day while I was prepping my lunch at home, and stopped on a guy taking us through the Bible day by day.

He was talking about prayer and receiving from God, stating that if we haven’t received the request of our prayer, not to give up praying. No matter what you are praying for – healing, new car, financial windfall, etc… He declared that the reason you do not receive such things is because you stop praying and trusting God to deliver.

Dear friends, that is falsehood. If it were true, then why didn’t God heal Paul when he asked to have that thorn in the flesh (some sort of illness) removed from him? God did not do so, stating that His strength is made perfect in Paul’s weakness.

We love the world. We love the world’s idea of Christianity. That is, we love Christianity which claims we should have success in the world, all the things we desire in the world, happiness in the world. But that is not truth.

What does the world says about the things which Scripture declares to be true? Lamentations was written by the prophet Jeremiah. For preaching God’s Word to God’s people Israel, he was put into the stocks. He was freed and told not to preach in such a manner again. Later, for again proclaiming the truth of God’s Word to God’s people Israel, he was thrown into a well. He was ultimately released form the well. But finally, for declaring to God’s people what God wanted them to hear, he was put to death – not by people of the world, but by those who were supposed to be God’s Old Testament church.

You and I are enamored with the things of this world. We want a happy life, no waves, no trials, no tribulations. What is more, there are false teacher who tell us that if God truly is the Creator of all, that if the whole world is in His hand, then we should have all the thigs of the world that our heart desires – for our heart cannot be wrong.

What did Jesus declare? *Where your heart is, there your treasure will be also.* (Mt. 6:2) If your heart is on the things of the world, it is not on Christ.

But this world is passing away. As Peter states pretty clearly in his letter to us. *Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.* (vs. 11)

You are at war! It is a bitter conflict raging for the possession of YOUR SOUL for all eternity. You are only strangers in this world, somewhere else should be your home.

Do you find your joy in Christ? In the 5th chapter of Acts the apostles are arrested by the Sadducees and imprisoned. The council met, and *finally, they called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.* (Acts 5:40-42)

Their joy was found in suffering for the name of Christ. It was their joy to be speaking of Jesus as God’s Christ.

Do you find joy in speaking the truth of Christ? Or are you embarrassed about what Christianity teaches – because the world says it is wrong?

You bear the name of Christ, and there will be times you endure sorrow or grief because of that name. It is not that God willingly afflicts you. God afflicts to lead you to repentance for the forgiveness of sins. He desires that you stop trusting in the world – or rejoicing in the things of this world – but that you trust in Him and find joy in the hope of your salvation.

The joy of Christians is that we endure in this life through the abundance of the steadfast love of the Lord. Christ is the love of the Lord! Christ bears us up – lest we dash our foot against a stone – that is, fall from faith.

Christ feeds and nourishes our faith.

We are persecuted for we are being saved, purified like silver by a refiner’s fire.

We may weep in the world, but Christ has overcome the world.

You overcome this world in Christ. Christ has overcome it for you and overcomes it in you.

The world tried to silence Him, but in silencing Him on the cross, it only made the empty tomb three days later a bolder and louder proclamation. In His resurrection He accomplished the opening of your lips to boldly proclaim…He is risen! He is risen, indeed! Hallelujah!!

His resurrection is yours! You are baptized into Christ – you are united to His death and to His resurrection. That, dear friends is your joy!

Your joy is knowing your eternity. Your joy is knowing that while you see your Christ hidden in water, Word, bread and wine, in a little while you will Him face-to-face in His eternal kingdom. With your own eyes and not another.

You know that until you behold Him on that last day with your fleshly eyes, He opens your eyes of faith to see Him each week. He comes to you, to bring you forgiveness, eternal life, and salvation – speaking it into your ear, placing it on your tongue, and pouring it through your lips.

Jubilate! Make a joyful shout to God! In Christ you overcome the world. In Christ, your greatest enemies – sin and death – have submitted to Christ and been overcome by Him. Grief? Sorrow? Maybe for a time, but they have no dominion over you. Your joy is complete! It is accomplished and delivered to you. In the name of Jesus. Amen.