

“COMEBACK – God’s Providence In Motion” Series

Lesson Two: “Following God, Finding Joy”

Ezra chapter 3

Conquerors Sunday School Class – Sunday, May 2, 2021

Our Lesson’s Theme Verse is found in these passages of Scripture...

***“And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD;
because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel.***

***And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD,
because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.”***

Ezra 3:11

Today’s Lesson Thought can be summed up in this one Question...

“Are You Experiencing The Joy Of The Lord In Your Life Today?”

Lesson: “Following God, Finding Joy”

I : Following God

- As we will see in this chapter, God’s people faced many a challenge as they returned into the land of Judah and to rebuild the lost and desolate city of Jerusalem.
- The end of their captivity was now seen as an opportunity to experience the grace and mercy of the great and loving God who had been forced to deal with their continued sin and rebellion against Him and who chastened them severely even as He had promised long before their captivity was made a reality!
- Now, the question was, would they honor the Lord, with their hearts humbled, and determine to obediently accept God’s loving mercy so as to rebuild and restore the relationship that they once had with the Lord God of Israel, or would they return to that sinful and rebellious lifestyle that had plunged them into the desolate captivity they had experienced for the past seventy years?
- Following God may not have been an easy thing to do for those who still chose to live after the flesh, but for those whose hearts were indeed humbled and broken, the cry of King Cyrus would remain,
“...Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem. And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.”
- In this chapter, we will learn of the opportunities that these people were afforded, beginning with...

A: A Purpose to Glorify God

- o Ezra 3:1

B: Fear the Lord God

- o Ezra 3:2-3, Proverbs 1:7, Proverbs 9:10, Proverbs 10:27, Proverbs 14:26-27, Proverbs 19:23, Philippians 1:27-29, I John 4:18

C: Obey God’s Word

- o Proverbs 1:5-9, Ezra 3:2-6

D: Serve God

- o Ezra 3:7-9, Matthew 4:19

II : Finding Joy

A: Recognize the True Source of Joy

- Ezra 3:10-11

B: Lay Aside All Regrets

- Ezra 3:12-13, II Chronicles 7:1-4

Conclusion:

Sometimes folks, our focusing on *'the good ole days'* is not always as good a thing as we think simply because many times, some folks will think that the present can never be as good and as glorious as the past, so why bother with doing anything today?!?

But folks, what we need to do, as Hell-deserving sinners now washed in the blood of Jesus Christ and who have been made to be new creatures by faith in Christ Jesus—what we need to do as *'Conquerors in Christ Jesus'* is to put the past in the past and leave it there!

According to Micah 7:19, God has cast all our sins into the depths of the sea, never to be remembered again! And according to Isaiah 38:17, God has cast all our sins behind His back where they can never again be seen or brought before His eyes! And the psalmist David wrote in Psalm 103:12, ***“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.”***—what a blessing that is to know today dear child of God!

And honey, whenever the devil tries to bring up your past before you were saved or whenever he tries to make you feel guilty of those sins you committed before you were washed in the precious blood of the Lamb—don't you fall to this accusations! And don't you get discouraged or think about quitting on God! You just remember what the Word of God says about all those sins that God says He has forgiven and forgotten and you just remind the devil of what the Bible says about him in Revelation 20:10 that brings you joy in knowing, ***“And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”***!

Don't let the devil deceive you! And don't let the devil discourage you! And for Heaven's sake, don't all the devil to stop you from following Jesus, for in following Jesus, you will find real joy and peace with God!

Dear Conqueror's Class member, take your burdens to the Lord—and leave them there!

Yes, we need to remember and rejoice in what God has done for us in the past, but never forget that following the Lord and staying in His Word TODAY is just as important as it was back then in the past!

And the only way to experience the joy of the Lord today or in the future is to continue to follow that same God of yesterday, today, and tomorrow—The God who never changes and who will always keep His promises—both good and bad—all the promises of blessing as well as the promises of discipline!

Folks, the joy of the Lord can indeed be real in the life of any and every child of God who is simply willing to trust and obey the Lord! Simply follow God and you WILL find abundant joy that will last forever!