



Devotional Thoughts :: JESUS JOY by David Wilkerson

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Where God's Word is revered, the inevitable result is an outpouring of genuine "Jesus joy."

Nehemiah and Ezra told those who had returned to Jerusalem, "You've been excited about God's Word, hungering for it, loving it, allowing it to work in your heart. You've repented, wept and mourned and God is pleased with you. But now it's time to rejoice. Take out your handkerchiefs and wipe away your tears. This is a time for great joy and mirth" (see Nehemiah 8:9-10).

The glory of the Lord fell on Israel, and the people spent the next seven days rejoicing: "All the people went their way to eat, and to drink . . . and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them" (Nehemiah 8:12).

The Hebrew word for mirth here means "glee, merriment, gladness, happiness." This kind of mirth isn't merely a good feeling, it's an inner joy, a deep exuberance. Its expression may look different in each of us, because such joy takes place deep inside. But it is clear to everyone around us that our wellspring of joy comes from heaven.

Whenever Israel turned to sin and idolatry, the Lord removed their mirth: "I will also cause all her mirth to cease" (Hosea 2:11). "I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness . . . and this whole land shall be . . . an astonishment" (Jeremiah 25:10-11).

At times, Israel put on a false joy to try to cover the sins of the people. We see this happening in many churches today, as well. We may witness singing, dancing, manifestations, loud praising—but those who love God's Word can discern whether it is true or false joy.

You may recall Israel's shouts as they danced around the golden calf. When Joshua heard the people, he said, "There is a noise of war in the camp" (Exodus 32:17). But Moses replied, "It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery" (32:18). Moses was saying, "That's the shout of a people still in bondage. They haven't mastered their sin." Gold had become Israel's god, and it brought a shout to the lips of the people. Yet it was a shout of false joy—a noise that signaled God's impending judgment.