

CHAPEL ON THE HILL
Shrewsbury, Massachusetts
www.cothma.org

Date:	Mar-9-2008	Pastor:	Jeff Gauvin
Message Title:	Psalm 47:1-2 “The Fear of the Lord is a Joyful Trembling”		

Week’s Message

Message	Bible Reference Passage
<p>1. THE COMMAND – “rejoice”</p> <p>A. Clap your hands – This is a sign of victory and rejoicing. These commands are given to all the peoples and, being plural, this indicates all the nations. As such, Spurgeon makes note that all the nations have a universal means as their expression to declare joy: clapping of hands. When every tribe, tongue and nation gathers around His throne, we see all kinds of joyful noise. This is an interesting contrast to the previous Psalm to be quiet before God exalted. The fear of the Lord brings joyful noise.</p>	<i>Revelation 19:5-6</i>
<p>B. Shout to God with the voice of joy – (KJV – with the sound of triumph)</p> <p>Shout – רָוַח (Ruah) can be used as a loud shout in a warlike manner, Josh. 6:16. It can mean to sound the trumpet, the alarm, for battle, Num. 10:9. The context of this Psalm rings of the King’s victory. Because of this military context, the King James has translated the next word as ‘triumph’. In other versions it is translated as Joy. Let’s talk about that word—Joy.</p> <p>Joy - רִנָּה (Rinah) This is a very interesting word. It can mean to cry to God from despair, a desperate plea. When it is used in a negative sense it usually refers to prayer toward God.</p> <p>Most of the time it refers to a joyful crying. Eight times in Isaiah it is translated in the King James as ‘singing’. It is found in Zeph. 3:17. King James also translates this word as ‘joy’ Ps. 30:5. Here the word very clearly has the sound of joy, but as we see in the context of this Psalm it is the joy of victory. After the blood and dirt and striving, after all the battle is over: we made it, we won, victory! That is a deeper, more awesome, joy that has been forged in the furnace of battle and tribulation. Victorious joy.</p>	<i>Joshua 6:16</i> <i>Numbers 10:9</i> <i>Psalm 142:6</i> <i>See also Psalms 42:4;</i> <i>126:2,5,6</i>
<p>Notice this is a command here. We are commanded to be happy in God. I like the way John Piper puts it, “rejoicing in God in not an option, it is our highest duty”. The Puritans put it this way in their catechism, “The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever”. Enjoying God is commanded. Read - Deut. 28:47, note the reason God was going to punish them. It was because they didn’t serve the Lord with joy!</p> <p>My parents made me eat peas. I used to swallow them whole, like</p>	

<p>pills. I hated peas. I used to hide them under the couch in the TV room. I didn't get caught until I was a teenager when we were moving and my parents found some black pellets under the couch. Eating peas was a duty I had to do.</p> <p>If this is what our religion is, then we are probably not even saved. Duty without delight is legalism, salvation by works. Christianity is duty which is bursting out from delight. It is not a duty for my children to eat their after-dinner snack— "Oh man do I have to eat chocolate cookies?" Their taste buds are designed to enjoy chocolate. So it is with the Christian. We have been given new taste buds so that we may be able to "taste and see that the Lord is good." If our religion is like taking cough syrup, or swallowing peas, a duty we must do, something we'll get through, then we don't know God rightly and we may not even be saved. Such duty does not make God look glorious. It doesn't make Christine (my wife) happy if I give her flowers and say, "It's just my duty". So it doesn't make God glorious if we strive to be holy and merely call it our duty.</p> <p>There is someone you need to talk to if you do not understand me here. His name is Jacob. He really loved this girl named Rachel, but he had nothing to give as a dowry for her. So he made a deal with her caretaker, Gen. 29:18-20. Did Jacob do his duty, his work? Yes. Did Jacob work and 'do?' Of course. But his duty was a delight. Because of the spice of her love, her lips were like chocolate cake to him and her eyes were beautiful pools of light. Moreover, we see it was the promise of her, the expectation of her love, and the hope of her promised embrace that moved Jacob so. The expectation of her love moved him from raw duty to duty blooming out of the soil of delight, like a fruit on a branch that is abiding in the vine. His duty was no burden because the text tells us his duty seemed to last but a few days.</p> <p>So it is with the promise of the gospel of Christ, which controls us. Not that we can ever say we have earned the dowry for Christ, but that He tells us to labor in this world but a few years, and if we are eager for His embrace, and look forward to His love, it will seem like a few hours.</p>	<p><i>Genesis 29:18-20</i></p>
<p>2. JUSTIFICATION FOR THE COMMAND</p> <p>A. The Lord Most High – This is key here. Don't forget who we are talking about. It is the Lord most High. When we look up into the sky we have no depth perception. It is hard to tell how high something is, especially the stars. It is impossible with our eyes to tell which star is the farther from us. That's just how we perceive what we worship. It is often hard for us to distinguish which is higher and more glorious. Often some earthly object, or a mere creature, mere man, even we, can appear higher than God.</p> <p>But here, in God's Word, we are given depth perception. Here in</p>	

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<p>apprehended by a proper understanding of Jesus Christ and Him crucified.</p> <p>I am reminded of a famous theologian of not long ago who had cried out in his day of the liberal bent of evangelicalism. During his time the church became embarrassed for God: He seemed so angry. Because they couldn't reconcile His wrath with His love, they denied His wrath, and at best were simply embarrassed by it. In response to this trend Richard Niebuhr, in his book <i>The Kingdom of God</i>, describes the liberal bent of evangelical theology as, "A God without wrath brought men without sin, into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross."</p>	
<p>C. A great King over all – Jer. 10:7 – describes fear as His due. The reason is because there is nobody like Him. He is Holy.</p> <p>This great King is just. He will punish sin eternally. If you don't think your sins deserve eternal wrath, you've not seen God's wrath properly. If you haven't trembled over the great salvation, the wide ocean of His unfathomable riches of glory, you don't understand forgiveness.</p> <p>The channel of joy that flows from Calvary runs deep. It rumbles below the surface sometimes and it cuts great canyons as it flows over time. Such a deep powerful currant of blood cannot be dammed.</p> <p>The context of the cross is the furious wrath of God and eternal damnation. The mercy and grace of God at Calvary makes no sense apart from God's awesome and perfect justice. So once again, as we consider the fear of the Lord, we are brought face to face with eternity.</p> <p>Nobody thinks it is strange when game show contestants tremble and cry for joy when they win the million dollar jackpot. Yet people call us fanatics if we get anywhere close to that in our joy and trembling before God. How strange it is that anyone would approve of a joyful trembling before that which is not eternal, earthly riches, and yet disapprove of a joyful trembling in someone who has gained the eternal riches of Christ.</p>	<p><i>Revelation 15:3-4</i></p>

Thank you and have a blessed week.
 Join us every Sunday morning at 10:15am | Have a prayer request? Send it to us online.