



Course: The Ministry of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament Church.

Course Title: The Fruit of the Spirit (10 Lessons)

Lesson Three:

Lesson Title: Joy (chara)

Lesson Theme: Joy in the Lord Jesus Christ is the mark of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Lesson Goal: To understand that the fruit of joy is constant in the believer and is not affected by circumstances.

Text: *Galatians 5:22-23, 'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.'*

Introduction: Joy (Greek '*chara*') means 'delight' or 'joy'.

It is love overflowing.

It is the joy of being united with Christ; and delight in who He is and all He has done for us.

It is the joy of being in His presence. *'In His presence there is fulness of joy' Psalm 16:11.*

It is the joy of belonging to Jesus.

When the presence of the Lord is evident in the church there is great joy.

Revival brings a great awareness of the presence of God, and in His presence is great joy. Joyfulness and singing have always accompanied revival. It is joy in Jesus Christ.

Nice music and singing cannot bring revival. Financial prosperity and temporary blessings cannot bring the joy of the Holy Spirit.

Joy is the expression of salvation.

When people have drunk from the well of salvation then the joy of the Lord will be seen on their faces. *'Therefore with joy shall you draw water out of the wells of salvation.'* Isaiah 12:3

Personal story: When I first went to the Philippines over 25 years ago, I found that the people in the villages were eager to express their desire to receive Christ, but I was also aware that there was no evidence of salvation on their faces. Then one day I was at an outreach meeting in a village and I saw a lady and her son at the meeting. Their faces shone with the joy of the Lord. I saw such a difference between them and the others at the outreach. The others did not have this joy. When I spoke with the lady I found out that she was the wife of a pastor and involved in Christian ministry. I knew even before I had an opportunity to speak with them that they had new life in Jesus because of the joy on their faces.

The joy of the Holy Spirit does not depend upon favourable circumstances.

It is a joy that rejoices in the Lord.

A person who has very favourable circumstances will rejoice. This is a natural response to a good situation.

The supernatural nature of joy, the fruit of the Spirit, is most clearly evident in unfavourable circumstances.

Question: Why do Christians suffer?

The uncertainty of life; the problems facing us in our daily life; the tragedies of life must be faced by everyone.

The Lord does not always keep us from the trial but he is always with us in the trial.

If Christians never faced unfavourable circumstances then the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives would not have the opportunity to be seen.

Joy rejoices in the Lord because He is always with us.

Joy is the Fruit of the Holy Spirit, which is a supernatural joy that rejoices in the Lord, and empowers the Christian.

Main Points:

1. Joy is essential in every area of the Christian life.

If we are filled with the Holy Spirit then we will be filled with joy.

1 Thessalonians 1:6. The Thessalonians received the word in much affliction but the joy of the Holy Spirit remained constant.

The outward evidence of the Holy Spirit working in our life is joy.

Romans 14:17, 'For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.'

Joy of the Holy Spirit will be seen in our fellowship with one another.

The believers in the early church were filled with gladness in their fellowship with one another. They were single minded because their hearts desired only the Lord. Their hearts were not filled with 'the love of the world'.

Acts 2:46-47, 'And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.'

They were anointed with the oil of joy.

Isaiah 61:3 '...the oil of joy for mourning'.

Joy of the Holy Spirit is essential in prayer.

The joy of the Holy Spirit must be evident in our prayer meetings.

Isaiah 56:7 'Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.'

The prayer meeting should be full of excitement and joy that is founded upon relationship with the Lord.

The meeting that reveals clearly whether a church is moving in the Holy Spirit is the prayer meeting.

2. It is joy that rejoices in the Lord.

Philippians 4:4, 'Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I say rejoice.'

The foundation of joy is in the Lord.

The Epistle to the Philippians is known as the Epistle of Joy. Paul stresses the need for the Philippians to 'rejoice in the Lord', (*Philippians 3:1; 4:4*).

The word meaning joy or rejoice occurs at least 15 times in the epistle. Yet Paul was a prisoner when he wrote the epistle. He rejoiced not in comfortable circumstances, but he rejoiced in the eternal plan and purpose of God. His joy was in the Lord who controlled his circumstances. His joy was the fruit of the Holy Spirit that flowed out of his innermost being.

'Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. For the same cause also do you joy, and rejoice with me.' *Philippians 2:16-18.*

The joy of the believer is not in changing circumstances but in the Lord.
The Lord is unchanging.
'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever' (Hebrews 13:8).

The resurrection of Christ is the reason for the believers' joy.

After the resurrection Jesus greeted the women with the word 'rejoice'.
Matthew 28:9, 'And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail (rejoice). And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.'
Their joy was that the Lord is risen.
The Bible says that the disciples could not believe for joy, *(Luke 24:41)*.
The joy of the Christian is because Christ is risen. *(1 Corinthians 15:19)*.
This is not just a historical fact for the Christian; it is an experiential reality.
The believer is risen with Christ, *(Colossians 3:1)*.

The joy of union with Christ.

The joy of His life in the believer.
Christ is our life, *(Colossians 3:4)*
John 15:11, 'These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.'
'My joy might remain in you' (the joy of the Lord) '...that your joy might be full' (our joy is in the Lord).
Psalm 45:7, 'You love righteousness, and hates wickedness: therefore God, Your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above Your fellows.'
His joy in the believer.

3. It is the joy of the Lord that is the believers' strength.

Nehemiah 8:10 'The joy of the Lord is your strength'
The Hebrew word for strength is *maoz* meaning a place of safety or protection, a refuge or a stronghold.
The joy of the Holy Spirit brings strength.
When we are troubled then we are weakened and have little strength.

Illustration: Times when we have been worried it drains our energy. We are weak when we are anxious and worried, and quickly become very tired.

Joy in trials and tribulations.

1 Peter 4:12-14, 'Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy. If you be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are you; for the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.'

The fiery trial (Greek *purosis*) meaning 'to set on fire'. Trial by fire as gold is refined. The trial of our faith is able to remove the dross of the old nature and bring forth the gold of the 'new nature in Christ'.

1 Peter 1:7 'That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:'

Paul gloried in tribulations, *(Romans 5:3)*.

Tribulation is the Greek word *thlipsis*, which means distress or affliction, being under pressure.

We also should not be worried when we face tribulations.

The outward experience of being under pressure through afflictions and troubles will reveal the inward work of God in the life of the believer. The new nature in Christ will be shine brightest in the darkest times.

We can rejoice at all times because the tribulations we face will not destroy us. We are overcomers in Christ.

John 16:33 'In the world you shall have tribulations but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world'.

Joy in persecution.

Matthew 5:11-12, 'Blessed are you, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.'

The word persecuted (Greek *dioko*) means to drive away, to pursue in a hostile manner. It is an action of hostility towards us because of our faith in Christ.

The Holy Spirit not only gives us strength to endure persecution, He fills us with joy that only those who truly love the Lord Jesus Christ can ever understand.

The joy of the Holy Spirit provides the strength to rejoice when evil is spoken against us falsely.

Words spoken against us hurt most when it is people who are close to us. The closer people are, the more they are able to hurt us. The Holy Spirit dwells in us. He is able to guard us from hurtful words and fill us with the joy of the Lord.

Joy gives us strength to serve the Lord.

We cannot serve the Lord without joy.

Our joy is in all that the Lord has done for us

Moses rebuked Israel because they did not serve the Lord out of joy for all He had done for them.

Deuteronomy 28:47-48, 'Because you serve not the LORD your God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; Therefore shall you serve your enemies which the LORD shall send against you, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he has destroyed you.'

We must always serve the Lord with gladness.

Psalm 100

1. Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all you lands.

2 Serve the LORD with gladness: come before His presence with singing.

3 Know that the LORD he is God: it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture.

4 Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name.

5 For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endures to all generations.

Conclusion:

1. Joy is essential in every area of the Christian life. It must seen in our daily lives, in our fellowship with other believers and our prayer life must always be with joy.

2. Joy is founded upon the Lord. The Christian rejoices because Jesus is alive and we are one with Him. The greatest joy comes from having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

3. It is joy that gives the believer strength to face trials and persecution. It provides strength so that we can serve the Lord.