

December 17, 2023

**The Lord wants you to live in His liberty and freedom.**

**Neh. 8:10** *Nehemiah said, “Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our LORD. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength. (NIV)*

*Joy to the world, the Lord has come, let earth receive her King.* This line of **Isaac Watts** hymn *Joy To The World* has always reminded me that one of God’s greatest gifts to us is that we can experience real joy. Joy exceeds happiness because it is not determined by our circumstances or the things that are happening around us. That is why so many who have been in dire situations can still be filled with joy. It was from his prison cell that Paul encouraged the people of Philippi, **Phil. 4:4** *Rejoice in the LORD always. I will say it again: Rejoice! (NIV)*

Peter shares this same understanding in **1 Pt. 1:8-9** *Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls. (NIV)*

As we celebrate this season of Christ’s birth, let us be reminded that this is a time of joy. When others are hurting, they need to experience the joy of the Lord. As the shepherds were watching over their flocks that night, an angel appeared and spoke to them. **Luke 2:10-12** *But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the LORD. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. (NIV)*

**Dear LORD, fill us with Your joy today. Help us to rejoice in all circumstances for this is Your will for us. Joy comes only from You. Fill us with Your joy today. In Jesus Name, Amen**