

FLEA VIDEO #15: "Joys Upon Joys"
(Philippians 3:20; Psalm 16:11, 45:15; I Peter 1:3-9)
7.14.20

Happiness is defined as "feeling or showing pleasure or contentment, a sense of well-being and satisfaction." It is an outer showing of an inner joy.

That sounds simple enough but, as we look around our world today, very seldom do we see anything that could be confused with "happiness." Particularly for people who have staked their happiness on finding it in this life, their search is going to be one of frustration and discouragement. The happiness found in this world is brief and fleeting - here one moment, gone the next.

But for believers in God through Jesus Christ, we have something so much more to look forward to, and we don't have to search for it, either. First of all, it is found in the assurance of a love and joy that is never going to end due to the presence of the God of the universe dwelling in our lives through the person of His Holy Spirit. It is the love and joy of knowing that, for a God who has absolute holiness and purity as His standard of excellence, that His standard can be met and claimed through the perfect life and substitutionary death of His Son, Jesus Christ. Trusting in Jesus for salvation allows us to be seen by that perfect God as perfect ourselves, as believers find themselves literally "clothed" (Galatians 3:27) in the perfect life of Christ.

But often believers still find themselves getting wrapped up in the pursuits and fads of this world and, depending on how deeply we get connected, the world's inability to find true happiness in earthly pursuits unfortunately translates itself into the lives of believers. That is so sad whenever it happens, when a believer whose life has been sealed by the eternal God of heaven and earth finds him or herself being pushed and pulled and yanked and see-sawed by the affairs of a finite world.

So, for all the things I could say to offer encouragement in those circumstances, these might be the best:

- 1) ***[O]ur citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ - Paul, Philippians 3:20.*** Why should I trade the eternal joy of heaven for the "here one minute, gone the next" momentary flirtations of joy here on earth? We have a place in a world that is promised, guaranteed, to be so much better - and quite a bit longer lasting, too!
2. ***You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence,***

with eternal pleasures at your right hand... Led in with joy and gladness, they enter the palace of the king - Psalm 16:11, 45:15. Now, what's really cool about these two verses from Psalms is what the English translates as "joy." In the Hebrew, this word is written in its plural form - "joys" - which is a way in the Hebrew language of communicating the overwhelming, exceedingly great joy that being in the presence of God will bring. It not only means that we will experience great joy, but joy upon joy, joy after joy. The presence of God is going to be a place where our happiness is never going to end.

No wonder the apostle Peter could write these words to an audience at that time going through great persecution and trial: *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith - of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire - may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 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 - I Peter 1:3-9.* The Greek translates "an inexpressible and glorious joy" as "a wonderful joy that cannot even be expressed." I love how the KJV tells it: as joy "unspeakable" and full of glory. There are literally going to be no words that will be able to capture the joys - not only the state of joy but the multiple joys - we are promised to be experiencing in heaven.

Now what is there on this planet that could possibly shine a brighter light, boast a more sure promise, declare a greater reward, than what the Bible tells us we are guaranteed one day to know and experience as "citizens of heaven?" Quick answer: There IS nothing on this planet that can compare to the eternal joys we are promised to inherit in the glorious kingdom of our Father in heaven.

This planet is our place of ministry, the place we serve as ambassadors of Jesus Christ. But it will never be our home. That is reserved for us in another place, a better place, a promised place . . . and a coming place. Pack your heart's bags for heaven. Pack your heart's bags for THAT home. It's on its way - Jesus promised!