



A LETTER FROM YOUR PASTOR: JANUARY 2023 by Lee Shipp

MAKE JESUS HAPPY

Love is of God, and only lovers can know God, for everyone that loves is born of God, and knoweth God (1 John 4:7). God is love. Love makes the ultimate sacrifice to win those who would destroy themselves. Love gives and sacrifices so others can live. God loves when He is not loved. God gave when He was not asked to give. God paid the debt when the slaves asked to be left alone. God loved us. God sent His Son to us. God made His Son the propitiation for our sins.

In his book, The Knowledge of the Holy, A.W. Tozer wrote, "You have declared Your unchanging love for us in Christ Jesus. If nothing in us can win Your love, nothing in the universe can prevent You from loving us. Your love is uncaused and undeserved. You are Yourself the reason for love."

Love casts out fear, and our troubled hearts are given peace. A.W. Tozer went on to say, "Because God is self-existent, His love had no beginning; because He is eternal, His love can have no end; because He is infinite, it has no limit; because He is holy, His love is the epitome of all spotless purity; because He is immense, His love is incomprehensibly vast, bottomless, a shoreless sea before which we kneel in joyful silence and from which the loftiest eloquence retreats confused and abashed." Love wills the good of all and never wills harm or evil to any.

Oh, joyful religion where it is the duty of man, the high calling of man, to love, to love because God is love. The man who loves abides in God and God in him. How vastly set apart is the faith of Christians from all others; theirs is a God of joy, peace, and love. The screams and abuses of those outside of Christ belong to those who worship gods other than Jesus. Listen to the devil's music. It is all about pain, sex, abuse, drugs, and depression. The screaming lyrics. The brutal abuse upon the body. But look at the worship of God. The glory. The celebrations. The joy. The happiness. Blessed religion indeed where it is the command to be joyful, to have peace, and to rejoice.

Jesus was happy. Why? Because He was the full, final, and perfect expression of the Father. The Father is happy. The Holy Spirit is happy. How do I know? Because Hebrews 1:9 declares that God has anointed Jesus with the oil of gladness. The anointing of the Holy Spirit on Jesus was gladness. The Holy Spirit is glad. The Father is glad.

What does this mean? What is the message about gladness? Gladness means extreme joy—the feeling of joy, the experience of delight, and uninhibited happiness. Jesus was anointed with extreme joy and gladness. How? Why? Because He loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore, God anointed Him with the oil of gladness above all other men. That's right. Nobody who has ever lived experienced and possessed more uninhibited happiness than Jesus because He loved righteousness. How foolish are those who pursue the devil's deceptions and think happiness is in this world or the possessions one has.

Jesus was anointed with gladness. To anoint means to consecrate Jesus to the Messianic office. To furnish Him with the necessary powers for its administration. The book of Hebrews tells us, "For the joy that was set before Jesus he endured the cross ..." [Hebrews 12:2]. What was that joy waiting beyond the cross? Indeed, some of it had to be the knowledge that His death would bring many sons into glory. God and man would be reconciled. The longing and loving heart of the Father would have the

rapturous delight of enjoying love with His once-wayward children. Jesus' soul would be made an offering for sin, and by Jesus, God would justify many. This was a portion, if not all, of Jesus' gladness.

The joy of Jesus is not in His power to condemn the wicked but in forgiving them and putting their sins away. It was His anointing to usher in the New Covenant whereby God could make the wicked righteous, and the Holy God could have intimacy with those who were once rebels.

Luke describes Jesus' anointing like this: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18-19).

We can see the gladness of Jesus. It was in His ability to help the broken, the sinner, the destitute, the lost, the incurable, and the wretched. It was His ability to make the wicked righteous, for He loves righteousness! It was in His ability to bring many sons and daughters into glory and give His beloved Father such delight; He would be the answer to His Father's longings.

JESUS IS EXTREMELY JOYFUL WHEN HE GETS TO SHOW GRACE AND MERCY

Jesus is extremely joyful when He gets to show grace and mercy by pardoning, saving, and healing the unrighteous. Though He loves righteousness, He does not hate the unrighteous. Just as His love is not like our love, His hate is not like our hate. As a father may hate the illness destroying his son, the father loves his son all the more. So, Jesus hates what unrighteousness is doing to His creation but loves the unrighteous all the more. So much so that He would go to war with their unrighteousness and destroy every trace of their sin and rebellion against the Holy Father; this makes Him glad.

"JESUS IS NOT TIRED OF YOU; THAT IS WHY HE IS YOUR HIGH PRIEST."

How unhappy Jesus would be if He loved the unrighteous but had no power to help them. But He does have power. The Spirit of the Lord is upon Him, and He can help them. He is anointed to remove their sin. When Jehoshaphat went to war, he sent the tribe of praise out before the army declaring, "... His mercy endures forever!" Psalms 136 has twenty-six verses, and the Psalm calls for praise twenty-six times because "His mercy endures forever." I seriously think God is trying to tell us something about His mercy – it endures forever!

So, what is mercy? Mercy is loving kindness. The constant of God, the thing that endures forever in God is not His wrath but His mercy. Forever, God is demonstrating His loving kindness. This teaches us the very thing Satan does not want us to know. Satan wants us to think that God is like all the other gods; He is angry, He is difficult to please, He is tight-fisted, He is so frustrated with you. However, God has revealed the very opposite. God has declared that He is not to be trifled with. He is the judge. He is holy. He will judge the wicked. He will pour His wrath upon sin. But He has made a way of escape. He has made provision for the wicked and the sinner.

God does not want the wicked to perish, nor does He enjoy judging them. What makes God happy is His ability to pardon them. God leaves you with that choice to receive His pardon or wrath. Jesus is not frustrated when we come to Him for forgiveness. He is not angry when we bring our sins to Him. He is offended when you don't!

When did you ever see Jesus angry for having to forgive a sinner? Instead, He was always exceedingly happy to do so. Jesus even revealed that all the angels in heaven rejoice (as though a grand party is thrown in heaven) whenever one sinner repents. Jesus loves to put sin away, not the sinner. Jesus loves to forgive the wicked. Jesus loves to give righteousness to those who believe Him; He loves it, and the more sinners He gets to impart righteousness to, the happier He is; He loves righteousness.

SO MUCH HAPPENED AT THE CROSS

I pray this will help you see more to the cross of Jesus than people usually do. Jesus was not a victim on that cross – He was a lamb! The Lamb. He was a soldier destroying Satan's hold of your life. He was the Truth exposing the lies about our heavenly Father. He was a King destroying the devil's kingdom. He was the way maker to open heaven's gates for all who will come. Jesus didn't die out of pity. The cross is the expression of who God is! The cross reveals the kind of love God has. He would die on a cross before letting you die in your sins.

Furthermore, the cross is how the Father can forever fulfill His intense longing to show His everlasting mercy and grace to you. When Jesus sees you turning to Him, His mercies erupt within His heart. He bursts with gladness. This is illustrated in the parable of the prodigal son. The prodigal's father was so glad his son came home, so glad that the son who was dead is now alive.

Jesus is not tired of you; that is why He is your High Priest. He ever lives to make intercession for you. He can save to the uttermost those who come to God by Him because He lives forever. Jesus is not tired of you. He is not tired of your failings. He is not resentful that you need forgiveness. The Bible assures just the opposite is true. Whenever you come to God, agree with God about your life and your sins, He is faithful and just to forgive you and cleanse you of all unrighteousness; He loves righteousness.

It is Satan who wants you to think God is tired of you. What breaks the heart of God is when you don't come to Him, when you mistrust His grace and kind heart by thinking you are too bad to seek God. It offends God when you try to clean up your sins, which you can never do, for He is the One who is anointed to save you from your sins.

If you are suffering from despair over your struggle with sin, be confident that Jesus is not. Though you may be very grieved over your inability to conquer certain things, Jesus is still glad. He is glad because there is not a sinner He cannot save. There is not a bondage He cannot break. The Lord Jesus commands every situation; the most challenging and unruly things rob none of His gladness. He can perfect those who trust Him – this makes Him glad.

Jesus is not afraid of your sin; He soundly conquered it through His cross. Jesus runs into the world of unrighteous people with compassion flooding His heart and gladness bursting through His eyes, for He is mighty to save. Jesus, the glad One, has come to rob unrighteousness of its claims and make all men righteous.

I call you to worship this Jesus. I urge you to overcome your temptations to despair. Yes, you may suffer sadness over your struggles, but Jesus is glad. He is not glad you are sad; He is not glad you are suffering; He is not glad that you sin; He is glad that He can save you.

I long to emphasize the ability of God. I am coming to those who have wandered away from God. I am coming to the ones Satan has overthrown. I am coming to those who are in the ruin of sin. I am coming to those whose hearts condemn them, and Satan would seek your destruction. I am coming to you, imploring you to not give up on Jesus; worship Him. Don't throw away your confidence which has great recompense of reward. Worship the glad Savior. Cry out to Jesus to not give up on you.

Have you grown tired of the church and religion? Are you so humiliated by your lack of heart or ability to live a holy life? Do you constantly fail? I have hope for you. Worship Jesus with a faith that believes He is able even when you are not. Go ahead, give up on yourself; call yourself unworthy, but understand that God anoints Jesus to minister your salvation and give you the righteousness of God.

You may be going through hell right now, but Jesus is praying for you; therefore, you don't have to live in the shame of your past or the destruction of sin. You don't have to be haunted by shame and loss. Everyone has something they are deeply ashamed of, hoping they never get found out; don't let this fear keep you from the One who will gladly save you. God offers a new life where those things have no more power.

GOD'S MESSAGE TO THE BACKSLIDER

If you are tempted to believe that God is tired of you, you need to hear what God said. If you think that God is disgusted with you, then you need to stop listening to

your emotions and Satan's lies and listen to God. The Lord says, *"Turn, O backsliding children ... for I am married unto you ..."* (Jeremiah 3:14). Can you believe God is saying this to you? He is! Face the cross ... consider that it is there; on that cross, God gave His life for you; now try to convince me that He does not love you.

So how do you turn to God? You have come so many times only to sink back into failure. That is all our testimonies. That was Paul's testimony. That was Peter's testimony. But this is the God who forgives not once ... not twice ... not even three times, but 70 times seven times, and then again.

Are you scared to turn to God? Are you ashamed of your constant failings? I understand. But we must worship Jesus and not our ability to perfect ourselves. I must do what God says to do and not follow my emotions or intellectual reasonings, for God's ways are not my ways, nor or His thoughts my thoughts. Here is what God says you should do, *"... return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips. Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses: neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy"* (Hosea 14:1-3). God responds to this worship by declaring, *"I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him"* (Hosea 14:4).

How long will you refuse a God so tender and compassionate? You may have nothing good ... absolute shame and filth are all you have left. You are overwhelmed with unworthiness, but all God asks you to bring is words. Do you have words? He even tells you what to say! Oh, what a glad God. Just take with your words. Well, what are you waiting for?

Understand what makes Jesus glad. *"Return, thou [backslider] and I will not cause my anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful and I do not want to keep my anger with you saith the Lord. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou has transgressed against the Lord thy God ... and ye have not obeyed my voice ... Turn, O [backslider] ... for I am married unto you"* (Jeremiah 3).

What makes Jesus glad is when He lets go of His wrath and shows mercy instead. All He wants you to do is acknowledge your sin. He does not ask you to stop sinning because that power comes from Him. He does not ask you to clean yourself up before you come to Him because He alone can cleanse you. He simply asks you to acknowledge your sin and turn to Him; then He can let go of His anger and not cause it to fall on you.

Jesus is not glad that you suffer. Your suffering is the result of your rebellion against Him. You see, all of us went astray from God. We teamed up with Satan and stood against the Lord. We became slaves to the devil. It is Satan who has tormented us, who has abused us, who has stolen so much from us. Satan likes to make you think that all these problems are because of God. He would like to get in your head and tell you, "Well, if God is love, then why is He allowing you to suffer like this?" Or "If God is good, if God is love, then why do innocent children suffer?"

All humanity suffers because we have rebelled against God and chosen to follow Satan. God has come to our rescue and desires to restore our life and joy. Jesus comes with gladness because He has the unmatched power to soundly conquer Satan and destroy his rule over our life. All Jesus needs us to do is turn to Him, acknowledge our sin, and bring our words to Him. Jesus will heal us. Jesus will gladly set us free.

Jesus hates what Satan and sin have done to you. Because Jesus loves you, He came to you. Even when you hated Jesus, He still came to you in love. Jesus came to do something about what happened to you. He hates what has happened to you and has come to put an end to these abuses. He hates what you have suffered. He hates your loneliness. He hates your orphan spirit. He hates the toll disease has taken on your body. He hates the fear that torments you. He hates what your abuse has done to you. So, the Creator has come to make a new you. One cry out of you and Jesus comes running – He cannot help it; He loves you! *"Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies"* (Psalms 103:3-4).