

We can be happy with Christ in our troubles

*'Blessed (Happy) are the people who know
the joyful sound! LORD, they walk in the
light of Your face.'* Psalm 89:15

*'Light is sown like seed for the righteous,
And gladness for the upright in heart. Be
joyful in the Lord, you righteous ones, And
praise the mention of His holy name.'*

Psalm 97:11-12

We can be happy with Christ in the times of our troubles, because the school of Providence in suffering, is for our good.

“And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying, “THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART, AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM,” “AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE.” Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin. Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus.”
Heb. 15:19

God wills that we should push on into His Presence and live our whole life there. This is to be known to us in conscious experience. It is more than a doctrine to be held, it is a life to be enjoyed every moment of every day.

However, we have accepted this only as a positional (legally) truth, just an idealistic idea that we have access to the Father. But the Father has made Himself actually present, if we will just believe and obey His call to come and abide with Him. Abiding in Christ is living in the closest possible relationship, now made available by God. We are welcomed into that relationship by taking up our cross and following Christ.

God has removed the veil by the blood of Jesus Christ, legally and effectually. On His part there remains no barrier to prevent us coming into His actual presence. But we have created our own veil of division through our fleshly desire to remain as we were, and we fail to take seriously the need to crucify our flesh by offering ourselves as a living sacrifice. Taking up our cross is removing our fleshly veil.

See this theme in A.W. Tozer's book. Removing the Veil. Chapter 3. 'The Pursuit of God.'

When Jesus said "*abide in Me*" He wasn't talking about a legal matter, a good proposition, He was and still is taking about actually joining with Him, by moment by moment loving to remain living in His presence.

We will suffer from the trials and tribulations we must face in the world, but we suffer alone through a lack of the actual presence of the Father and the Son and the Living Spirit of God, who are available for us while we walk through the valley of the shadows of death.

Sovereign Providence is God's best and foremost eye opener about the need to trust in Him in the darkness of the fallen world. As the screws tighten, and the pain increases, we learn about the mystery of the marriage of suffering and joy in the valley of the shadows.

'God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son.'
Rom 8:28-29

We are exalted by God to the degree Christ is exalted in us in the valley of shadows. Love is complete when it finds itself in our love for God. Joy is the inverse of suffering. The more we suffer in Christ, the more joy we will have in Christ. The more put down, the more exalted. For a time weeping and rejoicing are married in Christ. There is no real rejoicing in Christ without accepting the need for tears and a cross with Christ. The purpose for which God allows our suffering is so that we can know the great love of God endures with us for our good as we love and serve Him forever.

'For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.' Rom 8:18

'For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.' Rom 8:24-25

'For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.' Heb 2:10-11

'Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED." But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' Rom 8:35-39

Be happy, have fellowship with those who are blessed in Christ

*“Blessed (Happy) are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed (Happy) are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. “Blessed (Happy) are the gentle, for they will inherit the earth. “Blessed (Happy) are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. “Blessed (Happy) are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. “Blessed (Happy) are the pure in heart, for they will see God. “Blessed (Happy) are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. “Blessed (Happy) are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed (Happy) are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. **Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great.**”*

Matt 5:3-11

The word blessed is 'makarios' in the Greek, which means happy, fortunate, blessed. Consequently, the people of God who walk by the Spirit of Christ are able to take pleasure in pain as they live with Christ, even as we walk in the valley of the shadow of death, and suffer for His name's sake.

Be happy, take pleasure in your pain for your reward is great

“Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in this same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” Matt 5:12

'For it is God who is at work in you, both to desire and to work for His good pleasure.' Phil 2:13

'These whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?'

Rom 8:30-31

Great learning takes place when the words we read express what we have been thinking. This has potential for good and bad. It depends on what we are thinking. Whether our minds are set in the Spirit, or according to the flesh. If our minds are alive in the Spirit, we will be built up by the word of God, and the words written by godly people who live for the

glory of God in Christ who will speak what we have been thinking, according to His word. Obedience to the word of God reaps the blessing of the grace of God that overcomes all opposition by His presence.

'But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.'

2 Cor 12:9-10

While we are to cut away the fleshly ways, God is the vinedresser who prunes the life of everyone who abides in Christ in order to bear the fruit of the Christ life. We need to cut away the veil that separates us from God so we can enjoy the fruit of His presence.

While we are sometimes reluctant to put to death what is earthly in us, God knows exactly where the knife needs to do its best work. And He will not withhold what we need the most to lose, for His sight is impeccable, and His purpose for us undeniable.

'Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.'

Heb 12:1-2

'More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them mere rubbish, so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.'

Phil 3:8-10

Be happy, God intends His children to experience His presence

God gives us Himself. *“God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.”*
Eph 2:4-5

The Lord tells us to be anxious for nothing because we can trust in God's protective care for each of us as His beloved children. This means that when we believe in God, we must trust our life into His powerful hands.

If we walk in the light, we will know our treasurer is Christ, and our hope is in heaven waiting for us in Christ Jesus. If we think we walk in the light, but our hope is still in the world, we can't see because we have a rubbish bin over our heads. If we look to the world, we will forget that, *“God Himself is with us.”*
2 Chron 13:12

Let it be known from the very beginning, the reason God gives us Himself in Christ is that without Him living in us by His Spirit, and us abiding faithfully in Him, we will never be truly happy.

The cure for all our anxiety is God Himself. God wants us to enjoy His presence as we live by faith as He works out His providence in the world.

The level of anxiety amongst Christians would indicate that many do not actually believe they live in the presence of the All-Powerful God in Christ. But this is not what the Bible teaches us.

"Christians,' declares Scougal, 'know by experience that true religion is a union of the soul with God, a real participation of the divine nature, the very image of God drawn upon the soul, or, in the apostle's phrase, “it is Christ formed within us”. "It is 'life', the life of God within, in the sense of being spontaneous energy actively responding to the grace of God set forth in the gospel. Scougal calls it an inward, free and self-moving principle ... a new nature instructing and prompting'. This is ordinarily termed "faith in Jesus Christ." Henry Scougal "The Life of God in the soul of man"

How does Jesus show Himself to those who love Him?

“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you

also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in Me, and I in you. Whoever has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.” Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, how is it that you will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?” Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”

John 14:18-23

Jesus' words in 14:21 refer to the self-disclosures of Jesus to His disciples in later times *“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

Matt 28:20

Other New Testament passages testify to the dwelling of the Son in the Christian. *‘that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.’* (Eph 3:17) Augustine thought that this text coupled with vv. 25-26 argues for the indwelling of the Triune God in the believer (In Johan. Tract. lxxvi. 4).

A.W. Tozer, in “The presence of God.” Most Christian don't know the reality of the experience of the presence of God.

It is the presence of God that enables us to be joyful in the face of adversity. When we are happy with what God is doing, that should please us and give us pleasure.

Pleasure means: "source of enjoyment, pleasing quality or thing, that which pleases or gratifies the senses or the mind," "to please, give pleasure, be approved" If God is for us, and God only does what is good, then we should be pleased He is working for our good.

This is the paradox of pain and pleasure. But one day, the pleasure to come will far outweighs the pain in this world. There is no personal fellowship apart from the experience of the presence of God in the valley of the shadow of death. Taking pleasure in our pain is the same as taking pleasure in God who has ordained our pain for His glory.

The test of faith is trusting in the unknown mystery of God's good pleasure, in the purifying fire of His Majestic Sovereignty, working for the good of those who love Him, and are called according to His purpose.

From the Forward "Experiencing the Presence of God" A.W. Tozer

And it's only a mystery until we have been released from the encumbrances of this earthly flesh, and stand in the presence of the glory of God, seeing Him face to face.

For those who don't love Him and live for Him, it's just pain piled up on pain.

Be happy, we need to experience the presence of God

“This basic truth before us is that it is possible for us to know God in a degree of intimacy that is progressive as well as dynamic. The apostle Paul said, *"That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death"* (Phil. 3:10). That is the goal and what we are after: to know God in an increasing level of intimacy from day to day.” John Piper "God is the Gospel"

“When Jesus was raised and went back to heaven, He did not leave the disciples without His presence and power, His fellowship and help. He had said to His disciples, *"You know [the Spirit of truth] for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you"* (John 14:17-18). In other words, when the Spirit comes, He will be the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit will be for us the presence and the power of Christ Himself. The fellowship of Christ, promised in the gospel, happens by the Spirit's presence in us.” John Piper "God is the Gospel"

Be happy, we have Fellowship with God

“For the first, I shall only produce some few places of Scripture to confirm it, that it is so: *"God is faithful, by whom you were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord"* (1 Cor. 1:9). This is that whereunto all the saints are called, and wherein, by the faithfulness of God, they shall be preserved, even fellowship with Jesus Christ our Lord. We are called of God the Father, as the Father, in pursuit of His love, to communion with the Son, as our Lord. *"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with*

him, and he with Me" (Rev. 3:20; cf. John 14:23). Certainly this is fellowship, or I know not what is. Christ will sup with believers: He refreshes Himself with His own graces in them, by His Spirit bestowed on them." John Owen "Communion with the Triune God"

"A devout man bears everywhere with him his own Comforter Jesus, and says unto Him, *"Be present with me, O Lord. Jesus, in every time and place. Let this be my consolation, to be cheerfully willing to do without all human comfort. And if Your consolation be wanting, let Your will, and just trial of me be unto me as the greatest comfort."* "He will not always chide: neither will He keep His anger for ever." Psalm 103:9

Thomas A Kempis "Of the Imitation of Christ"

Living in the presence of God requires effort

"Unfortunately, many Christians settle for less than God's conscious, manifest presence in their daily walk. There is a strain of loneliness infecting many Christians, which only the presence of God can cure. Why do so many Christians shy away from the holy presence of God? God's face (His realised. manifested and enjoyed presence) may be the treasure of all God's people.

The struggle to come and stay in the manifest presence of God is well worth the effort. The one who breaks through the self-imposed veil will discover a waiting presence that will grace and bless his or her life with the pleasing aroma of adoration and praise for the rest of their earthly days."

A.W. Tozer. Experiencing the presence of God.

"The Discipline of the Daily Expectation of God's Presence. This seems to be something taken for granted, and yet I wonder: How many Christians really harbour within their own spirit the daily expectation of God's presence? How many truly expect a personal encounter with God?.....Let me quickly point out that this expectation must be based on the Bible and not some esoteric hope. The Christian must fearlessly repudiate anything not in harmony with the plain teaching of the Scriptures.....Each day presents a new

opportunity to experience God and fellowship with Him. Nothing should so occupy the mind of the Christian than discovering God in his day." A.W. Tozer. "Experiencing the Presence of God"

"Make Room for His Presence. To experience the presence of God is a pilgrimage of utter delight and fascination for the believer. How sad for some who live their entire lives in a way that everything can be explained. Oh, my friend, make room for mystery in your Christian life!" A.W. Tozer. "Experiencing the Presence of God"

Living in the presence of God is not for those who want to live for themselves.

Experiencing the presence of God demands we love Him more than all things and people. Living in His presence also requires our devoted obedience and loyalty. Living in His presence cannot happen without sincere diligence and perseverance in separating ourselves from the influence of the world and the flesh as prescribed in the word of God.

We cannot take God's word out of the context He has placed it. This is how heresy begins. When we don't want to hear what God is actually saying through His servants, we throw them under the bus. Our problem is we don't want to trust God in all our circumstances, so we form our own opinions. Then we are left without God's peace and comfort in the valley of the shadows.

Therefore, our foremost hope and desire must be our heavenly home as we seek first to live for the kingdom of God. Seeking the kingdom of God first means taking control of our thinking, so that when we are not required to concentrate on some tasks at hand, we don't allow our thoughts to naturally return to worldly troubles and fleshly desires. *'For those who are in accord with the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are in accord with the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.'*

Rom 8:5

God offers pleasure in our pain through faith. With some effort, a time will soon come when nothing will satisfy us in the same way as

mediating on the person of Christ, and words that highlight His excellency.

It is mostly our attachment to the world and self-interest that limits our experience of the presence of God. And this also prevents us gaining the best insight into the truth of God's written word. Cleaving to God's presence compensates for the tribulations we endure in the world. For God is our comforter "*who comforts us in all our affliction*" so we can comfort others in their time of need. 2 Cor 1:4

We can continue to get on the windmill of our minds, we will be going around and around with the cares and interests of the world, and not realise for a moment that we have been deceived and robbed ourselves of the opportunity to have precious fellowship with God that will enable us to become more like Jesus Christ our Lord. It's simple really, from which realm of attachment in our minds will we gain the peace and love we desperately need in order to prepare ourselves more earnestly for heaven? Are we willing to apply the diligence required to enjoy the pleasure of the presence of God at this time, or will we ignore the potential for light and truth, to just languish in the mediocrity of not really living according to the provisions of the providence of God that provide for us in the fallen world?

Fellowship with God can make up for what is lacking in the world until we get home to glory. Do we love God more than the world?

We have a tendency to pay too much attention to the darkness of the world. The darkness we cannot avoid. But by the grace of God, we can see the darkness, but stand in the light of God Almighty who lives in us.

'The mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.' Rom 8:6

It is only when we make God our source of all joy and delight that we begin to be delighted and joyful in the things that He does. We begin to see the world as He does. We find joy and pleasure by noticing Him in everything. We see the way He is working all things for our good.

Being happy in the providence of God is knowing God and following God's way. The salvation of Jesus has the goal of making us able to know God in a way that we faithfully in follow Him, so we become like Him.

"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."

John 17:3

Be Happy with God

'Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord set up, not man.'

Heb 8:1-2

'For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation: for by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or rulers, or authorities— all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.'

Col 1:13-17

There is no great distance between the domain of darkness, and the kingdom of His beloved Son. For even now we who have been given eyes to see can look into heaven and see Christ on the throne.

'Therefore, if you have been raised with Christ, keep seeking the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on the things that are above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.'

Col 3:1-3

Jesus Christ saved us so we can be in the presence of God who is nearby. He sees all things, and He hears all things, for He is closer to us than our own breath. When we are unfaithful His is always there.

Jesus didn't have to travel very far from heaven to be born of the incorruptible image of God. This appearance of the divine life in Christ is not hard to accept if we trust in the mystery of godliness. And the mystery continues, for when we receive faith from God we are born again in the image of God in Christ. New birth gives access to God. And while Jesus walked amongst us, He was always in the bosom of God. In Christ we too are in the bosom of the Father.

John 10:30

There is No separation between the Lord and us, we are one life in God. Jesus came to remove the veil that hides the presence of God from sin and sinners, so that we can have one life with God in Him.

*"I am not asking on behalf of these alone, but also for those who believe in Me through their word, that they may all be one; just as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, **that they also may be in Us**, so that the world may believe that You sent Me."*
John 17:20-21

By the blood of Christ and the power of the Spirit means we can be with God through the faith He provides to the repentant heart. Those who now live for Christ have been given the privilege of being united with God so that God in Christ now lives in them.

*'To whom God willed to make known what the wealth of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles is, the mystery that is **Christ in you**, the hope of glory.'*
Col 1:27

*'I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but **Christ lives in me**; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.'*
Gal 2:20

*'so that **Christ may dwell in your hearts** through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love.'*
Eph 3:17

*'If **Christ is in you**, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.'*
Rom 8:10

*'Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognise this about yourselves, that **Jesus Christ is in you**— unless indeed you fail the test?'*
2 Cor 13:5

God is near, we dwell on earth but we live in heaven, in the kingdom of God's Son.

*"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, **I will be with you**; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you."*

Isaiah 43:1-2

"Peace is what I leave with you; it is my own peace that I give you. I do not give it as the world does. Do not be worried and upset; do not be afraid."

John 14:27

Our spirit has been joined to the Spirit of God so that we can know we walk with God in the valley of the shadows of death. Therefore, we don't go to church to enter into the presence of God. We live in the presence of God to go to church.

Jesus wants us to follow Him and be happy like Him

'Blessed (happy) are those whose way is blameless, Who walk in the Law of the Lord. Blessed (happy) are those who comply with His testimonies, And seek Him with all their heart. They also do no injustice; They walk in His ways. You have ordained Your precepts, That we are to keep them diligently. Oh that my ways may be established To keep Your statutes! Then I will not be ashamed When I look at all Your commandments. I will give thanks to You with uprightness of heart, When I learn Your righteous judgments.'

Psalms 119:1-7

Taking pleasure in God's providence results in worship. The purpose of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. *'For the Lord takes pleasure in His people; He will glorify the lowly with salvation. The godly ones shall be jubilant in glory; They shall sing for joy on their beds.'*

Psalms 149:4-5

In the presence of Christ, we can give thanks in all things. (1 Thess 5:18) God's medicine for pain is to take pleasure in worship. Gratefulness is healing for the soul because it means looking to God and not our circumstances. *The Lord favours those who fear Him, Those who wait for His faithfulness."*

Psalms 147:11

*'O satisfy us in the morning with Your lovingkindness, That we may sing for joy and be glad all our days. **Make us glad according to the days You have afflicted us, And the years we have seen evil.** Let Your work appear to Your servants And Your majesty to their children. Let the favour of the Lord our God be upon us; And confirm for us the work of our hands; Yes, confirm the work of our hands.'*

Psalms 90:14-17

'For You, O LORD, have made me glad by what You have done, I will sing for joy at the works of Your hands. Psalm 92:4

Be Happy with Christ our Lord

"You say correctly that I am a king. For this purpose I have been born, and for this I have come into the world: to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to My voice." John 18:37

Be happy with Christ our King, because if you live for Him now, He abides in you now. And He is coming to take you to His Father's Home.

"Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you." John 14:1-2

One glorious day, our glorious day, we will have a wedding cake to share with the Lion who looks like a Lamb, who reigns forevermore.

Be happy with God, the day of restoration for all creation is coming. This is the day evil will be judged and the people of God will be enthroned with their Christ.

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among the people, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." Rev 21:1-4

Be Happy with Christ Jesus our Lord and Master.

Abide in Christ Jesus, He is your life.

Living Water Resources

Come to the River

‘O satisfy us in the morning with Your lovingkindness, That we may sing for joy and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days You have afflicted us, And the years we have seen evil.

*Let Your work appear to Your servants And Your majesty to their children. Let the favour of the Lord our God be upon us; And confirm for us the work of our hands; **Yes, confirm the work of our hands.**’*

Psalm 90:14-17

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