

WHY THE JOY OF THE LORD IS OUR STRENGTH!

BY PATRICIA WILLOUGHBY

Leader guide and Bible passages are available online or by calling the LWML Office.

Opening Prayer: Dear Father in heaven, reveal to us the strength there is to be found in You and through your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. Fill our hearts with Your joy. Amen.

Lacking Joy

Joy derived from circumstances can be ever so fleeting. Getting a new job — which wears off after the first six months. The joy of a new baby — which wanes after several sleepless nights or a difficult diagnosis. The big deal is concluded — but worry over details yet to come prevents sleep. Why do we not have lasting joy?

Ecclesiastes 2:24–26; 1 Timothy 6:17 _____

Psalms 143:3; John 10:10 _____

John 3:18; Romans 6:23 _____

When the Israelites rebelled, God called them to come back to Him through the prophet Isaiah (30:15a): *In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength.* He continues to draw all to Himself through the Holy Spirit, His Word, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

Living Joy

There is eternal joy in the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, even when we come into various trials — for they serve a purpose. List several reasons for that everlasting joy.

John 3:16–17; John 10:9–11 _____

Ephesians 2:18–20; Revelation 3:4–6 _____

2 Corinthians 5:1–2 _____

Colossians 1:26–28 _____

James 1:2–4 _____

John 16:33 _____

Hebrews 13:5b _____

No one likes suffering, yet all people suffer because of the fallen nature of the world. We can remember how God used Christ's sufferings to save us and that He will also use our suffering to bring Christ's saving work to others who have no hope. When we face temptation and trouble in this world, we can take heart that Christ has overcome the world for our sake and gives us the lasting peace that only He can give.*

Lasting Joy

We can stand firm against the devil, the joy stealer!

John 14:3 _____

James 4:6–8a _____

Nehemiah 8:10b _____

Read Together **Psalms 51:10–12.**

Conclusion: When we are hurting, struggling or grieving, we can find our strength in the eternal joy of the LORD because Jesus is greater in us than he that is in the world. (1 John 4:4) Whatever our lot in life is, we can say without hesitation, "It is well with our souls."

Closing Hymn: "Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus" (LSB #685; LW #381; TLH #409).

Closing Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, fill our hearts with Your unspeakable joy so that Your light shines through us, especially when we are struggling. Let others see the hope of Christ in us. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*Based on notes for Colossians 1:26–29, page 2045, and John 16:25–33, pg 1816, *Lutheran Study Bible*.

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