Joyful, Joyful!

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday March 12th, 2023

Text: Jude 24-25

# Intro

1. Jude 24-25: Jude ends his epistle on a positive note, one of praise and hope.
	1. “To make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless…” – Jude 24 (Redemption).
		1. Ephesians 5:27: Not having “spot or wrinkle or any such thing”
		2. “Holy and blameless” (Same as Jude 24: *G299 amomos:* Without blame)
		3. This is necessary if we are to be permitted in the presence of God's glory!
	2. “…With great joy” – Jude 24
		1. While we are to have joy and “rejoice always” in the Lord (I Thess. 5:16) in this life, when we stand in His glory there will be greater joy!
2. “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee” (1907) by Henry Jackson VanDyke (1852-1933):
	1. A Presbyterian preacher and professor of English literature at Princeton University.
	2. An author of many books, inlcuding *“The Other Wise Man”* (1896).
	3. Wrote the text of the hymn in 1907 while guest-speaking at Williams College and set it to the music of Beethoven’s 9th Symphony’s “Ode to Joy” (aka “Hymn to Joy”).
3. Saints are to “rejoice always” and this hymn reminds us of the joy found in knowing God!

# God is Lord of Creation and the Hearts of Men

1. Stanza 1 demonstrates that the God of creation is also the Lord of our hearts:
	1. “Joyful, joyful, we adore thee, God of glory, Lord of love; Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee, Opening to the sun above. Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; Drive the dark of doubt away; Giver of immortal gladness, Fill us with the light of day.”
2. As flowers open to the sun above, so our hearts should turn toward the God of heaven and be filled with joy – Mark 12:30: Love God with our whole heart, mind, soul, and all our strength
	1. Peter tells us the virtues of a heart turned toward God – *II Peter. 1:5-11*
		1. Moral Excellence (Virtue): The determination to do what’s right.
		2. Knowledge: Knowledge of the word of God for it tells you what is right.
		3. Self-control: Application of that knowledge to your life.
		4. Perseverance: Remaining steadfast to the Lord and His cause.
		5. Godliness: Being like God, as He would have you to be.
		6. Brotherly kindness: Tender affection toward brethren in Christ.
		7. Love: Devotion to God, Christ and your fellow man – Motivation for obedience!
3. As the sun melts the gloomy fog, so we can ask God to drive the dark of doubt in our lives away (Malachi 4:2)
	1. I John 1:5-7: God is light – when we walk in the light as Jesus is Light (Jn. 8:12), we will be in the right relationship with God to ask Him for help when in trouble *(Heb. 4:14-16).*
4. As the sun is the bringer of light for life, so God is the Giver of immortal gladness who can fill us with the light of day (James 1:17) – John 8:12: Jesus is the Light of the world!
	1. In eternity with God there is no need of the sun or any light for He is the light! (Rev. 22:5)
5. God is the Great I Am, the Creator of heaven and earth, and should be Lord of our hearts!
	* + 1. God Created and Upholds All Things
6. Stanza 2 reminds us that God’s physical creation speaks of His glory and so directs our worship to the Creator Himself:
	1. “All Thy works with joy surround Thee, Earth and heaven reflect Thy rays; Stars and angels sing around Thee, Center of unbroken praise. Field and forest, vale and mountain, Flowery meadow, flashing sea, Chanting bird, and flowing fountain Call us to rejoice in Thee.”
7. All of God’s works point us joyfully to praise Him who made them (Psalm 145:10-12; 148)
	1. Romans 1:20: Creation alone leaves man without excuse!
8. Even the very stars of the heavens declare His glory and show His handiwork (Psalm 19:1-4*)*
9. All the fields, forests, vales, mountains, meadows, seas, birds, the microscopic and telescopic and unseen things of this world remind us that the earth is the Lord’s and call us to rejoice in Him (Psalm 24:1-2).
	1. Hebrews 1:1-3: Jesus was there “in the beginning” and created the worlds and upholds them by the “word of His power.” (God spoke the world into existence – Genesis 1: “God said”)
	2. Colossians 1:15-17: “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” – Colossians 1:16-17. (Luke 19:37-40: “The stones cry out!”)
	3. Exodus 3:13-15: God said His name is “I AM” (”I Exist”) which means He has no beginning or ending, not restrained to any time period, but ever present! (John 8:58)
10. God created, and the works of His mighty hand shout His praises!

# God Blesses Man

1. Stanza 3 emphasizes the spiritual blessings that this same creative God provides for the inner needs of man:
	1. “Thou art giving and forgiving, Ever blessing, ever blessed, Well-spring of the joy of living, Ocean-depth of happy rest! Thou our Father, Christ our brother, All who live in love are Thine; Teach us how to love each other, Lift us to the joy divine.”
2. The God who is giving is also forgiving so that we might have the joy of living and happy rest (Psalm 103:8-14; Matthew 11:28-30)
	1. Matthew 1:21; John 1:29: Jesus was sent to save the world from sin! (Luke 19:10)
3. Because He is our Father, He sent Jesus to partake of flesh and blood as our Brother, and through death bring salvation (Hebrews 2:14-18)
	1. Ephesians 1:7: In Christ’s blood we have forgiveness and redemption from sin!
4. Those who “abide” in Christ have the love of God! (I John 3:23-24)
	1. John 13:34-35: Jesus said His disciples are to be known by their love for one another!
5. God sent Christ to teach us how to love one another and to forgive all of mankind their sins!
	* + 1. God Grants the Victory
	1. Stanza 4 shows the ultimate effect of our relationship with God is victory over the trials of life and eternal triumph as we march onward to be with God:
		1. “Mortals, join the mighty chorus Which the morning stars began; Father love is reigning o’er us, Brother love binds man to man. Ever singing, march we onward, Victors in the midst of strife; Joyful music leads us sunward In the triumph song of life.”
	2. God’s children are invited to join the mighty chorus of joy which began at the dawn of creation (Job 38:4-7) – Man praised Jesus, for if they didn’t “the stones would cry out” (Luke 19:40).
	3. To do this, we must acknowledge the reign of God in love over our lives which in turn binds us to one another as fellow citizens of His kingdom: Philippians 3:20
	4. As we sing together and march according to His directions, we can be victors in the midst of strife: Romans 8:37-39; I John 5:4

#### God’s ultimate purpose was to make it possible for us to live with Him in heaven evermore.

#### Matthew 25:21, 34: Heaven has been reserved for the faithful before the creation of the world.

#### I Peter 1:3-4: Our souls have a reservation in heaven!

#### I Thessalonians 4:16-18: One day we will “always be with the Lord!”

* 1. God is the author of salvation and has provided a means to live with Him forever more!

# Conclusion

1. God’s word has a lot to say about the importance of genuine joy in the life of each Christian.
2. Life is filled with trials, heartaches, disappointments, tragedy and strife.
3. With trust and hope in God we can see the beauty of life through the trials and storms of life, and we can certainly find many good aspects of life which should bring us joy (I Thess. 5:16).
4. It starts by remembering that every good gift comes from God (James 1:17).
5. If we abide in Christ and remain faithful we will “stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy!” (Jude 24)
6. Just as creation itself praises God (Psalm 148), may we ever express our praise to Him as we sing, “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee!”
7. If you are not a Christian, you need to be! Repent and be baptized in the only name that saves! (Acts 4:12)
8. If an erring Christian, repent and be renewed!
9. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!