

Joy Remains amidst Deep Hurts

Galatians 5 identifies the characteristics which define a real Christian: the fruit of the Holy Spirit. When a person comes to faith in Christ, the Spirit makes his home with them and gradually transforms their minds and hearts. The 'fruit' consists of qualities which are Christ-like and which should grow and grow as we mature as believers-though we will always fall far short of the character of Christ. The second fruit is that of Joy. This is no 'happy clappy' type of joy which exists only when circumstances are favourable. Rather it is that deep sense of peace and rest that comes with the personal knowledge of Jesus the Christ. The world around may fall apart and yet this joy is one that speaks: *fear not, though you will have troubles, I have overcome the world-there is purpose in all things; look beyond this world, to what is real but yet unseen.* When you come to *really know* that your very existence has a purpose beyond what the world tells us, the world looks a very different place. Amidst the pain caused by abuse, amidst the very real emotional, social and physical consequences of abuse, it is Christ who makes possible this deep seated Joy. The Joy exists through and alongside the hurts of this world. It makes the hurts bearable. This Joy cannot be conjured up, it cannot be developed through counselling or a self help guide, it cannot be created through will power. The only way to receive it is through entering a relationship with Christ Himself. The Spirit is freely given to all who receive Christ as their personal saviour and with the Spirit comes the privilege of experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit in developing within us a 'way' beyond what the world offers, beyond what the world can understand. It makes possible a real sense and experience of joy even amidst the deepest of hurts. Christian reader-remember the power that now resides in you. Unbeliever-seek out his joy by seeking the Joy-Giver Himself: Jesus Christ.