

New Hope Sermon Shalom Delight in Salvation

The Psalms exhort us repeatedly to “Make a joyful noise unto the Lord,” just as we said together in Psalm 100: **(pp.)** *Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth! Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! ³ Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. ⁴ Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! ⁵ For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.*

Joy in our salvation

We sing God’s praises because God’s steadfast love endures forever, because His faithfulness extends to all generations, because He has made us and takes care of us as the sheep of his pasture. Because He is good!

Psalm 95 makes the source of our joy even more specific: **(pp.)** *Oh come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!* **(pp.)** That’s our basis for shalom: We grow in our experience of well-being as we delight in the God of our salvation – the One who gives us salvation through Christ.

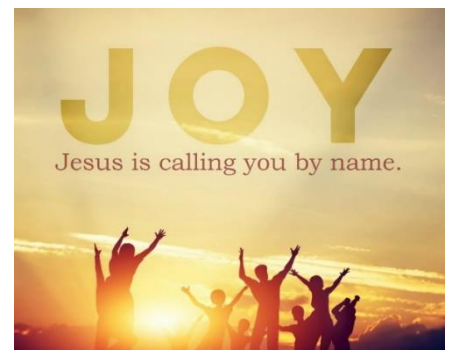
(pp.) Psalm 92:4 says: “You thrill me Lord with all you have done for me; I sing for Joy at the work of your hands.” When we can honestly say that, we will have inner rest and peace in our hearts. The initial basis of **(pp.)** shalom comes from salvation through Christ. So, today, as we pursue our theme of shalom, let’s itemize all the Lord has done for us in our salvation. So many of these areas are mentioned in the psalms:

1. First, **(pp.)** He has clothed us in His robe of righteousness.

(pp.) J.P. Mahaney said, “What joy the gospel gives me! I can approach the throne of God with confidence – not because I’ve done a good job at my spiritual duties but because I am clothed in the righteousness of Christ.”

But this was made possible by Christ’s costly sacrifice. Everything we laud as our righteousness God calls filthy rags (Isa.64:6). It is only through Christ’s shed blood that we are made righteous in him and clothed with His righteousness. How it works is described in this excellent illustration from a believer in Durban, South Africa: **(pp.)** “The Old Testament word for worm is *tola'ath*. This little worm from the Middle East is something like the cochineal of Mexico. When these creatures are crushed, the blood makes a brilliant crimson dye used in the bright Mexican garments. In Palestine and Syria, the *tola'ath* similarly makes a beautiful permanent scarlet dye. It is very expensive and worn by the rich and noble. In a sense, the word *scarlet* means “the splendor of the worm.” The scarlet producing worm is even used in a text prophetic of the Messiah. “I am a worm (*tola'ath*), and no man” (Psalm 22:6). The glorious garments of our salvation have been procured as a result of Christ’s death and suffering. He became the *tola'ath* —crushed in death—so that we may be robed in glory. *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia; Raymond Ferreira*. We celebrate communion every week at worship to remind ourselves of the great cost Jesus paid for our salvation – the Lamb slain for us.

2. We have joy in our salvation because it brings us into God’s family and Jesus calls us by name. As it says in John 10: *Jesus said: I am the good shepherd....My sheep listen to my voice. I call them by name and lead them out...I know my sheep and my sheep know me.*” (v. 11, 3, 14). This is one of the unique aspects of our salvation, beloved, in distinction from every other religion: We have a God who knows our name and has sacrificed himself to call us into His family and offer us His abundant life- “*I am come that they may have life and have it to the full.*”



3. And we have that life to replace the burdens and wailing and despair of our former life. Jesus turns our wailing into dancing. He removes our sackcloth – the garment worn at death – and **(pp.)** clothes us instead with joy.

He removes our cloth of despair – that stifles us like a heavy wool coat worn in the dead of summer and gives us a garment of praise instead (Ps. 30 and Isa. 61).

4. Then, in the midst of our inadequacy and our weakness, we have **(pp.)** "the Lord as our strength and our shield – our protector and our deliverer. This is what makes us secure in the face of great trouble and opposition from those who oppose God and fight against His people. **(pp.)**" As Psalm 3 says *You, Lord, are a shield around me, my glory and the One who lifts my head.* The forces of evil are too strong for us, beloved, but Christ has nailed every evil spirit to the cross and rose, triumphing over them. As His followers, we can share in His victory. As we see God do this again and again, our heart does leap in joy and we want to praise him, the God of our salvation.

THE LORD IS MY
STRENGTH
AND MY SHIELD;
My heart trusts
in Him,
& He helps me.
My heart
leaps for **JOY**
& with my song
I **PRAISE HIM.**
Psalm 28:7
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And finally, #5 – the wedding analogy.

Last week I woke up early as the sun was just ascending in the sky and the verse God brought was Isa. 61:10. As it says in the NIV: **(pp.)** “*I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God for He has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness.*” “*Delight greatly*” or, as the NLT says “*overwhelmed with joy in the Lord!*” “The word for “delight” means to be *soft and pliable*. We might say be *moldable* or *teachable*. It means more than being happy or excited about God. Earl D. Wilson in *Does God Really Love Me?* Christianity Today, Vol. 33, no. 6.

The Message describes it as: *He dressed me up in a suit of salvation, he outfitted me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom who puts on a tuxedo and a bride a jeweled tiara.* In America, particularly in the more northern states, June is wedding month. So every weekend, even if you go to Cantigny Park, you will see various wedding parties shooting videos before or after their weddings – and the groom is indeed in his tux and the bride is resplendent with her jewels and tiaras. These beautiful clothes make the wedding day distinctive and are part of the festival of joy surrounding the occasion. No ordinary jeans and tee-shirts on this occasion. And no solitary dress-up for one. The wedding attire is communal – for the entire wedding party and their guests.

There is joy in a wedding – **(pp.)** as you can see in the wedding picture of Keith and I as we processed down the aisle as husband and wife, decades ago in 1960!

A wedding analogy is another picture of what shalom means in terms of our salvation – when we have experienced salvation in Jesus Christ, there is great delight in our relationship with the Lord and great joy in the beauty of the clothing He has provided for us. And joy in the customs in the marriage event that are part of the story and part of the delight – cross-culturally as well.



In the western wedding ceremony the husband is given the cue to “now kiss the bride” after they have said their vows to one another. But here’s what happened in one cross-cultural setting:

“A Japanese couple, recent arrivals in the States, were getting married. Despite their limited exposure to western customs, the American-style wedding went well. But when the minister invited the couple to kiss, nothing happened. Surprised, the minister turned to the bride and said, “How about a little kiss?” Not wanting to offend, she shyly leaned forward and kissed him!”

Still, no matter what happens during the ceremony, the joy is shared by everyone there. Just as the participants



rejoice at a wedding, God's people delight greatly in the Lord and experience the joy of salvation **as a group**. Like the frolicking lamb, *may your faithful people sing for joy* -to the rock of OUR salvation. We sing as God's people, the sheep of His pasture, to the One who knows US by name. He is OUR strength and shield, our glory and the lifter up of our heads. Experiencing all these realities brings shalom to our minds and hearts.

But I discovered still another joyful wedding story that describes a further aspect of our salvation – Jesus does it all for us, just as Hanna's husband did it all for her: **(pp. black)**

“Hannah Peterson was involved in a serious car accident just one month before her wedding in Ontario. She broke her pelvis in three places, punctured a kidney, broke some ribs, and suffered a concussion and partial hearing loss during the July 18 collision.

Despite being confined to a wheelchair, Hannah was determined not to let the accident affect her big day on August 25. So when it came time to walk down the aisle, Hannah's father wheeled her part of the way down, and then her fiancé;, Stuart, tenderly carried her the rest of the way.

Hannah, 23, who along with her now-husband is originally from Northern Ireland, said that despite her predicament, the only emotion she allowed herself to feel on the day was joy. "Obviously, being in the wheelchair and not able to walk was very upsetting for me on my wedding day," she told reporters.



Because of her injuries, Hannah Patterson sat during most of her wedding, but wanted to stand for one very important part. **(pp.)** "I was determined to stand for my vows," she said. "It was hard on me to stand for that long even with Stuart holding me up, but it doesn't seem obvious in the pictures and video the pain I was in."

Hannah has continued to heal in the two months since the nuptials, and is now able to walk around the house using a cane. She added: "Stuart has never left my side during all of this ... He was strong for both of us. He always made me see how blessed I was." So she had delight to wake up each morning as his bride – whom he still cared for, nurtured and protected. It's a lovely illustration of our attitude toward Christ – who has become the groom for the church as His bride.”

And God wants us to pass that joy on to others.

Henri Nouwen writes:

I have a friend who radiates joy, not because his life is easy, but because he habitually recognizes God's presence in the midst of all human suffering, his own as well as others'. ... My friend's joy is contagious. The more I am with him, the more I catch glimpses of the sun shining through the clouds. Yes, I know there is a sun, even though the skies are covered with clouds. While my friend always spoke about the sun, I kept speaking about the clouds, until one day I realized that it was the sun that allowed me to see the clouds. Those who keep speaking about the sun while walking under a cloudy sky are messengers of hope, the true saints of our day. *Henri J. Nouwen in Here and Now: Living in the Spirit. Christianity Today, Vol. 40, no. 13.*

So, in application: 1. Are you delighted day by day with your salvation? 2. Are you experiencing this joy of salvation in community? And 3. Are you giving testimony of God's salvation when others are in the midst of the darkness of sadness that overtakes their lives? If yes, you know shalom in salvation. Thank God.