



DAILY DEVOTIONAL FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY FOR AUGUST 19, 2011

THE JOY OF GOD

The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing. (Zephaniah 3:17, ESV)

MORE THAN ONE PHOTOGRAPH EMERGED FROM THE PGA CHAMPIONSHIP celebration showing a reflection of Keegan Bradley's kiss reflected in the Wanamaker Trophy. Odd as they may be, we've come to recognize such silly smooches as part of a winner's exuberant expression.

But what of God when He wins? What would His excitement look like? Zephaniah 3:17 gives us insight into the joy of God. In the context of the passage, we must recognize that God's pleasure follows His pain. His people have wandered far from Him in their hearts, and God has been grieved. But looking forward, God reveals through His prophet that a wonderful age is coming, an eternity of salvation and rejoicing.

Distant as this ancient prophecy may seem from us, we can find in it an exact picture of our own life and our own soul's desire for God's lasting redemption.

First, we know that we live in continuing exile—our sin has separated us in our present condition from the fullness of God's kingdom.

Second, we know that God is in our midst all the same, by His Holy Spirit; He sees our hearts and recognizes our needs.

Third, we have certain hope that a way has been made by God for us—the salvation we have in Christ, who is Himself already seated at the right hand of God.

And fourth, we can take joy ourselves in the joy of God as it will be on the day of His thrill. Imagine: He will exult over us with singing! Here is a God who kisses trophies, too. *We* are those trophies, bought at the price of His Son's blood, and beloved by the God of the universe. In the end, He will have won us back to Himself for eternity by His love. Let me tell you—in my breast right now, His joy is mine. Hallelujah!

A stark picture

Read Deuteronomy 28:45-48. In this stern warning, for what reason did God say He would chastise His people with dire consequences? Why do you think joy is so important to God in this passage and in our contemporary walk with Him?

The heart of a king

Read Psalm 21:1-7. What caused King David to rejoice in this psalm? How did he express this joy?

Joyful expressions

Read Ephesians 5:18-20. What joyful expressions of God's people are to accompany fullness of the Holy Spirit? How does our joy in God unite our hearts to God's joy in the salvation He has for us?
