

## Easter in July

**Romans 6:4 HCSB** Therefore we were buried with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in a new way of life.

### Introduction:

The research organization Public Agenda recently found that 79 percent of us say that lack of respect and courtesy is a serious problem, and 61 percent feel things have gotten worse in recent years. People everywhere are grumpy, irritable, and rude—in stark contrast to the kind of life the Bible describes as one of joy and rejoicing.

This same verse in the Phillips Version reads: “Just as He was raised from the dead by that splendid revelation of the Father’s power so we too might rise to live life on a new plane altogether.”

The Bible insists we’re to live on a new plane, as though every day were Easter. The Christian life is joy all year long.

### 1. Easter Brought Joy to Jesus.

Prior to the Cross, our Lord was troubled.

- **Matthew 26:38 HCSB** Then He said to them, "My soul is swallowed up in sorrow--to the point of death. Remain here and stay awake with Me."
- **John 12:27 HCSB** "Now My soul is troubled. What should I say--Father, save Me from this hour? But that is why I came to this hour."

But what was His attitude when He rose from the dead? In Psalm 16, a messianic Psalm that foretells the resurrection, Jesus is quoted in advance as saying: “Therefore my heart is glad, and my spirit rejoices (v.9)... In your presence is abundant joy; in your right hand are eternal pleasures.” (v.11)

We read in Hebrews 12:2

- **Hebrews 12:2 HCSB** keeping our eyes on Jesus, the source and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that lay before Him endured a cross and despised the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of God's throne.

When the sun rose on that premier Easter, when the lightning of resurrection struck Him and the voltage of glorification surged through His body, when the tomb unsealed itself and the stone rolled away and the Risen Christ emerged into the freshness of that new day, He was infused and enthused with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

### 2. Easter Brought Joy to His Followers.

A. The women hurried from the tomb “with fear and great joy.”

- **Matthew 28:8 HCSB** So, departing quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, they ran to tell His disciples the news.

Our hearts are big enough to hold more than one attitude or emotion at the same time. We can be afraid, yet filled with joy. We can be hurting, yet filled with joy. We can be grief-stricken, yet filled with joy.

B. When Jesus revealed Himself to the disciples they could hardly believe it, because of joy and amazement.

- **Luke 24:40 HCSB** Having said this, He showed them His hands and feet.

Compare that to

- **Luke 24:52 HCSB** After worshiping Him, they returned to Jerusalem with great joy.

They returned to Jerusalem in great (Greek: *mega*-) joy.

C. The disciples were glad (NIV: overjoyed) when they saw the Lord—not their circumstances, but the Lord.

- **John 20:19-20 HCSB** In the evening of that first day of the week, the disciples were *gathered together* with the doors locked because of their fear of the Jews. Then Jesus came, stood among them, and said to them, "**Peace to you!**" **20** Having said this, He showed them His hands and His side. So the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

### 3. Easter Brings Joy to Us.

- **John 16:19-22 HCSB** Jesus knew they wanted to question Him, so He said to them, "**Are you asking one another about what I said, 'A little while and you will not see Me; again a little while and you will see Me'?**" **20** "I assure you: You will weep and wail, but the world will rejoice. You will become sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn to joy. **21** When a woman is in labor she has pain because her time has come. But when she has given birth to a child, she no longer remembers the suffering because of the joy that a person has been born into the world. **22** So you also have sorrow now. But I will see you again. Your hearts will rejoice, and no one will rob you of your joy.

Jesus implied that in all of human history, the devil has had but three days of joy. This ungodly world had a three-day period of jubilation. While the body of Jesus was in the borrowed tomb, Satan was ecstatic.

Likewise, in human history there has only been three days of soul-sinking despair for believers—while the body of Jesus was in that tomb. Jesus said, "For a few hours, the world will rejoice and you will weep and mourn. But suddenly your mourning will turn to joy, and the world's joy will turn to grief."

Imagine the sudden reversal of emotions on Easter Sunday. The devil's exaltation was turned inside out, and the disciple's grief became unmitigated joy. Today we who know the risen King, should live a life of sustained, unbroken joy.

The king of a particular country traveled often, but one day a man living near the place remarked, "Well, it looks like the king is home tonight." "How do you know?" asked his friend. "Because the castle is all lit up," the man said.

### Derashot

Have you lost the joy of salvation? Billy Sunday said, "If you have no joy in your religion, there's a leak in your Christianity somewhere." How can we turn the lights back on? How can we plug the leak?

- Confess your lack of joy as sin. The Bible says, "Be joyful! Be glad! Be of good cheer!" Tell God you're sorry you haven't been exhibiting those qualities.
- Focus on the Lord Himself. Rededicate yourself to Him. Our joy flows from our fellowship with Him. Spend time with Him each day in Bible study and prayer. Bring your burdens to Him.
- Make up your mind to be joyful. Abraham Lincoln said that a person is about as happy as he makes up his mind to be. Sometimes we have to be joyful by faith
  - **James 1:2 HCSB** Consider it a great joy, my brothers, whenever you experience various trials,
- The word "joy" occurs 158 times in the Bible (NKJV), and the word "Rejoice" another 287 times. Internalize some of the Bible's great verses about joy
  - **Nehemiah 8:10 HCSB** Then he said to them, "Go and eat what is rich, drink what is sweet, and send portions to those who have nothing prepared, since today is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, because your strength *comes from* rejoicing in the LORD."

- [John 20:20 HCSB](#) Having said this, He showed them His hands and His side. So the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.
  - [James 1:2 HCSB](#) Consider it a great joy, my brothers, whenever you experience various trials,
  - [Philippians 4:4 HCSB](#) Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!
  - [Psalms 118:24 HCSB](#) This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.
- Live as though every day were Easter—because it is!