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SUNDAY, JUNE 9, 2002

OT - ESTER - 3/11 - 13

NT - ~~LUKE~~ Luke - 2/8 - 14

"When God Shouts"

~~It's better to shout than to doubt,
It's better to rise than to fall,
It's better to let the glory out
Than to have no glory at all.~~

~~EARLY STUDENT VOLUNTEERS, ENGLAND~~



I HAVE NEVER read a word of commentary about ~~the Bible~~ in the Bible. Shouting is not normally a part of ~~church~~ ^{A MAIN LINE} worship. In fact, it is considered "out of place" in ~~most~~ ^{MOST} impolite society. I ~~certainly don't want people shouting at me. Do you?~~ Nevertheless, if we are to consider expressions of Christian joy, we cannot ignore ~~it~~ ^{SHOUTING.}

My wife ~~is~~ ^{WAS} anything but a shouter. Quiet and demure, she expressed her witness to Christ firmly, but in characteristically gentle tones. Shouting ~~is~~ ^{WAS} not her cup of tea. ~~She~~

Yet, the Bible tells us that God Almighty expressed Himself with shouts, and so did His Son Jesus. ~~And~~ Many believers have found through the centuries that ~~at~~ ^{WHEN} ~~the~~ ^{IN} joy of the Lord becomes so exhilarating that the only way they can express it is ~~with~~ ^{IT} a shout.



Hundreds
Weld
Men's Chorus
Pittsburgh

A shout of joy can take different forms, ~~of~~. It can be a song sung loudly, ~~or~~ ^{IT CAN BE AN} acclamation or a proclamation. ~~or~~ ^{IT CAN BE} simply an ecstatic crying out, ~~or~~ ^{AS} "Hallelujah!" were expressed as shouts in the Bible. They are occasionally heard in conventional worship services today, but usually in hymns and songs. ~~The~~ The apostle Paul, ~~added~~ added one of the greatest New Testament books to the Bible when he wrote to the Christians of Galatia. In it he asked this ~~question~~ question: "What has happened to all your joy?"¹

At the close of the book of Psalms a shout of joy is raised that is worth repeating. It is found in Psalm 150:

Temporary
Pitman in
Church of Saviour
in Canton

Praise the Lord! . . .
Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet,
Praise him with the harp and lyre,
Praise him with tambourine and dancing,
Praise him with the strings and flute,
Praise him with the clash of cymbals,
Praise him with resounding cymbals.
Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.
Praise the Lord! (NIV)

The hundredth Psalm explains the reason for all ~~the~~ ^{THIS} loudness:

Make a joyful shout to the LORD, all you lands!
Serve the Lord with gladness;
Come before His presence with singing . . .
For the LORD is good;
His mercy is everlasting,
And His truth endures to all generations.

In other words, there come times when due to the goodness of Almighty God, the joy-filled believer simply has to burst forth in noisy exuberance! ~~The~~ The joy of the Lord occasionally gets so exhilarating that it simply cannot contain itself.

Astronomers and cosmologists have discussed at length the possibility of the universe originating with a "big bang." One

such theory contends that the universe was created by the explosion of a mass of hydrogen atoms and is still expanding. Such an ancient explosion presumably sent a spangle of stars and nebulae spinning in every direction. The "big bang" theory is now commonly taught in public schools, ~~though~~^{But} no one has yet explained satisfactorily who or what ~~is what~~ set off the bang. Nor have they told us what was there before the explosion.

Following that theory, some Darwinian adherents teach that a pool of slime on planet Earth started the chain of evolution; and thanks to some improbable configurations and chance fluctuations in the course of time, here we are!

~~It is a theory of evolution which goes:~~

~~The ~~first~~ ~~man~~ ~~was~~ ~~a~~ ~~chimpanzee~~ ~~baboon~~
 Who always ~~came~~ ~~down~~ ~~from~~ ~~the~~ ~~tree~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~beginning~~,
 For he said, "It appears
 that ~~the~~ ~~million~~ ~~of~~ ~~years~~
 I shall certainly ~~be~~ ~~on~~ ~~a~~ ~~tree~~."~~

It is hard for Christians to take evolutionism seriously because its adherents are always changing their premises. The Bible teaches that the beginning of all things was not an explosion of stars as such, but rather it was the proclamation of THE "Word." ~~The~~ "Word" was in the beginning with God, and the "Word" was God. - JOHN 1/1 - GOD SHOOTING - GENESIS 1/2-3

Just how the Word was first proclaimed the Bible does not say, but it does say that "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."² From that verse in the book of Job we can gather that there was some shouting going on somewhere. It charms the mind to think that God Himself, the Great Ruler of heaven, could have suddenly started the creation not with a Big Bang so much as a Big Shout! That is to say, God spoke in His holiness and the universe began, and was, and is.

A strange expression is found in Psalm 47, which describes a magnificent Israelite victory that was being celebrated with great jubilation. It seems people were clapping their hands and exalting the Lord Most High. Then in verse 5 we hear the

psalmist saying, "God has gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet."³ How amazing! Imagine God shouting for joy! Yet there it is, in the divine record.

As might be expected, commentators are quick to explain away ~~the~~ ^{THIS} verse. They say it was not God who shouted, but that the "shout" was the Jewish people's own glad cry of victory over some enemy, which they accompanied with the sound of trumpets and songs of praise.

Well, it is certainly true that shouting was frequently heard in Israel's military history. The shouts of the troops and the blowing of horns, recorded in Joshua 6, brought down the walls of Jericho. But if in Psalm 47 it was the army of Israel rather than God that "went up with a shout," I ask, why didn't the psalmist say so? Why did he say God did it? Why didn't he write instead, "The people have gone up with a shout"?

If it was really God who "went up with a shout," what does that mean to you and me? We are not thinking about some imaginary deity now, we are thinking about our Maker. Did He shout or didn't He? If He did, is He acting like us? For an answer, turn to Genesis 1 and find God saying, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness." So ~~when God shouts in exultation, as He does in Psalm 47, He is not acting like us, but just the opposite: When we shout for joy we are acting like Him!~~

The Bible has some important things to say about shouting that are not often discussed in church; ~~and~~ ~~to look at them.~~

Not always in the Bible did God shout joyfully. In the book of Amos the Almighty roared forth from Mount Zion. In Jeremiah He roared from on high "against all who live on the earth." In Ezekiel His voice was like the sound of many waters, and again like the sound of the wings of the cherubim. In Exodus God spoke out of a bush, in Matthew out of a cloud. In Revelation John wrote that His voice sounded like thunder.⁴

But as ~~we~~ ^{we} read the Bible ~~we~~ ^{we} gain the impression that the true sublime greatness of God shows forth not in His roars of indignation, but in His expressions of joy and gladness. Why?

Because joy came first! God's joy and pleasure, with love, were in the original design of God's creation and form part of the ground of reality; whereas sin and evil that appeared later are ~~mere~~ mere corruptions of reality and goodness.

Let's look further in the Bible. In Psalm 27 the psalmist declares when trouble arises and enemies oppress him, the Lord will so protect him that his head "shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me." He then adds a curious statement: "I will therefore offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle."

Sacrifices of joy! What are they? It sounds like a nice Biblical expression, ~~but when I consulted it turns out to be an apparent corruption.~~ How is a sacrifice joyful? Was Abraham joyful when he tried to sacrifice Isaac? ~~But I consulted several commentaries,~~ ^{CONSULTED} and while failing to find an answer to ~~that~~ ^{THAT} question, I did learn something.

Joy, ~~is~~, is not an isolated or occasional consequence of faith. ^{RELATIONSHIP} It is an integral part of our whole ~~relationship~~ to God. The joy of the Lord is something that rises above circumstances and focuses on the very character of God. ~~It is that~~

There is a holy joy, so pure it exists even in the midst of sorrow. ~~That kind of~~ ^{THAT KIND OF} joy comes to us from the Holy Spirit along with love, peace, and other virtues described by Paul in his letter to the Galatians. ~~How does~~ ^{How does}

~~But how~~ this joy expresses itself in the Bible? ~~It is expressed~~. In "dancing, shouting, singing, clapping, leaping, foot-stamping, feasting and celebrating." For example, in the week-long harvest Feast of Booths or Tabernacles, the Hebrews took to the open air, living in the shade of booths made of the leafy fronds of trees. They did so in sheer gladness of heart as a way of thanksgiving, in obedience to Deuteronomy 16:15: "You shall be altogether joyful."

~~But how~~ After the Babylonian exile in the sixth century B.C., the great Jewish festivals lost much of their original joyous character and became solemn anniversaries. I could not help wondering, is not that also what happened to joy in the New Testament church after Pentecost? In each succeeding century the church seems to have brought in more sanctimony,

~~96~~ solemnity, and ritual, while cutting back on the celebrating.

~~At the time of the [redacted]~~
~~Dr. Ronald Youngblood, the distinguished Old Testament scholar, author and compiler of Bethel Seminary [redacted]~~
~~that the Hebrew sacrifice of joy was a shout.~~ STENUS that the Hebrew sacrifice of joy was a shout. As the worshiper gave his ~~offering~~ offering to the Lord and the priest accepted it, the donor shouted for joy! The term "sacrifice of joy" thus really means "joyous shout!"

How does all this relate to us? How do we offer a sacrifice of joy to the Lord? ~~THE HAND BE FOUND~~ answer in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew. Jesus told a famous parable, implying that when His followers go out of their way to help somebody with a visit, a prayer, a gift of food, water, or clothing, they are doing it not just to help someone else, they are doing it for Jesus Himself **AND** ~~it~~ it becomes a work acceptable to God.

Look at that again. When we do something for others that has *nothing to do with our own personal agenda*, we who love the Lord become His priests and priestesses of joy. No wonder the psalmist exclaimed, "I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord." Yea, and shout, too, and twang the harp. To repeat, when we do it for others, we are doing it for Jesus! That's what the Lord told us, and that's what the Scripture means by a sacrifice of joy. What a beautiful concept.

We all remember the dazzling Christmas story in Luke, as he described the angels that appeared to the shepherds and shouted for joy, "Glory to God in the highest, and peace among men" ~~His [redacted]~~

Luke further tells that the voice of the Heavenly Father was heard at the baptism of Jesus: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Similarly the heavenly voice was heard by Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration ~~probably~~ saying, "This is my beloved Son. Hear Him!"⁵

On Palm Sunday a few years later, according to Luke, Jesus' disciples shouted joyously, "Blessed is the King!" as Jesus was descending from the Mount of Olives. Five days later, according to Mark's Gospel, our Lord Jesus Himself shouted twice, once in

agony and once in victory. When He uttered the words "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" ~~██████████~~
~~██████████~~. Then at the moment of His final breath on the cross Jesus gave a shout that has always been interpreted as a signal of triumph. **IT IS FINISHED!**

Finally, according to Scripture, when Jesus Christ returns to earth He will "descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God."⁶

Jesus taught that there is "joy in heaven" when a sinner repents and turns to God. He repeated it a second time: "I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."⁷ How do you imagine that joy was expressed?

The twentieth century has seen more martyrs for Christ than all the previous 19 centuries together. **WE MUST BE ALERT.** The time may ~~██████████~~ come when "political correctness" or some popular New Age dogma in our own Western democracies will demand the price of Christian martyrdom. Then, as brave new gospel songs are written, we will learn all over again the meaning of the word "shout."

~~██████████~~ Remember the young Huguenot girls in France during the sixteenth-century wars of religion, singing psalms and spiritual songs as they went to the scaffold for their faith ~~██████████~~ calling only on Christ their Savior." What a welcome they must have received in heaven! — OUR HYMNAL ROMAN NUMERAL 7.

"Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth!" cries the psalmist. "Shout aloud. Sing for joy. Wake up, shout it aloud, don't hold back. Shout for joy, O heavens. Shout aloud, O earth beneath." And the book of Revelation ~~██████████~~ with the Spirit and the bride ~~██████████~~ "Come! Whoever is thirsty, let him come and take the water of life free of charge."¹⁸

John Wesley's INSTRUCTIONS FOR SINGING

8

The man whispered, "God, speak to me" And a meadowlark sang.
But the man did not hear.



So the man ~~whispered~~ ^{SHOUTED} "God, speak

to me!"
And the thunder & lightning rolled across the sky.
But the man did not listen.



The man looked around and said, "God, let me see you."
And a star ~~shined~~ ^{BRIGHTLY} TWINKED IN THE CLEAR NIGHT SKY.
~~lightly~~ But the man did not see.



And, the man shouted, "God, show
me a miracle" And a ~~life~~ ^{BABY} was born. But the man did not notice.

9 ~~10~~



So, the man cried out in despair, "Touch me, God, and let me know you are here" Whereupon, God reached down and touched the man. But the man brushed the butterfly away and walked on.



I found this to be a great reminder that God is always around us in the little and simple things that we take for granted. even in our electronic age . . . so I would like to add one more: The man cried "God, I need your help" . . . and an e-mail arrived reaching out with good news and encouragement.



But the man deleted it and continued crying..... The

good news is that ~~we~~ ^{WE} are loved. Don't miss out on a blessing because it isn't packaged the way that you EXPECT IT TO BE.



~~expect. My instructions were to send this to four people~~

LET US PRAY... FATHER, WE ARE NOT AS DEMONSTRATIVE IN OUR EXPRESSIONS OF JOY IN MOST OF OUR CHURCHES TODAY. MAYBE YOUR HOLY SPIRIT HAS TOUCHED US TO A POINT OF QUIET JOY. HELP US TO WITNESS TO OTHERS... TO EXPRESS OUR JOY AS CHRISTIANS WITH POSITIVE EXCLAMATIONS OF JOY SO THAT OTHERS WILL WANT TO SHARE IN THIS JOY AS CHRISTIAN BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST... AMEN.