



Heaven Rejoices

Have you ever thought about a celebration in _____? Yes, God our Father and the angels _____! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. The God of the _____ is the God of salvation and eternal life. He's the God who _____ every person and wants what is _____ for us all. He's the God of peace, the God of mercy, the God of forgiveness, and the God of all comfort. He's also the God of _____, and we can rejoice in Him! God is love, and the God of love rejoices in what is good and right. Love "doesn't rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the _____" (1 Corinthians 13:6). Loving and obeying the truth will bring us joy.

One thing I know about God: He cares for every person who is _____ and wants that person to be forgiven. First Timothy 2:3-4 says, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who _____ all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." Some think of God as waiting for us to sin so He can send us to hell; but God takes no _____ in sending anyone to hell. He sent Jesus to _____ His love, which can bring about tremendous life, those changes that are inside of us that cause us to become new creatures in Christ. God rejoices in our newness of life.

God's joy is not like the passing pleasures of happiness in this _____. It's everlasting and full. Psalm 16:11 says, "You will make known to me the _____ of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever." True, abundant life comes from the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our hope and our joy forever!

Our reading today comes from the gospel according to Luke, chapter 15:4-7.

Many in our society don't like to _____ about sin, hell, or the need for repentance. No one likes to hear something that they're doing is _____. People don't like it when you _____ with them about what they think or believe. Some even believe it's _____ to ask them to repent. That was true in the days of the Lord Jesus, and it's true today! Frankly, many people do not _____ that God sees repentance differently than we do.

The Pharisees of the first century were arrogant and thought they were _____ than others. They did everything they could to _____ the common people and sinners of that day. Luke 15:1-2 records their actions: "Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him. Both the Pharisees and the scribes began to _____, saying, 'This man receives sinners and _____ with them.'" They believed if Jesus were truly a _____, he wouldn't eat with sinners. They knew their traditions, but they didn't know the heart of God. God _____ every person and wishes to bring them _____ to heaven. First Timothy 2:3-4 says as we mentioned, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires _____ men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

This is why God rejoices over every sinner that _____. Just like the shepherd who searches till he _____ his lost sheep, the Lord Jesus says, "I tell you that in the same way, there will be more _____ in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance" (Luke 15:7). Just like the woman who searches until she finds a lost coin, so the Lord

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Jesus says, “In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one _____ who repents” (Luke 15:10).

The Lord Jesus tells the heart of a father whose son finally returns penitently after going to a far country and living in _____. Luke 15:22-24 says, “But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was _____ and has come to _____ again; he was lost and has been found.’ And they began to celebrate.” People who live in sin are spiritually dead and separated from God, but those who penitently _____ to God can have spiritual life once again!

Let’s examine the reasons that God rejoices. First, God desires more than your salvation by love, faith, and obedience; He desires that you _____ and change your heart and your ways. God wants you to be _____ again with a new heart that wants righteousness rather than rebellion, purity rather than impurity, and holiness rather than worldliness. He wants you to be _____ from a person who follows after sin into a person who follows the Lord Jesus in purity and holiness. When people place their faith in Christ, repent of their sins and are baptized into Christ, they’re _____ again in Christ. That begins a _____ life of devotion to the Lord. Faith, love, and a changed heart and life continue as long as we live.

Second, God rejoices because He puts extreme _____ on your soul. Your soul is not worthless. The Lord Jesus said, “For what will it _____ a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in _____ for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26). Your soul is worth much, much more than you may imagine.

First Peter 1:18:19 says “knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious _____, as the lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.”

Third, God rejoices that you’ve _____ a life that is sad, empty, and has no promise. Life apart from God is vain and futile. God wants something _____ for you than a sinful life. Ephesians 4:17-19 says, “So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the _____ that’s in them, because of the hardness of their heart, and they have become callous, having given themselves over to sensuality for the _____ of every kind of impurity, with greediness.” This idea of being ungodly means that _____ has no place in your heart or life. You don’t know Him, and you don’t _____. Ungodly people don’t take God seriously, so they _____ their hearts and their lives with godless and wicked ways. You have no future with God but a future with _____ if you’re ungodly. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

I see people who do evil things, speak the most unwholesome words, treat others disrespectfully, and live ungodly lives yet still have a necklace with a cross or a cross tattoo on their arms. This _____ everyone about righteousness. It’s as if Jesus Christ means _____ to the way they live. They can live as they _____ and yet still be considered all right with Christ. This, however, is a _____. You can’t live for the world and live for Christ at the same time. To do so is spiritual _____. You can’t be attached to God and have a worldly life on the side. James 4:4 says to those who want both, “You adulteresses, don’t you know that friendship with the _____ is hostility toward God? And therefore whoever wishes to be a _____ of the world makes himself an _____ of God.” Making an enemy of God is the worst thing that you can do.

Fourth, repentance takes God seriously and _____ for righteousness. We die to the desire for sin when we _____. We convert our hearts and convert our lives. When we recognize the _____ conditions that our sins have made against God and how they've caused that, we begin to _____ our eyes. Sin causes guilt and shame in our hearts. Sin can quickly cause us to be enslaved to habits that _____ our lives. Sin can _____ other people and destroy our relationship with God. As Isaiah 59:1-2 says, "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not so short, That it cannot _____; Nor is His ear so dull, That it cannot _____. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have _____ His face from you so that He does not hear." Sin causes spiritual death (Romans 6:23).

Repentance moves a person to _____ to leave everything that's evil and to do what is right and good. A penitent person _____ making excuses and trying to justify his sinful behavior. He'll be _____ with himself. Psalm 51:6 reminds us that God desires _____ in the innermost being. God knows when you have sinned, but He wants you to be honest and acknowledge it.

Some in our culture refuse to _____ anything is sinful. They don't realize the harm and confusion they're causing by _____ something that God condemns isn't immoral. Nothing could be more harmful or oppressing than to relabel sinful behavior as okay. Do you really think relabeling sin _____ God's mind or His will. We're not the first to try that; oh, it didn't work before and it won't work now! Isaiah 5:20-21 says, "Woe to those who _____ evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And clever in their own sight!"

Our culture has confused the _____ of many. They have often used the word "love" to _____ whatever they want to do. Love, however, can't turn a _____ into the truth. Love can't justify _____. David's love for Bathsheba didn't justify his adultery or killing Uriah. Love doesn't justify fornication in any _____. Love doesn't justify pedophilia or same-sex activity. Again, 1 Corinthians 13:6 says love "does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the _____." God rejoices and wants us to rejoice when we are righteous, but God doesn't rejoice over _____ behavior. Someone says, "Well, God wants me to be _____." Yes, He does; but God's happiness _____ to those who hunger and thirst for righteousness and those who are pure in heart. He doesn't _____ those who take pleasure in sin.

Someone objects, "Well, God is not about _____ people." That view of God is _____ but misrepresents God. God is love, but God is also light that is _____, and He's light that is _____. He will not accept those who _____ in sin or darkness (1 John 1:6). Sadly, people _____ to themselves when they think they can live in sin and still have fellowship with God. The Lord Jesus said that His words, the things that He's taught, will _____ us on the last day (John 12:48). Second Corinthians 5:10 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may _____ what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil." Though some think we should _____ judge anything, the Lord Jesus said, "Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment" (John 7:24). Loving others means telling them the truth. The truth is _____ than a lie that causes them to turn from God.

Repentance means that you'll put to _____ the sin in your life rather than excuse it. Romans 6:11-13 says, "Consider yourselves to be _____ to sin, but _____ to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you _____ its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God."

Christians should _____ those things that are evil. First Corinthians 15:33 says, “Do not be deceived: Bad _____ corrupts good morals.” They don’t want to _____ to the sin that they left when they repent. Second Timothy 2:22 says, “Now _____ from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.”

Fifth, repentance opens the _____ for change and obedience, which leads to salvation and eternal life. God sees our hearts; He sees our repentance and willingness to _____. When we obey, God’s _____ becomes deeper, richer, and fuller to us. We begin to understand more fully how deep and wonderful is the love and grace of God. Repentance means we want nothing more to do with _____ and everything to do with _____. The bitterness that came from recognizing we were lost is _____ with grace and joy for the penitent believer who obeys.

We’ll never know how sweet and marvelous God’s love is until we _____ how repugnant and offensive our sins against Him are. The Lord Jesus out of love paid a great _____ in suffering and dying upon a cruel cross so that we could be _____ from the guilt of sin. He wouldn’t have done so if the sin were not a real _____ to our souls. His love protected us from the _____ of God and against sin. His atoning sacrifice allowed us to stop being _____ to God and start being His children. We don’t have to fear and dread the Judgment if we’re cleansed by the _____ of Jesus Christ. We can have confidence in His love and forgiveness. That confidence will move us to love Him and find the joy of obedience and forgiveness.

Some people think the command to _____ is like the old practice of penance, where people _____ themselves for their sins. Repentance, however, _____ us and brings healing to our souls, our lives, and our consciences. Though God’s grace forgives, God expects us to _____ our hearts and ways. When grace and repentance work together they bring great healing to our broken lives. We become _____ people who can stand right with God and have a good conscience. We have no greater joy than knowing we have God’s blessing and favor. Are you right with God?

The prophet Micah knew the _____ of a heart devoted to God. God wants our hearts to _____ Him all our days. Micah 6:6-8 says, “With what shall I come to the LORD, And bow myself before the God on high? Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings, With yearling calves? Does the LORD take delight in thousands of rams, In ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I present my firstborn for my rebellious acts, The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you, But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?”

God washes away our sins when we’re baptized into Christ (Acts 22:16), but a baptism without faith or without repentance will not wash away sins. The New Testament has no record of unbelievers being baptized or the impenitent being immersed in water for the forgiveness of their sins. The New Testament gives no teaching or example of an infant being baptized, since infants neither believe nor have a reason to repent. The people on Pentecost had a need to repent and were told in Acts 2:38 to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. Perhaps you have a need to repent. Won’t you repent and be baptized today for the forgiveness of your sins?

Perhaps you were baptized for forgiveness many years ago but have fallen away from the Lord and stopped worshiping at church. You may have allowed sinful thoughts and behaviors to lead you away from God. Why not consider your soul and those whom you love? Come home, penitent, confess your sins, and ask God’s forgiveness. Focus your heart on God by worshiping at church today.