

A MERRY HEART

Introduction

- 1) **Ecclesiastes 3:4** – “A time to weep, and a time to laugh” – life is filled with both
 - a) Weeping can be necessary and more helpful (7:1-4); it is foolish to try to evade the difficult lessons of life by avoiding sad occasions
 - b) But there are appropriate times to be merry – enjoy good times, laugh, have fun
- 2) **Proverbs 15:13** – general prevailing attitude of heart colors the whole personality of a person
 - a) A merry heart is one that is generally cheerful, and creates a cheerful countenance
 - i) “A merry heart makes a cheerful face; heartache crushes the spirit” (New English Bible)
- 3) “Unhappy Christians are, to say the least, a poor recommendation for the Christian Faith, and there can be little doubt that the exuberant joy of the early Christians was one of the most potent factors in the spread of Christianity” (D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cure*, Forward)
- 4) What does the Bible say about the Christian and being merry?

I) BEWARE OF EVIL MERRIMENT

- A) The song and laughter of fools (Eccl. 7:5-6)
 - 1) Coarse jesting (Eph. 5:4)
 - 2) Mocking scorn (Matt. 9:24; Job 12:4; 2 Kgs. 2:23)
- B) Merriment of drinking, dancing, drugs, sensuality, etc. (Ex. 32:6; Mk. 6:22; 1 Pet. 4:3)
- C) Laughter of unbelief (Gen. 18:10-15)
- D) The laughter and joy of sin needs to turn to mourning and gloom (Jas. 4:8-9)

II) CAUSES OF SORROW

- A) *Guilt over sin* – needs forgiveness (Eccl. 11:12; Psa. 32:1-2, 5, 10-11)
- B) *Temperament* – needs to be filled with joy (Rom. 15:13)
- C) *Physical condition* – needs spiritual strength (Jas. 5:13-14)
- D) *Grief and anxiety* – needs the peace of God (Phil. 4:4-7)
- E) *Lack of faith* – needs the word of God (Rom. 10:17)

III) THE MERRY HEART OF GOD’S PEOPLE

- A) God brings joy and contentment; worldliness brings affliction (Prov. 15:14-18)
- B) Merry heart promotes good health (Prov. 17:22)
- C) True joy comes from God and His promises (Lk. 6:20-29)
- D) The joy of God’s salvation and restoration (Psa. 126; Jer. 33:10-11; Acts 8:39; Lk. 15:22-32)
- E) Joy now in Christ foreshadows greater joy to come in heaven (1 Pet. 1:3-9; 4:12-13)

Conclusion

A Christian has great reason to enjoy this life and God’s blessings (Eccl. 8:15; not selfishly Lk.12:19); let us count our many blessings and rejoice in the day of the Lord (Psa. 118:24)!