

Christ's Joy in His People

Introduction:

The Genesis account of creation stresses that mankind was made in the image of God.

Genesis 1:26-27

²⁶ Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷ So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him.

In Proverbs 8:22-31 we read about wisdom:

²² "The LORD possessed me at the beginning of His way, Before His works of old.

²³ I have been established from everlasting, From the beginning, before there was ever an earth.

²⁴ When there were no depths I was brought forth, When there were no fountains abounding with water.

²⁵ Before the mountains were settled, Before the hills, I was brought forth;

²⁶ While as yet He had not made the earth or the fields, Or the primal dust of the world.

²⁷ When He prepared the heavens, I was there, When He drew a circle on the face of the deep,

²⁸ When He established the clouds above, When He strengthened the fountains of the deep,

²⁹ When He assigned to the sea its limit, So that the waters would not transgress His command, When He marked out the foundations of the earth, ³⁰ Then I was beside Him as a master craftsman;

And I was daily His delight, Rejoicing always before Him, ³¹ Rejoicing in His inhabited world,

And my delight was with the sons of men.

This passage obviously personifies, or assigns a human personality, to the concept of "Wisdom."

But this personification cannot refer to any common man, for no man but Christ was with God during the creation. Many students consider it to be a poetic description of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ was with God in the beginning, and He was the master craftsman that created all things:

John 1:1-3

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

And He was the unquestionable Delight of the Father:

Both at His baptism and again at the Transfiguration God shouted down:

Matthew 3:17 & 17:5

"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"

I can't prove that Proverbs 8 is referring to Christ. You'll have to decide that for yourself, but 1 Corinthians 1:30 says:

³⁰ But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God — and righteousness and sanctification and redemption--

And there are plenty of Scriptures that show us that His delights are with the sons of men.

So, How can I show you from the Scriptures that Christ finds His joy, or His delight, if you will, in us?

By the fact that He became a human being like we are (except for our sinfulness):

In Luke 1:35 the angel told Mary that the Lord Jesus Christ would be called the Son of God.

³⁵ "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.

But He chose to call Himself "The Son of Man" a total of 83 times in the four Gospels.

Besides being the Son of God He was a literally a son of man with Mary's DNA.

Philippians 2:5-8 tells us that although He was in the form of God, and did not consider it unfair to be equal with God, He made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. Was it humiliating for Christ to become a man, or what?

Do you really realize what it meant to Him to become a man?

Can you imagine the Son of God from heaven being squeezed into a human body?

Limiting Himself to a human body like ours throughout His stay on earth meant that:

He walked wherever He went without using the "Beam me up" mode of angels and deity. It was not until he got His resurrection human body that He passed through the stone door of His tomb like it wasn't there, and passed through the closed doors of the upper room where the disciples were meeting.

It also meant that He felt the pain of the crucifixion in just the same way that the thieves that were crucifixion with Him did.

And Folks, He is still the Son of Man, although He has a glorified body up in heaven.

In **Acts 7:56**, as Stephen was being murdered for preaching Christ, he exclaimed:

"Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

By the Crucifixion:

In **John 15:13** Jesus said:

¹³ Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

Jesus was willing to lay down His life for us

In **Hebrews 12:1-2** we are told:

^{1c} Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Christ was mocked and jeered at Calvary, but He despised the shame.

He was nailed alive to a morbid cross, but He endured the pain.

But as He bore our sins that day, His tortured soul was led to say,

Psalms 42:7

⁷ Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls;
All Your waves and billows have gone over me.

And in Psalms 69:1-3

¹ Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul.

² I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing:

I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.

³ I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried:
mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.

You see, Isaiah 53:6 says:

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

God took all the sins and low-down things I've done and laid them on the back of His own Son, of whom **Psalms 45:7** says:

⁷ You love righteousness and hate wickedness;

And there on the cross **2 Corinthians 5:21** tells us that:

²¹ He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us,
that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Aren't you glad that Isaiah 53 goes on to say:

Isaiah 53:11

¹¹ He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied.

Folks, we mean so much to Christ that He not only despised the shame and endured the pain, but He also bore the wrath of Almighty God against sin for us.

By what the Scriptures call us:

In Ephesians 1:22-23 we read:

²² He (God) put all things under His (Christ's) feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all

First of all we are called "His body."

Christ is the ascended head of the church. The church is looked at as His body, temporarily left on the earth to accomplish His will and spread the gospel

But I believe that being His body also implies our relationship to Christ as the Bride of the Lamb.

From the beginning, when a couple were married, God considered them to be "One flesh."

We are One with Christ!

It seems to me that being the fullness of Him who fills all in all is related to that special place of nearness that we have been given to the "Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us."

Still, I cannot wrap my mind around the magnitude of what the Scriptures call us.

"The fullness of Him that fills all in all."

Colossians 1:19 says:

¹⁹ It pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell.

And we are said to be the fullness of Him that fills all in all

It's rather like a couple who have had a long and happy marriage.

When one of them passes on, the other feels that they have lost half of themselves. It's a long and lonely recovery from such a loss. But it's the concept I picture when I ponder that Christ's delight us is so great that He would feel unfulfilled without having His people with Him throughout eternity.

By the Love that He shows to us on an ongoing basis:

Ephesians 5:25-28 tells us that:

^{25b} Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

He is working out the details of our lives to cleanse and sanctify us here on the earth so we will be a perfect and glorious church when we are presented as the bride of the Lamb.

He sustains us in temptation:

Hebrews 4:14-16

¹⁴ Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

He forgives us when we sin:

1 John 1:8-9

⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Ephesians 5:29 goes on to say that He also, "Nourishes and cherishes us"

He supplies our every need, and sustains us with His love and comfort in the vicissitudes of life.

John 15:9

⁹ "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.

By His desire to be With us:

In **John 14:1-3**, when Jesus was about to be crucified, He said:

¹ "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

And in the Lord's prayer in John 17 He prayed:

John 17:22-24

²² And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: ²³ I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

²⁴ "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me;

He has shared the glory which the Father has given Him with us, and He wants us to experience that glory in Himself.

And as when Jesus introduced the Breaking of Bread to them at the last supper, He said,

Luke 22:14-15

¹⁵ "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.

I believe that He wanted them around Himself that evening before He died because He desperately wanted them to understand, in this symbolic way, how very much He loved them!

And I personally feel that that's how He feels every Lord's Day morning when Christians gather around His table to remember Him

Conclusion:

So How do the Scriptures say that Christ finds His delight in us?

1) By His becoming a man like we are

2) By the Crucifixion

"Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame."

3) By what the Scriptures call us

"The church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."

4) By the way He treats us

"No one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church."

5) By His desire to have us with Him

"Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am."

6) And possibly by the Proverbs 8 description of creation?

"And my delight was with the sons of men."