



# **Receiving the Joy of the Lord!**

**GRACE COMMUNION INTERNATIONAL, NEW BRUNSWICK, CANADA**

**JANUARY 5, 2019**

## **SCRIPTURE READING JEREMIAH 31:7-14 (ESV)**

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**7 For thus says the LORD: “Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, ‘O LORD, save your people, the remnant of Israel.’”**

**8 Behold, I will bring them from the north country and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, the pregnant woman and she who is in labor, together; a great company, they shall return here.**

**9 With weeping they shall come, and with pleas for mercy I will lead them back, I will make them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble, for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.**

**10 ¶ “Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, ‘He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.’**

**11 For the LORD has ransomed Jacob and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.**

**12 They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall be like a watered garden, and they shall languish no more.**

**13 Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy; I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.**

**14 I will feast the soul of the priests with abundance, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, declares the LORD.”” (Jer 31:7-14 ESV)**

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Receiving the Joy of the Lord

**THESE ARE THE ENCOURAGING  
WORD OF OUR LORD**

**THANK YOU GOD. YOU ARE THE  
SOURCE OF EVERLASTING JOY AND  
GLADNESS!**

**AMEN**

During today's sermon, we are going to consider the encouraging words found in Jeremiah.

*The time in which Jeremiah lived were very troubled times. He became a prophet during Josiah's reign. Josiah reign between 640 - 609 BC.*

*Josiah was the last faithful King in Judah's history as we read in 2 Kings 22 and 23. After his death, Judah, as a nation ceased to exist.*

*The reason for its demise was the political, social, financial, moral and spiritual decay. In two decades, the nation of Judah ceased to be.*

*(Facts "Taken from the ESV® Study Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright ©2008 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.")*

In the midst of the severe correction found in the book of Jeremiah, chapters 30 - 33 offer great hope for the future of Israel and for all of us.

In spite of Judah's rebelliousness and turning away from God, God did not change his

attitude and plan for humanity.

We must remember that God loves humanity. He loves Judah and Israel as well as the Gentiles.

In the book of Genesis, we read that when God brought order to his creation, he said that it was good. After creating Adam and Eve, our human parents, he said that it was "very good".

When we read that before the creation of the world, it was decided that Jesus would come as the Lamb of God to be sacrificed in our place (1 Peter 1:27, Ephesians 1:3-4).

As we read Jeremiah is important to keep in mind God great plan of salvation as Jesus came to the earth not to condemn the world but to save the world, all those who would come to faith in him!

As we begin 2020, we also live in rather troubled time, politically, socially, financially, morally and spiritually. (Next slide)

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## VICTORIA FALLS AFRICA



<https://www.victoriafalls-guide.net/victoria-falls-entrance.html>

Receiving the Joy of the Lord



With those kinds of droughts, it means that people are suffering. For the lack of rain, it affects the food supply

Militarily, the capacity to destroy yourself has reached proportions which would have been unimaginable just a few decades ago.

On December 27 of this year, Russia declared that it had an Intercontinental weapon that can fly 27 times the speed of sound. It is a weapon that is very hard to detect. (from <https://apnews.com/>).

The speed of sound is 1,235 km/h or 767 mph. 27 times that is equal to 33,345 km/hr or 20709 mph. 7,816 km

The distance between Moscow, the capital of Russia and Washington, the capital of the USA is 7816 km. At that speed, it would take about 23 minutes to reach Washington from Moscow. Incredible speed!

Canadians are personally indebted to our ability to pay it back **Canadians owe \$2.16 trillion—which, as a share of gross domestic product, is the highest debt load**

**in the Group of Seven economies.**  
(<https://www.bnnbloomberg.ca/>)

2 trillion is 2 followed by 12 zeros.

When we look at God's word and look at what North America and Europe accept as acceptable morality, we see a great chasm. Living in grace of our Lord teaches us to live very different life morally than what the world accepts.

As we begin the celebration of the year, we say Happy New Year, hoping that it will be a year filled with joy and happiness.

Apart from God, we search in the wrong places. We seek joy and happiness and it eludes us.

The Israelites try to find joy and satisfaction apart from God. They broke the covenant God had made with them. God let them choose life or death. As Adam and Eve had done before, they chose death and suffering.

Let's look at some of the Scriptures that show the sad state Israel was in.

## SAD STATE OF ISRAEL

- **“Thus says the LORD: We have heard a cry of panic, of terror, and no peace.” (Jer 30:5 ESV)**
- **Promise: “Alas! That day is so great there is none like it; it is a time of distress for Jacob; yet he shall be saved out of it.” (Jer 30:7 ESV)**

**12 “For thus says the LORD: Your hurt is incurable, and your wound is grievous.**

**13 There is none to uphold your cause, no medicine for your wound, no healing for you.”**

**14 All your lovers have God forgotten you: they care nothing for you; ...(Jer 30:12-14 ESV)**

**Promise: “For I will restore health to you, and your wounds I will heal, declares the LORD, because they have called you an outcast: ‘It is Zion, for whom no one cares!’” (Jer 30:17 ESV)**

Even if Israel walked away from the covenant and chose to follow the ways of the nations, God did not change his love for them.

As stated before, God let them choose to live without him and apart from him. Love cannot be robotic. It is willed. It cannot be forced on anyone.

When he rearranged the confusion that existed on the earth and cleaned up the firmament, and created the plants and the fish, he said that it was “good”.

When God created humanity, when he created Adam and Eve, he said that it was “very good”.

God was delighted in the creation of human beings.

From eternity, God’s intent for humanity was eternal life for them through his son Jesus.

The fact is, he had decided from before the foundation of the world that Jesus would be sent to the earth not to condemn humanity but to save humanity, all those who would come to faith in him. (Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:20; John 3:16-17).

As Paul wrote in Romans, chapter 8, God's plan is to restore the whole his creation to how he intends it to be.

God being a just and loving God, sent his Son to the earth to live perfectly under the covenant given at Mount Sinai. He was going to replace the Old Covenant with a better covenant with better promises! Not physical promises but eternal life in Jesus.

Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us, live lived in our flesh in complete obedience to God's perfect will. Because he lived perfectly, he did not need to die. In his wisdom, justice and love for us, Jesus who was sinless became sin for all of us. (Rom. 6:11 and 2 Cor. 5:14-15). He died on the cross for all of us. Because he was sinless, he was resurrected. Death had no hold on him. God the Father reconciled humanity to himself in Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:21 and 2 Corinthians 5:19).

God promised to change a hopeless situation into one of joy and complete rejoicing.

**Jer 30:“1 ¶ “At that time, declares the LORD, I will be the God of all the clans of Israel, and they shall be my people.”**

**2 Thus says the LORD: “The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness; when Israel sought for rest,**

**3 the LORD appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.**

**4 Again I will build you, and you shall be built, O virgin Israel! Again you shall adorn yourself with tambourines and shall go forth in the dance of the merrymakers.” (Jer 31:1-4 ESV)**

This is incredibly wonderful news for Israel there. As we look at history, they have never experienced that to the fullest. It is a prophecy to be fulfilled in Christ in the future.

Because of God's faithfulness, they will be able to party. They will go forth in the dance of the merrymakers.

God promises to restore Israel.

God had given physical promises under the old covenant. In these hopeful chapters, he promises Israel and Judah so much more!



<https://blessingshamilton.ca/>

- **“31 “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD.” (Jer 31:31-32 ESV)**

**“33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”” (Jer 31:33-34 ESV**



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Isn't this wonderful news?

People will turn back to God. There will be great rejoicing, shouts of joy in giving praise to God!

God will bring his people and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth.

He will gather the broken, the blind and the lame. He will gather the pregnant women and even those who are in labour.

Not a few will be gathered but it will be a great company.

They will turn to God with weeping and asking God for forgiveness, for mercy. They will come in repentance. God will hear their prayers and he will lead them back to himself.

God is the great Shepherd. Just as he scattered Israel because of their abandoning him, he will gather them back. God will look after his flock.

**“They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant**

**over the goodness of the LORD, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall be like a watered garden, and they shall languish no more.” (Jer 31:12 ESV)**

Amazing promises. The young women will rejoice in the dance and the young man in the old man would be Mary. They will be joyful. They will be merry.

They will be comforted by God himself. Their sorrow will be changed into gladness, God tells them.

The people shall be satisfied with God’s goodness! They will not look elsewhere.

The promises for the future are joyful!

As we see in the New Testament, these future promises include not only the nation of Israel but also the gentiles, which means all of us who live in the age of the New Covenant.

What can we learn from this tremendously encouraging passage of Scripture?

# PART OF THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS JOY

As I read the Scriptures, there are many things that jump out at me.

God's love for his people never stop.

God is faithful.

God is forgiving. He does not hold a record of wrong and of sin. He does that because of Jesus finished work on the cross! His finished work on the cross is the ultimate action to show his love towards us.

God tells us that we have the mind of Christ. Jesus told his disciples to forgive not just once or twice but  $77 \times 7$ . In our new life in Christ, as his people, our DNA includes on-going forgiveness.

God is not asking anything of us that he doesn't do himself. He is the one who empowers us to forgive. We are told that we are his temple. He lives in us through the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:9).

In our relationship with others, we are to be ready to forgive past wrongs – to let them go. To use a modern analogy, we do not deny that they exist but we are to shred

them. We need to ask God to heal our minds, our memories, our stored hurt emotions. With God's help, we are to stop dwelling on them and thus keeping them alive. (next slide)

God forgives. He remembers the sin of David, Abraham, Israel and our sins. He has forgiven them already at the cross. Because we are forgiven, we share that forgiveness with others. We did not deserve forgiveness, yet we are forgiven. We are to extend that that forgiveness and love to others. The next slide describes it well.

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CORINTHIANS  
13 (AMPLIFIED  
BIBLE)

**4 Love endures with patience *and* serenity, love is kind *and* thoughtful, and is not jealous *or* envious; love does not brag and is not proud *or* arrogant.**

**5 It is not rude; it is not self-seeking, it is not provoked [nor overly sensitive and easily angered]; it does not take into account a wrong *endured*.**

- **6 It does not rejoice at injustice, but rejoices with the truth [when right and truth prevail].**
- **7 Love bears all things [regardless of what comes], believes all things [looking for the best in each one], hopes all things [remaining steadfast during difficult times], endures all things [without weakening].**

As we live in Christ and as we live the faith that leads to obedience, we will grow in these qualities.

Our future is beyond our imaginations. We see through mirror dimly now (1 Cor. 13:12) but in the future, at the resurrection, we will live this joy, this merrymaking fully.

Joy, being part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit, means that we can begin to have this joy now. We can grow in it genuinely. The apostle Paul writes about this joy.

**“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” (Ro 14:17 ESV)**

**“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.” (Ro 15:13 ESV)**

**“And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit,” (1Th 1:6 ESV)**

Joy and merrymaking is a gift of God to be received.

Let us elevate our eyes to Jesus, **“looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith” Heb 12:2)** so that instead of feeling anxious and depressed we will begin to experience life in the joy of the Lord!

Let us pray to grow in the joy, a gift of God, that will help us to grow in merrymaking!