

AN ENCOURAGING WORD FOR TROUBLING TIMES #126 (by Rev. Dr. Alice Wolfe, 9/29/20)

“There ain’t nothing gonna steal my joy!”

What steals your joy? Troubles? Trials? Anger? Fear? Depression? Unforgiveness? Betrayal? Loneliness? Isolation? Illness? Life not turning out like you planned? People not acting the way you want? Not being in control? We face all sorts of troubles and trials in our lives, nation, and world today. And yet, in the midst of it, God (through the Apostle Paul) calls us to...

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4, NIV)

Paul could have sulked that he sat in prison, in chains, and couldn’t go out and do what he wanted to do. Instead, Paul refused to let anything steal his joy! Why? Because his heart and life had been transformed by Jesus Christ. Jesus raised Paul from the deadness of sin, anger, hatred, and violence, and gave him new, everlasting life. Paul’s heart overflowed with the joy and love of the Lord, and *nothing* could steal his joy!

If you haven’t yet, watch the attached video of a young girl singing, “Old Church Choir,” in a children’s choir (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WTsSj74DEcA>). The children’s choir director, God bless him/her, probably asked all the kids to stand still and sing along as they were taught. But this one little girl couldn’t... She had so much joy in her heart, it overflowed through her smile, fingers, toes, and all her movements! Watch the video and ask yourself: Who in the video is most like you? Why? Who do you want to be like? Why?

Probably like a lot of people, I sometimes let things steal my joy (or I unintentionally squelch it myself)—but I don’t want to live that way. What can we do? Focus on Christ! Remember how much he loves you! Remember all Christ as done for you! Remember all Christ promises you if you follow him! Remember all Christ wants to do through you..., including sharing his joy with others! Let Jesus’ love and joy fill you to overflowing so it spills out of you... like the little girl dancing to “Old Church Choir”...

“Old Church Choir”

(by Zach Williams)

There's revival, and it's spreading Like a wildfire in my heart
A Sunday morning, Hallelujah And it's lasting
all week long

Can you hear it? Can you feel it? It's the rhythm of a gospel song
Oh, once you choose it, you can't lose it

There ain't nothing, there ain't nothing gonna steal my joy

I got an Old Church Choir singing in my soul I got a sweet salvation and it's beautiful
I've got a heart overflowing 'cause I've been restored

There ain't nothing gonna steal my joy No, there ain't nothing gonna steal my joy

When the valleys that I wander Turn to mountains that I can't climb
Oh, you are with me, never leave me
Oh, 'cause there ain't nothing, there ain't nothing gonna steal my joy

I got an Old Church Choir singing in my soul I got a sweet salvation and it's beautiful
I've got a heart overflowing 'cause I've been restored
There ain't nothing gonna steal my joy No, there ain't nothing gonna steal my joy

Clap your hands and stomp your feet Till you find that gospel beat 'Cause it's all you'll ever need, all you'll ever need Clap your hands and stomp your feet Till you find that gospel beat 'Cause it's all you'll ever need All you'll ever need

I've got an Old Church Choir, singing in my soul I got a sweet salvation and it's beautiful

I got an Old Church Choir singing in my soul I got a sweet salvation and it's beautiful I've got a heart overflowing 'cause I've been restored

There ain't nothing gonna steal my joy No, there ain't nothing gonna steal my joy Oh, there ain't nothing gonna steal my joy

PRAYER:

Loving Lord, I confess that sometimes I let things steal my joy... [Prayerfully reflect on this and share your heart with God.] Help me to turn from my sins and toward you. Help me to not focus on my trials but on you. Help me to choose to rejoice in you... no matter what! Come and live in me and fill me with your love and joy so that nothing can steal my joy... and so that your joy in me spreads like wildfire to people around me! Amen.

LIVE IT!

Prayerfully reflect: Has anything been stealing your joy? If so, what? Why? How? Watch the video and ask yourself: Who in the video is most like you? Why? Who do you want to be like? Why? Rejoice in the Lord always so that nothing can steal your joy!

