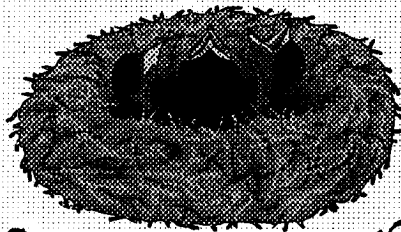
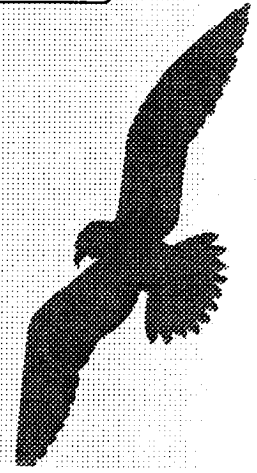


May 2002

*"They shall
mount up...*

ON EAGLES' WINGS

*... with wings
as eagles."
Isaiah 40:31*



AERY NUGGETS

"These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

John 15:11.

"And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." 1 John 1:4.

*"For the joy of the Lord is your strength."
Nehemiah 8:10.*

JESUS, THOU JOY OF LOVING HEARTS

Jesus, Thou Joy of loving hearts

Thou Fount of life, Thou Light of men,
From the best bliss that earth imparts,
We turn unfilled to Thee again.

Thy truth unchanged hath ever stood;
Thou savest those that on Thee call;
To them that seek Thee, O how good,
To them that find Thee, All in All!

We taste Thee, O Thou Living Bread,
And long to feast upon Thee still;
We drink of Thee, the Fountain Head,
And thirst our souls from Thee to fill!

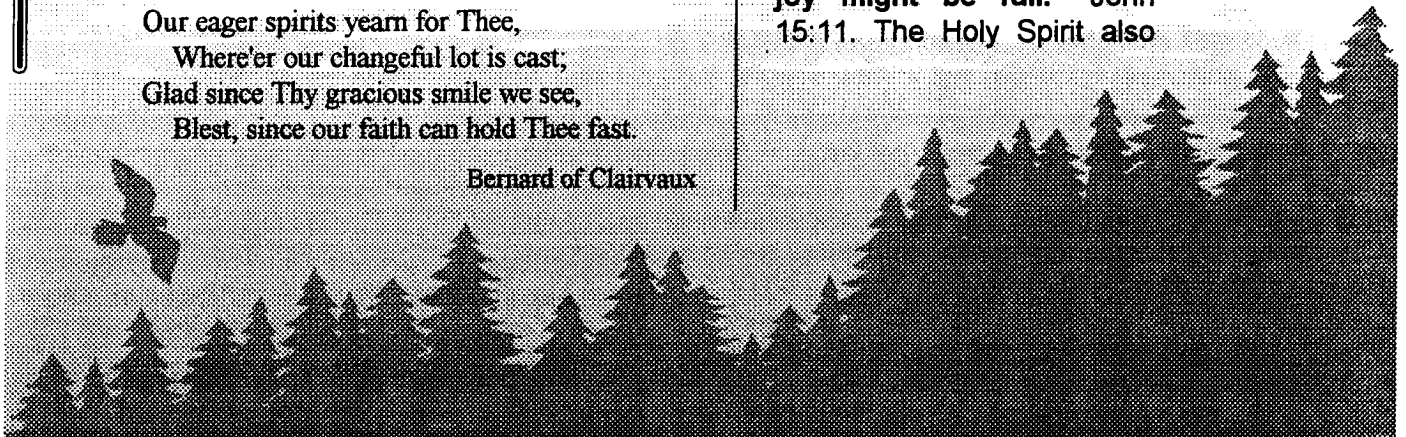
Our eager spirits yearn for Thee,
Where'er our changeful lot is cast;
Glad since Thy gracious smile we see,
Blest, since our faith can hold Thee fast.

Bernard of Clairvaux

Dear Friends,

What is real joy? The words "joy" and "happiness" are sometimes used interchangeably. Webster's dictionary defines one who is happy as "being favored by luck or fortune." Happiness can be described as the emotion produced from good things happening to us. A gift of a million dollars or an unexpected visit by a dear friend can bring happiness into our lives. But, as we all have discovered, happiness may come today and be gone tomorrow. The word "joy" as used in the Bible is independent of good things happening to us. In fact we find real joy in the midst of real sorrow. One has written that "Experiences of sorrow prepare for, and enlarge, the capacity for joy." See 2 Corinthians 7:4.

I have been impressed recently by the desire of the Lord Jesus that He wants your joy and mine to be full. The apostle John was led by the Holy Spirit to record these words of the Lord Jesus shortly before he went to the cross. "These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." John 15:11. The Holy Spirit also



led John to write these words in his first epistle, "And these things write we unto you, that **your joy may be full.**" 1 John 1:4.

Here is a question that I have had to ask myself and one that I would like you to ask yourself; "Is my joy full?" We have to confess that sometimes our joy is not full. We often allow so many things to come into our lives that seem to crowd out the joy of the Lord. The news that we hear and read about may burden us. The necessary cares of this life may cause us to worry and fret. I know that all of us can relate to the following verse of a hymn:

"Our love is oft times low,
Our joy still ebbs and flows;
But peace with Him remains the same,
No change Jehovah knows."

What then is the secret of true real joy? The verses in the heading of this paper give us the answer. The joy that the Lord Jesus wants to give us comes from what He has said to us in His Word. As we read and meditate upon the Word of God we will experience a joy that is not dependent upon circumstances. It was in a Roman prison that the apostle Paul wrote these precious words: "**Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say rejoice.**" Philippians 4:4. The *stress* in this verse is on the words, "**Rejoice.**" It begins rejoice and ends with rejoice. The *source* of that joy is found in the Lord. Not simply Jesus but the realization that He is Lord. He is in control of everything that comes into our life. (It is always good when addressing Him to say "**Lord Jesus.**" Never in scripture do we find His disciples addressing Him simply as Jesus. See Matthew 17:4; Luke 10:40; John 13:35; Acts 9:6. When we see Him face to face I believe we will be compelled to say "**Lord Jesus.**" How good to recognize His Lordship even now.) "If He's not Lord of all, He is not Lord of at all."

Regarding the joy that comes from meditating upon His word, Jeremiah wrote "Thy words were found and I did eat them; **and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.**" Jeremiah 15:16. Jeremiah was being persecuted and he was alone yet he found joy in God's word. What an example for us! Eating God's Word implies that we think about what we have read. We, as it were, chew (meditate) upon what we have read. One way to do this is to write a particular verse or verses on a piece of paper and take it with us through the day. By looking at it several times during the day, the precious truths of the verse can be impressed upon our thoughts and our lives. We will begin to experience that wonderful joy even in the midst of trial and difficulty.

King David experienced this when he wrote these words: "How sweet are Thy words unto My taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through Thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way." He also found guidance and direction for his path. "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Psalm 119:103-105.

Job esteemed the words of God's mouth **more than his necessary food.** This was at a time in his life when he could not understand where God was in all of his deep trials. His source of comfort and joy was in God's word. See Job 23:8-12.

What is it that can interrupt this wonderful joy? Sin can take away this joy in the Lord. David lost this joy when he sinned. After he had confessed that sin to the Lord, he said, "**Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation.**" Psalm 51:12. How good, then, to keep short accounts with the Lord. The Lord as the Good Shepherd wants to restore that joy unto us. We can say with David, "**He restoreth my soul.**"

May we then, in these perilous times in which we live, remember that, "**One thing is needful.**" It is to sit at Jesus' feet and hear Him speak to us from the Word. Our joy then will be full even in times of trial and suffering. The choice is ours. May we choose that good part which shall never be taken from us. Luke 10:42.

In His wonderful love,

John D. McNeil

*Sitting at the feet of Jesus,
Oh, what words I hear Him say!
Happy place! so near, so precious!
May it find me there each day.
Sitting at the feet of Jesus,
I would look upon the past;
For His love has been so gracious,
It has won my heart at last.*

For address correction or free new name addition, write to:
Leslie L. Winters or Christine Albury