

**Intro:**

Our theme is ‘the joy of the Lord’ from Neh 8.10.

We are commanded as Christians to be filled with joy:

**1 Thessalonians 5:16** Rejoice evermore.

**Philippians 4:4** ¶ Rejoice in the Lord always: *and* again I say, Rejoice.

And you know that ‘joy’ is not the same thing as ‘happiness’, right?

We aren’t commanded to be ‘happy’ but to ‘rejoice’. There is a difference.

Now I want you to consider your participation in the Christian life as we know it. What is it made up of?

In other words, if someone came to you and asked, “What is your Christian life made up of? How do you ‘do’ it?” What would you say to that?

Here’s a possible answer:

- I attend worship services and Sunday school every Sunday morning
- I attend a Sunday evening service every week (or Sunday afternoon in our case)
- I attend a Wednesday prayer meeting every week
- I try to read my Bible every day
- I try to pray every day
- I have a regular Christian ministry of some kind – some ministry in the church, or a home Bible study, or some such thing
- I try to raise my children for the Lord, bringing them to church and involving them in spiritual activities.

Now, I want to ask a question: do you ever find yourself following this pattern and it becomes a dry, somewhat joyless, somewhat boring routine?

- Or maybe a *really joyless, really boring* routine?

Now I want you to consider the situation of the people of God in the times of Ezra and Nehemiah.

For that we are going to have to turn to Ezra first.

Ezra 3.11-13 – why were the older men weeping?

- Commentators tell us that it is because the second temple was smaller than the first temple. It certainly was less glorious than the first temple.

Ezra 4.24 – the work stops on the temple (Israel subject to the authority of a foreign king!)

- A constant irritant, weight, burden for Israel in this period is that they have no king. They have no son of David on the throne ... and will not have one at all again up to today ... still no son of David on the throne.
- Remember the Davidic Covenant? “You will not lack a son before me forever?”

Ezra 7.1-7 – first mention of Ezra, new king on throne of empire, 78 years after temple foundation laid, 57 years after temple completed

- Haggai, Zechariah, and Esther have all come and gone
- Ezra’s return is to renovate (beautify) the temple and reform the worship and the people [spiritual lethargy and disarray – discouragement]

Neh 1.11 – the arrival of Nehemiah, 14 years after Ezra’s arrival

- You know the story of the difficulty of building the wall under Nehemiah
- Which brings us to Neh 8.10, in a revival service that Ezra is conducting

The words that characterize the spiritual life of the people under Ezra and Nehemiah might be these: discouragement, lethargy, dullness, hopelessness.

Spiritually, their situation might be parallel to ours in what could be and sometimes is the lethargy of our routine, living out our Christian lives year after year, going through the same routine over and over again.

Ezra had a solution, however: the book of Chronicles! He wrote the book to encourage the people. Let’s see how he did that — look at the very beginning:

Read 1 Chron 1.1-24

So, how are you doing so far? Encouraged?

**Proposition:** In order to find joy in regular Christian routine, you need living faith in the age old promises of God.

Title: *Finding Joy in the Regular Christian Routine*

## I. Understanding the organization and purpose of the Chronicles genealogies

### A. The last name in the genealogies (1 Chr 3.24)

1. Commentaries tell us the last name is Anani, a descendant of David (I am not entirely certain how they determine that, but we are going to take their word for it)
2. The estimated date for the birth of Anani is between 425 and 400 BC [This puts us right in the period of Neh 8.10]
3. So Chronicles covers the period from Creation (1 Chr 1.1) to Ezra's day (Anani, 1 Chr 3.24)
4. How many generations between Adam and Anani? [I don't know, you count them!]

The point I want you to see here is that we are looking at the promises of God among His people for generation after mind-numbing, routine, ordinary generation.

God's people lived, believing God's promises, raising generation after generation after generation of children.

### B. The organization of the genealogies – organized under heads of households

1. The line of Adam (1.1-24)
2. Abraham (1.24-52)
3. Jacob (2.1-2)
- 4. Judah (2.3-8)**
- 5. David (2.9 – 3.24) 71 verses – 18 %**
- 6. Judah (4.1-23) 29 verses – Judah 7%; Judah + David 25%**
7. Simeon (4.24-42)
8. Reuben (5.1-10)
9. Gad (5.11-17)
10. Reuben / Gad / Manasseh (5.18-22)
11. ½ Manasseh (5.23-26)
- 12. Levi (6.1-81) 81 verses – 20.2%**
13. Issachar (7.1-5)
14. Benjamin (7.6-12)
- 15. Naphtali (7.13) 1 verse – 0.2%**
16. ½ Manasseh (7.14-19)
17. Ephraim (7.20-29)
18. Asher (7.30-40)

**19. Benjamin (8.1-40) 40 verses**

20. Nobles of Jerusalem (9.1-34)

**21. Saul (9.35-44) 9 verses [49 Benjamin verses – 12.2%]**

407 verses in 9 chapters – which lines are emphasized?

- Clearly the royal lines and the priestly lines
- Especially David's line

What promises did God make to His people in the OT?

- The promise of land, seed, and blessing to and through Abraham.
- The promise of a persisting priesthood through Moses.
- The promise of a perpetual King through David.

Do you see a connection?

What is the point of all these generations of people in connection with revival and God's promises?

## II. Understanding the rest of Chronicles

A. We have in the rest of Chronicles the record of the kings

1. Only the kings of Judah – not the kings of the northern tribes of Israel
2. An emphasis on the positive aspects of all the kings lives
  - a. No mention of the Bathsheba incident
  - b. Much mention of the planning for the temple
  - c. Much mention of the building of the temple
  - d. Much mention of the worship in the temple
3. Mention of the good qualities in bad kings
  - a. A time of humility and repentance in the life of Rehoboam (1 Chr 12.1-8)
  - b. A time of repentance in the life of Manasseh, the worst of the kings and the one on account of whom the Babylonian exile was determined (2 Chr 33.10-14)

c. And so on through all the kings....

B. As mentioned, we also have a heavy emphasis on the temple, and the priestly aspect of the nation throughout Chronicles

Do you begin to see a connection?  
What are key aspects of the fulfillment of God's promises?

- The ministry of the priests
- The coming of a king

### III. Getting to the point of Chronicles (2 Chr 36.22-23)

A. The decree of Cyrus

1. Return to the Land
2. Rebuild the Temple

B. The situation of Chronicles

1. A rebuilt (but perhaps less glorious) temple
2. No king
3. But hope: "Go Up!"

Note this: Chronicles was placed last in the Hebrew Bible.

- The last word from God for the Jews was this, "Go up!"

C. In our minds, let's turn the page to the New Testament

1. What do you see when you turn the page? Matthew 1 and the *genealogy of the King!*
2. What do you see in the Temple? Luke 2 and Simeon cradling the baby Jesus in his arms!

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**Luke 2:34** And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this *child* is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;<sup>35</sup> (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

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A question: Are the promises of God true?

## **Conclusion:**

Back to our introduction: do you ever find yourself chafing under the dullness of the routine of the Christian life?

Do you ever suffer a kind of spiritual depression, a disillusionment with your spiritual life?

- The answer is not found in new and emotion laden charismatic worship!

The answer is found in living faith in the age old promises of God.

Do you believe God? Do you live by faith? Do you believe that in your flesh you shall see God? — the prophet Ezra in Chronicles says, “Yes!”