

Psalms 32:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

Analysis

The psalm concludes with exuberant call to corporate worship. **'Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous'** commands joy rooted in divine relationship—not circumstantial happiness but theological gladness. The imperative *simchu* (be glad) and *gilu* (rejoice) are strong, emphatic calls. Joy isn't optional for believers but commanded response to forgiveness and mercy. The righteous (*tzaddiqim*)—those justified through confession and faith—have reason for gladness: sins forgiven, mercy surrounding, divine guidance promised.

The second imperative intensifies: **'and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart'**. The verb *harinu* (shout, raise a shout) suggests loud, exuberant praise—not quiet contemplation but vocal celebration. The upright in heart (*yishrei lev*—straight, level, honest of heart) refers to those without guile (v.2), who confess honestly and trust genuinely. Their joy overflows in audible expression—praising God publicly for His forgiveness and faithfulness.

This joyful conclusion validates Christian experience: genuine forgiveness produces genuine joy. Where religion produces mere duty or fear, gospel produces delight. Paul repeatedly commands rejoicing (Philippians 4:4, 1 Thessalonians 5:16). Peter speaks of 'joy unspeakable and full of glory' (1 Peter 1:8). Nehemiah declared 'the joy of the LORD is your strength' (Nehemiah 8:10). Justified sinners become joyful saints—burden lifted, guilt removed, relationship restored, future secured.

Historical Context

This verse reflects Israel's worship tradition—loud, demonstrative, communal celebration. Temple worship included instruments, choirs, shouting, dancing (Psalm 150). David himself danced before the ark with abandon (2 Samuel 6:14). This contrasts with cultures viewing religion as somber duty. Biblical worship combines reverence with joy, holiness with gladness. The redeemed celebrate their Redeemer.

The psalm's movement from individual testimony (I acknowledged, I confessed) to corporate exhortation (ye righteous, all ye upright) reflects worship's communal nature. Personal salvation experience leads to corporate worship expression. No one gets saved in isolation; the justified join the justified community in praising their Savior. The early church exemplified this—individual conversions led to gathering for worship, teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer (Acts 2:42-47).

Church history records periods of joyful revival alternating with dead formalism. Reformation recovered gospel joy after medieval emphasis on penance and works. Pietism emphasized heartfelt faith versus dead orthodoxy. Wesleyan revival featured enthusiastic worship. Pentecostal movement restored exuberant praise. Each renewal movement recovered what this psalm commands—genuine joy flowing from genuine forgiveness.

The psalm's canonical placement between Psalms of lament and imprecatory prayers is significant. It demonstrates that honest struggle with sin and suffering can coexist with deep joy. Joy isn't denial of difficulty but confidence in God's faithfulness despite difficulty. David wrote this after devastating moral failure, yet concludes with triumphant joy—testimony to grace's transforming power.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. Why does Scripture command joy rather than merely suggest it as optional emotional response?
2. What is the relationship between being 'upright in heart' (genuine, guileless faith) and experiencing genuine joy?
3. How should individual forgiveness lead to corporate worship and shared celebration among believers?
4. What barriers prevent believers from experiencing or expressing the joy this verse commands, and how are they overcome?
5. How does the psalm's movement from confession (v.5) to joy (v.11) model the Christian life's trajectory from repentance to celebration?

Interlinear Text

שִׂמְחָה ו	בְּיְהוָה	וְגִילוּ	צְדִיקִים	וְהִתְהַלְלוּ	כָּל
Be glad	in the LORD	and rejoice	ye righteous	and shout	H3605
H8055	H3068	H1523	H6662	H7442	
יְשֻׁרִי		לֵב:			
for joy all ye that are upright		in heart			
H3477		H3820			

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 64:10 (Righteousness): The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.

Psalms 97:12 (Righteousness): Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

Philippians 4:4 (References Lord): Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.

Psalms 97:1 (References Lord): The LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.

Psalms 5:11 (Parallel theme): But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.

Psalms 33:1 (Righteousness): Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright.

Psalms 68:3 (Righteousness): But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.

Deuteronomy 12:12 (References Lord): And ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants, and your maidservants, and the Levite that is within your gates; forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you.

From KJV Study • kjevstudy.org