

One of my favorite verses in the Bible is “the joy of the Lord is my strength” Nehemiah 8:10. Growing up, we sang Sunday school songs of that verse. It has remained a favorite because in times of questioning, difficulty, or even depression, this verse comes back to me.

Wondering how joy could be my strength, I looked up the meaning of the word ‘joy’ in a Hebrew dictionary and it actually means rejoicing. With an ‘ing’ ending, it is a verb, so it is something we need to do. I love listening to Christian radio and can rejoice in the Lord with so many beautiful songs.

The biblical story around Nehemiah 8:10 is Ezra, the priest, found the book of the law (which had been lost) and he gathered the people together, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. Ezra and the priests read from the Book of the Law of God with clear meaning so the people could understand what was being read. The people were so joyful that they wept when they heard the words. Ezra told the people this day was holy to the Lord and not to be grieved for the ‘joy of the Lord is your strength.’

Can you imagine losing God’s law? And besides losing it, they forgot it. It had been long forgotten and broken by the people so that they wept and grieved. Besides learning they had broken God’s law, they remembered their many sins of the past and their tears were mingled with a thankfulness that they were God’s people and now had a strong desire to worship Him. Ezra reminded them that they are to be thankful and glad, and that the purest form of worship is the worship of God with great joy! Therefore, the joy of the Lord is your strength.

What can we take away from this verse? It gives us a sense of acceptance with God and also gives us rest for our spirits, but we must also grieve and ask forgiveness of our sins. We will have a stronger and more intimate relationship with God which can take away any fear that lies before us or any anxiety that lies within us.

The upcoming Easter season is a perfect time to draw closer to God realizing that He wants to have a closer relationship with all of us. That is why He sent His Son, Jesus, as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. By accepting that sacrifice of Jesus’ death and resurrection, we can have great joy – and the joy of the Lord will be our strength!

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