

The Joy of Salvation

by Drew Effimov

Imagine with me receiving a letter on Monday from the Golden Casket Authority this week telling you that you won a \$10 million superdraw? You didn't enter, they just chose your name. To confirm that this wasn't a joke, they enclosed a check for the first \$1000. The letter said, "Just bring down this letter to claim the rest of your prize on Friday".

What would go through your mind? How would you feel? I know what my reaction would be. Excitement, anticipation and enthusiasm. There would be a sudden feeling of security. No worries! The future's taken care of! When they say 'set for life' they mean it! I think I would have a more confident outlook toward life? Perhaps even more of a sense of inner strength and independence when dealing with others.

I would probably feel more generous – perhaps able to give a bit more. I might call someone who owes me a few dollars here or there to forget about it now.

I would be elated. There would probably be a smile on my face that I couldn't remove. Yet at the same time a certain relaxation, I'd be unfazed by things - able to put up with difficulties throughout the week. Looking forward to Friday!

And I don't think it would change on Tuesday morning – I'd wake up and have to remind myself it wasn't a dream and renew my looking forward to Friday with a countdown.

Of course this is imaginary – I don't think it's going to happen this Monday. But I ask myself, is there a reason why I don't feel the same way anyway? Where is my source of joy? What makes you and I feel on top of the world? If anyone should have it, we should. Today I'd like to look at our salvation as our source of joy and 2 reactions it brings in our life.

Matthew 13:44 - "Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like some treasure which has been buried in a field. A man finds it and buries it again and goes off overjoyed to sell all of his possessions to buy himself that field."

You may be able to see in you mind's eye Nicholas Cage of National Treasure finding the gold, or the Count of Monte Cristo when he finally finds the treasure chest. This is fabulous wealth and it gets a reaction! Our salvation – that hope we have of eternal life – it is a wellspring of joy in our life. It is a powerful source from which we receive two key results.

The first is it provides an X Factor – a special quality - not charisma or something special about us.

It's exaltation toward God. It's an excitement about the present with an enthusiasm for the future because of what He is doing. It's a lift above the here and now, bouyed up by an outlook to where it is all headed.

Isaiah 25:9 – “And it will be said in that day: “Behold, this *is* our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us. This *is* the Lord; we have waited for Him; We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.” With our salvation it's a sense of victory, of being triumphant. Set for life – in the eternal sense.

Secondly – the X Factor gives confidence. It's a deep down confidence and joy that keeps us going through even the toughest of trials in this life as we excitedly and anxiously look forward to what God has in store for us and the important and exciting role He is preparing for us in that coming Kingdom.

Habakkuk 3:17-19 [Amplified] – “Through the fig tree does not blossom and there is no fruit on the vines, [though] the product of the olives fails and the fields yield no food, though the flock is cut from the fold and there are no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will exult in the [victorious] God of my salvation! The Lord God is my strength, my personal bravery and my invincible army; He makes my feet like hinds' feet and will make me to walk [not to stand still in terror but to walk] and make [spiritual] progress upon my high places [of trouble, suffering or responsibility]!

Confidence means serenity and inner quiet in difficulty. It doesn't deny the difficulty of the present, it maintains our perspective.

We go through peaks and troughs in life. We know these things intellectually but there are times that the X Factor eludes us and our confidence may be disturbed. How can that be when it is so awesome?

We borrowed a Discovery Channel program from Mr Lowe. It showed how the wonders of sight & hearing and the way our physical senses can trick us.

One example had men practicing basketball. There was an audience watching a film of them practicing they were asked to count the number of times the ball was passed between the men. Afterwards they were asked the number of passes. Several got the right number of 20. Then they were asked whether there was anything unusual in the film. Only a few had noticed anything else. When they were reshown the film they burst out laughing - amazed that in the middle of the men practicing there was a person dressed in a gorilla outfit who walked into the

middle of the court, beat his chest and then walked off. They had completely missed this in focusing on the balls being passed.

Our salvation is like the 800 pound gorilla in our life. It dominates the centre stage and should absorb our attention. But all too often the movement of everything else around us can distract us from that perspective. It's there but falls out of focus.

If you're like me you've had your share of distractions. I know I've needed a renewal of the joy in my life by refocusing.

Let's notice how David rejoiced in His salvation in the Psalms that he wrote and how he basked in God's love for Him and how it both calmed and exulted his spirit:

Psalms 9:13-14 – “Have mercy upon me, O LORD; consider my trouble which I suffer of them that hate me, thou that liftest me up from the gates of death: that I may show forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in thy salvation.”

Psalms 13:5-6 – “But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation. I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.”

Psalms 20:4-6 – “Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel. We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners: the LORD fulfil all thy petitions. Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand.”

Psalms 35:9 – “And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD: it shall rejoice in his salvation.”

Psalms 40:16-17 – “Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation say continually, The LORD be magnified. But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.”

The apostle Paul's writings are filled with these phrases that show how he basked and rejoiced in His salvation and the TRULY AWESOME FUTURE God has in store for us. He wrote:

1 Corinthians 2:9 – “But as it is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.'”

Romans 8:31-39 - “What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? *It is* God who justifies. Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: 'For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.' Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

I've felt this kind of exultation a few times. I felt it the day I was baptised. I felt it the day I was engaged and on my wedding day and I felt it when my daughters were born. You may recall some precious moments in your life when you felt the same.

When deep down we truly understand and comprehend the **SHEER MAGNITUDE** of the future in God's Kingdom that God has in store for us we can't help but feel this overwhelming sense of joy at times! This may sound like a platitude but it is the reality!

That's exultation! That's confidence! That is the result of focusing on our salvation – the true wellspring of our joy!