



Joy To The World

(As the candles are being lit)

“Joy to the World, The Lord is Come...” Most people will recognize the beginning of this popular Christmas song. Such a song can cheer our spirits. We may even be stirred to recall a Christmas past, drawn to contemplate the reason for the season, or simply overcome with happiness and glee. Yet, when the song is finished, we are quickly sobered back to reality. But what if in reality there *was* a kind of joy that could surpass this temporary experience?

The Good News instructs us that there *is* indeed a surpassingly great joy! There is a kind of joy that triumphs over the dreary facets of life and overcomes even the darkest night. This kind of joy overwhelms feelings of doubt. It silences fearful thoughts and bolsters our weaknesses. This kind of joy can drown out depression. As Nehemiah once said to the grief stricken assembly, “The Joy of the Lord is your strength,” (Nehemiah 8:10). This joy quiets our anxious tendencies and endures past the sting of our suffering. Jesus Himself prayed by example, “Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will...” (Matthew 26:39). In this spirit He gave Himself up as a ransom for many, “For the Joy set before Him he endured the cross,” (Hebrews 12:2).

Anyone who puts their faith in Jesus Christ can possess this kind of joy. It is a free gift from God, the fruit of the Holy Spirit for all who believe. Sometimes in the face of suffering it is hard to see it. We can easily grow frustrated. “But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be *overjoyed* when his glory is revealed” (1 Peter 4:13).

Receive today the surpassingly great Joy of Christ, for a day is coming soon when we will be *over* joyed, and the glory of the Lord will be revealed.