

THE CITY OF GOD

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A river brings joy to the city of our God, the sacred home of the Most High. God dwells in that city; it cannot be destroyed. From the very break of day, God will protect it. (Psalms 46:4-5, NLT)

River:

It is thought that Jerusalem had no such literal river, but it is believed by many that there is a subterranean water supply that is the source of various pools in Jerusalem. Jerusalem is one of the few ancient cities not built on a river. Ancient cities needed water close at hand, which was beneficial for their survival.

City of God:

Jerusalem was considered as the place where God was worshipped, and where He dwelled. It was the city where God dwelled with His people, it was the center for worship.

God's protection:

In verse 5, the source of Jerusalem's security was not simply in the water supply or the walls but in the reality of God's presence. And the effect of the divine presence was that the city will not be shaken, it will not and cannot be destroyed.

The Church

Who or what is the church?

- The English word for church translates from the Greek word *ecclesia* which means called out ones. (1 Peter 2:9)
- The Bible makes it clear that the church is not a human invention, it is a divine institution.
- Being a believer is not an individualistic or isolationist activity. Believing also involves belonging. (Romans 1:6)

Why Is the Church important to God?

Man has failed but the church will never fail. She will be a strong victorious place where all peoples from different backgrounds and cultures find a place in God's kingdom.

Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means 'rock'), and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it. And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven. (Matthew 16:18-19, NLT)

What did Jesus say about the church?

1. It would be a church He would build.
2. It would be a church against which the gates of hell would not prevail.
3. It would be a church that would have the keys of the kingdom.
4. It would be a church that He adores, cares for her, devotes his attention to.
5. It would be a church that Christ as the risen Head would be in the midst of.

How Can We Find Joy in The House of God?

1. Joy is a command in the Bible.

There are many verses in the bible that commands us or encourages us to be people that are joyful.

When that happens, be happy! Yes, leap for joy! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, their ancestors treated the ancient prophets that same way. (Luke 6:23, NLT)

Our hearts ache, but we always have joy. We are poor, but we give spiritual riches to others. We own nothing, and yet we have everything. (2 Corinthians 6:10, NLT)

Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again, rejoice! (Philippians 4:4, NLT)

2. Joy is not based on our struggle but on Him.

The believer's joy is anchored in our faith, it is not based on our subjective feelings. We will go wrong if we start to base our joy purely on our feelings. Joy based in Christ shapes our attitude to our circumstances and to what is happening around us. (1 Peter 1:8, Galatians 5:22-23)



3. True joy is found in His house.

As present-day believers, we do not rally to a particular city; we rally to God for refuge, strength, and very present help in time of trouble. And we do so together, which means the church is a pathway for finding joy especially in a crisis. (Matthew 18:20)

How Can We Find Security in The House of God?

1. Protection that never fails.

God has assured us of His presence, His concern and His protection over our lives if we stay committed to Him and His bride the church. If God be for us, if God be with us, who can be against us, who can destroy us? (2 Samuel 22:3-4, Hebrews 13:6)

2. Depend on Him for your security.

It is God Himself who is our refuge and strength not material possessions, but God. It's so easy to build up our own defences against trouble and to put our trust in them instead of in God. The key to experiencing security in our life is to depend on things that are eternal, not temporal. (Romans 8:38-39)

Conclusion

In conclusion, this is the year where we take full refuge in the things of God. There is no other place where joy and security can be found except in the House. Let us endeavour to make His house our first and primary priority.

I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.
(Romans 15:13, NLT)

Those who live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty. This I declare about the Lord: He alone is my refuge, my place of safety; he is my God, and I trust him. For he will rescue you from every trap and protect you from deadly disease. He will cover you with his feathers. He will shelter you with his wings. His faithful promises are your armour and protection. (Psalms 91:1-4, NLT)