

Let everything that has breath
praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!

Psalms 150:6

Praise Points

with Karen Holland

Clothed with Joy

Nehemiah 8:10 *Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.*

Psalms 30:11 *You have turned my mourning into joyful dancing. You have taken away my clothes of mourning and clothed me with joy.*

I was on my way to work, a full day ahead of me and I was tired. I was praying and pondering the above scriptures. I desperately wanted to have enough strength to attend a praise dance service at my friend's church later on in the day. The name of her praise dance team was 'Clothed with Joy'.

Here in Psalms 30:11 the word joy-simchah means mirth, gladness, the joy of God. The root of this word denotes being glad or joyful with the whole disposition, the whole heart. Clothed-'azar means to be girded, encompassed, equipped. To be 'clothed with joy' is to be 'equipped' with the Joy of the LORD!

Looking at Nehemiah 8:10, strength-ma'owz means a place or means of safety, protection, refuge and comes from a root that means to be strong or prevail-'azaz. Equipped with the Joy of the LORD to be strong and prevail!

This is what I was praying, asking the Lord to strengthen me with His joy. I also was praising and singing to the Lord. He did carry me thru work somehow, even though I was still very tired. I was determined to see my friend Marsha dance. This would be the first time she was dancing for the Lord again after surviving more than one bout with cancer. This would be a very special dance and I was so grateful to be able to share in it. So I continued to ask the Lord to equip me with His joy, thanking Him for this opportunity.

As I entered my friend's church, there was a flurry of dancers in lovely costumes, warm greetings and a sense of expectant excitement. I searched for my friend but did not see her. Then the service began. The worship was beautiful; it was good to sing to the Lord midst this congregation. Then the praise dancers entered. I finally saw Marsha. When our eyes met we both cried tears of joy; tears of gratefulness to the Lord that we were both here to share in this moment. All of the songs, costumes and choreography were beautiful, honoring the Lord.

Then Marsha emerged, dancing a solo to a love song to the Lord. She didn't have to match her steps or motions with anyone else. Her dance was unique, expressing her own style. She danced differently, but it wasn't just her dance, it was her heart. Her face radiated the love and joy of and for the Lord. Her dance drew me into the presence of the Lord in such a way that it was as if I was dancing along with her before the Lord, with all our hearts and might. It made me think of David dancing before the Lord with all his might. What a beautiful expression of joy in the Lord's presence! I could feel my tiredness lifting as my heart too was filled with joy.

After this dance finished there was loud applause; other hearts were as deeply touched as mine. Then Marsha gave her testimony. This dance was a testimony of how the Lord helped and sustained her through her bouts with cancer and healed her. More than once Marsha had previously shared with me how she drew strength from her dancing before the Lord. This was her joy drawing her into His presence. Marsha's dance and words were a beautiful testimony of our living God, Jesus Christ our Lord! Her words touched my heart even more deeply, my heart was completely revived!

It surprised me a little that it was Marsha's joy in the Lord along with her testimony that revived my heart. When I was praying to be equipped, strengthened with the joy of the Lord, I somehow thought it would be my own joy in the Lord that would revive me. When I got home this made me curious enough to look up the scriptures the Lord had put on my heart.

Psalm 30:9-12 *What profit is there in my blood, if I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise You? Will it declare Your faithfulness? Hear, O LORD, and be gracious to me; O LORD, be my helper. You have turned my mourning into joyful dancing, You have taken away my clothes of mourning and clothed me with joy, that my soul may sing praise to You and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to You forever.*

Clothed, equipped with joy not only to be strong and prevail but to give testimony to the Lord's faithfulness! Looking at Nehemiah 8:10 again, the word joy from a root means exceedingly glad, great joy; like that of a king filled with joy dancing before the Lord with all his might/strength.

Psalm 21:1, 6-7 AMP THE KING *[David] shall joy in Your strength, O Lord; and in Your salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! ... For You make him to be blessed and a blessing forever; You make him exceedingly glad with the joy of Your presence. For the king trusts, relies on, and is confident in the Lord, and through the mercy and steadfast love of the Most High he will never be moved.*

2 Samuel 6:12-14 *Now King David was told, The LORD has blessed the household of Obed-Edom and everything he has, because of the ark of God. So David went down and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with gladness. And so it was, that when the bearers of the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling. And David was dancing before the LORD with all his might and David was wearing a linen ephod.*

A coincidence? The word for might is from the same root to be strong, prevail as strength in Nehemiah 8:10!

Has the Lord filled you with joy and gladness at His faithfulness? Then let this joy be seen, do not be silent! You were blessed, clothed with joy to share your testimony. It will bring the joy and strength of the Lord to others. You were blessed to be a blessing!

Psalm 68:3 *Let the righteous be glad (with the whole disposition); Let them rejoice (jump for joy before God); Yes, let them exceedingly rejoice (display joy) with gladness!*