

THE LORD'S OWN JOY

by the Rev. Donald L. Rose

This talk could help you and your family discuss how we can find joy in keeping the Sabbath by looking at the Lord's example. Rev. Donald Rose points to three things that gave the Lord great joy on earth—learning from the Word, helping others, and a sense of peace—are all aspects of the Sabbath, as we are taught in the Heavenly Doctrine for the New Church.

When the Lord came into the world...[the Sabbath] became a day of instruction in Divine things...and of meditation on such things as relate to salvation and eternal life, and also a day of love toward the neighbor (True Christian Religion 301).

The Sabbath stands for rest, and in this highest sense, peace. From all this it is also evident why the Lord called Himself "Lord of the Sabbath," that is, of rest and peace (True Christian Religion 303).

Long before the first Christmas, a prophet told something about what the Lord would be like when He was born. "Behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel [which literally means "God-with-us"]. Curds and honey He shall eat" (Isaiah 7:14-15).

Let's think for a moment what could be meant by the saying that the Child would eat honey. Honey, as you might easily guess, stands for what is sweet and joyful and happy. This is only one of the many things to be known about the Lord—that as a child He knew great joy and sweet delight.

And what was it that made Him happy? Well, He loved learning. The joy of learning may be seen in ourselves and in others. As our body loves sweet things to eat, so our spirit is "greatly delighted" with its food—the food of finding things out and learning (*Arcana Coelestia* 1480). Now the Lord had the power of learning beyond any other child ever born. And how He enjoyed learning. He learned "with pleasure and delight" (*Arcana Coelestia* 1492). And if you have ever known someone who loved to hear stories from the Word, or if you yourself have loved stories from the Word, you may be sure the Lord's joy in it was even greater. He wanted to learn from the Word (*Arcana Coelestia* 1461). To Him the things of the Word were (as the Psalm says) sweeter than honey or the dropping of the honeycomb (see Psalm 19:10). As He learned the Word the Lord could feel and say more than anyone else, "How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Psalm 119:103).

Think of this when you read of the Lord, "And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom" (Luke 2:40).

But there was one great joy to the Lord that was a comfort and delight to Him. That was the joy that others should be happy. The thought of other people being saved and being safe was all the reward He hoped for. The thought of their protection and peace filled the Lord with joy. You see, He loved others so very much that His greatest joy was in their happiness. If someone could turn to the way of heaven, that thrilled the Lord.

Listen to this. “In that hour Jesus rejoiced” (Luke 10:21). This was when the disciples, whom He had sent out, came back to the Lord and told Him that the work He had sent them to do was turning out well. This meant that people were being helped. The Lord told the disciples, “rejoice because your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:20).

When people received the teachings He wanted to give them, the Lord was so happy. In fact there is a story about Abraham in which Abraham was so happy that he bowed down to the ground with joy (Genesis 23:7,12). That story of Abraham bowing down with happiness pictures for us “the Lord’s joy” when people received Him (*Arcana Coelestia* 2927, 2950). It was with this happiness that the Lord told His disciples, “Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

The deepest delight is called “peace”. When someone has struggled very hard, and at last the hard struggle is over, the feeling they have is like the feeling of peace (*True Christian Religion* 304). When the Lord’s work in the world was completed, “He had peace,” and so also did angels and people then have peace (*Arcana Coelestia* 10730:2). A very deep and wonderful way of describing peace is this: Peace is “the joy felt by the Lord in angels and by angels from the Lord” (*Heaven and Hell* 286). The Lord said, “My peace I give to you” (John 14:27).

And this brings us to the most wonderful thing to be known about the Lord’s happiness and joy. He wants others to feel it and share it. Yes, He wants to give to others as much of His joy as He possibly can, for that is the nature of His love. He said, “these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves” (John 17:13).

Just think of that—the Lord’s own joy in us. That is what He wants, for He said to His disciples and He says to us, “these things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full” (John 15:11).

Amen.

Lessons: John 15; *Arcana Coelestia* 10730:2