

THE FIRST 15

Wednesday, August 14, 2024

Today is Wednesday, August 14 and we are studying what the Bible says about anointing with oil.

OPENING PRAYER

I come to this quiet space and seek the presence of God, my gracious host - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I still the rushing thoughts of my busy mind and focus on His presence. I calm my body and slow my breath. As I breathe deeply, I inhale God's gifts of healing, holiness, joy and peace and exhale any negative thoughts, worries or concerns. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy. All your robes are fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia; from palaces adorned with ivory the music of the strings makes you glad. Daughters of kings are among your honored women; at your right hand is the royal bride in gold of Ophir. Psalm 45:6-9

REFLECTION

There were many uses for oil in the Old and New Testament. In ancient times, oil was used to anoint sacred spaces, make a person or object holy, and set apart and anoint leaders to serve. Oil was considered a reminder of God's presence and an image of God's abundant provision. From the words of Psalm 45 we come upon the phrase "the oil of joy". Psalm 45 was written for a king by a court poet on the occasion of his wedding. It is a happy occasion of glad celebration. The psalmist says that because the king has led with equity, sought righteousness and hated wickedness, "God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy."

God also wants to bless us with the oil of joy. The Bible tells us God longs to give the gift of joy to His people. He does not withhold joy and gladness from His beloved children. We can find joy in all circumstances and situations – not just on happy occasions. Joy is one of the most prominent themes in the Bible and a mark of the Christian faith. From the very beginning, God's plan for humankind was to bring us joy and peace. Throughout scripture we see stories of joy in response to God's blessings and as a celebration of His promises. Nehemiah tells us the joy of the Lord is our strength (Nehemiah 8:10). Paul tells us that God wants to fill us with joy and peace so we will overflow with hope (Romans 15:13). Paul expressed joy regardless of his circumstances and told us he discovered the secret of contentment (Philippians 4:11-13).

Believers are sometimes surprised by a sense of joy even in the midst of hard times, difficulty and suffering. Joy is different from happiness. Joy doesn't come because everything in our life is perfect, joy comes from God through Jesus Christ and is given by the Holy Spirit. Joy is a fruit that grows in us over time as we mature in the faith. Joy is a gift that comes from somewhere

outside of ourselves and enters into our heart. Sometimes believers bubble up with the joy of the Lord without understanding the source. Joy from God comes upon us (like an anointing with oil) and all we need to do is receive it. God wants to bless you with joy. This very day. This very moment. Turn to Him. Receive the Oil of Joy!

Ask: How might I be in a posture to receive the joy God wants to provide me today? How might I turn my negative thoughts into an attitude of gratitude and embrace the joy of the Lord?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Blessed Lord God, thank You for loving me. Thank You for wanting to anoint me with the gift of joy and gladness. Whatever the circumstances of my current situation, I come to You with a humble heart seeking to find the joy You promise. I turn my eyes upon You, I raise my heart to You, I open my mind to You, I tilt back my head and lift my forehead to the heavens. I ask You to anoint me with the oil of joy. Pour out Your Holy Spirit upon me and fill me to overflowing. May the joy that You put in me inspire and lift the hearts of others. Amen.