

### Thoughts to Meditate On

- Bach once wrote that the “aim of all music should be none other than the Glory of God and the refreshment of the soul.” Music does have that remarkable power to provide that refreshment, yet, as Bach suggests, if music is not used to glorify God, then it is not fulfilling its two-fold design. How much of the music we listen to, though, was not designed to glorify God. How do you evaluate the music to which you listen? Do you listen just for the beat or do you ask whether the lyrics are edifying to your faith? I would suggest that both ought to be present if we are to fully benefit from the “refreshment” that Bach believes music offers.
- Bach speaks of our passionate yearning for Christ as “the fire of life.” How often, though, the life of the Christian is described in very different terms. A fire that has begun to smolder can be re-kindled by adding two things: oxygen and fresh fuel. In other words, when your spiritual life begins to get cold, then you need to add the life-giving breath of the Holy Spirit and the fuel of God’s word. The first you need to ask for in prayer, the second requires you to take up and read. Note: the best way to maintain a fire is not to wait until it gets cold before you stoke it, but to keep it burning red hot.
- In the passage we read (1 Peter 1:8-9), Peter reminds us that the faith we have been given ought to bring us a joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory. Yet, though we may not be able to fully express this joy, said joy ought to be captured in our demeanor. And specifically, the things we take the most joy in, we do not keep to ourselves, but share with others. To know and love Christ goes hand in glove with telling others about him.

### Chromatic Notes<sup>1</sup>

- This particular piece was originally the 10<sup>th</sup> movement in the Cantata entitled: *Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben* (Heart and Mouth and Deed and Life). Bach wrote more than 200 such cantatas during his four years in Leipzig, performing a new Cantata every week. He spent Monday-Thursday writing and orchestrating, Friday was the first rehearsal, Saturday was the dress-rehearsal, and Sunday it was performed.
- This piece is often played at weddings, though that is not Bach’s original design. While usually played slowly, Apollo 100 did a fast-paced keyboard version of this that has been used in numerous commercials and short films. The Beach Boys song, *Lady Lynda*, is also based on the melody of this piece.
- Bach is well known in Christian circles for marking all of his Cantatas with the initials, SDG, standing for *Sola Deo Gloria*—For the Glory of God.
- Verse 1 reminds us that it is God who draws us to himself. As Paul writes in Romans 3:11, there is no one who seeks out God.
- Verses 3&4 pick up on the shepherd theme from John 10 and Psalm 23 (and elsewhere). Note the reminder that true joy can only be drunk from the springs that Christ leads us to.

<sup>1</sup> In music, a chromatic note is a note that is not part of the harmony, but is designed to embellish or “add color” (hence the name). In a similar vein, these notes are bits that don’t necessarily fit into my sermon, but do help shine some additional light (or color) into the text.

Lyrics

*Jesu, Joy of mans desiring,  
Holy Wisdom, love most bright;  
Drawn by Thee, our souls aspiring  
Soar to uncreated light.*

*Word of God, our Flesh that fashioned,  
With fire of life impassioned,  
Striving still to truth unknown,  
Soaring, dying round Thy throne.*

*Through the way where hope is guiding,  
Hark, what peaceful music rings;  
Where the flock, in Thee confiding,  
Drink of joy from deathless springs.*

*Theirs is beauty's fairest pleasure;  
Theirs is wisdom's holiest treasure.  
Thou dost ever lead Thine own  
In the love of joys unknown.*

*“The trouble with many men is that they have got just enough  
religion to make them miserable. If there is not joy in your  
religion, you have a leak in your religion.”*

*-Billy Sunday*

***Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring  
(1 Peter 1:8-9)***

**Big Idea:** This hymn reminds us that the only true source of joy in life is found in Jesus, and whether we are willing to admit it or not, we long to have this joy fulfilled in our hearts.

I. Joy: our fundamental longing in this life.

II. What is Joy from the Bible's Perspective?

A. Joy is found in relationship with God

B. Joy is experienced in a life of faith

III. Why is Jesus the source of true joy?

A. God is Joy

B. God did for us the most Joyful work of all

C. God has given us Joy