

Finding Joy in a Joyless World

Media outlets bombard us 24 hours a day with graphic accounts of depravity in our neighborhoods, cities, and schools. Thousands of ads per day tell us we must buy stuff in order to achieve self-worth, happiness, and fulfillment. And pharmaceutical companies will gladly treat whatever ails us, for a price that many cannot afford.

It's no wonder that people of the world feel lost, depressed, and unhappy. Their only hope of joy comes from earthly events, circumstances, or possessions, which Jesus tells us are temporary (Matt. 6-19).

As Christians, our joy is not rooted in the outcome of a golf game, a promotion, or shiny new sports car. It comes from who we are and *Whose* we are. It comes from personally knowing our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ through our repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38). And it comes from His resurrection that assures our Heavenly inheritance (1 Peter 1:3) and obedience to His commands (John 14:21).

That does not mean, however, that we are immune to pain or sadness. As Christ's followers, we should experience sadness when a friend or family member denies Christ or dies without knowing Him. We should grieve with others who've lost a loved one. And hurt when they've been hurt. After all, they're God's creations, too.

And, like everyone else, we are frail and flawed humans who live in a sinful, imperfect world. We're vulnerable to accidents, malevolence, and painful – even terminal – diseases. We aren't immune.

Thankfully, through our relationship with Christ, we can rise above the trials and tribulations. Look at the Apostle Paul... he was whipped, beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, and imprisoned, among many other extreme hardships (2 Cor. 11:24-27). Yet, he found joy: "In all our affliction, I am overflowing with joy." (2 Cor. 7:4 ESV)

We can find joy, too. As that beautiful hymn reminds us, "this world is not my home, I'm just a-passing through."

-Dan Biby, Garriott Road church of Christ, Enid, OK (via Bridgeport, WV Church of Christ) -

*Jesus bids us shine, with a clear, pure light,
Like a little candle burning in the night;
In this world of darkness we must shine,
You in your small corner, and I in mine.*

- Author Unknown -
from *Treasures of Silver*

Friendship doubles our joy and divides our grief.

News & Notes

CARE & SHARE BEARS: Each Tuesday, 9:00-11:00 a.m. All ladies are invited to participate in making stuffed bears for sick & needy kids.

CONVERT'S CLASS: Each Thursday at 11:00 a.m. Everyone welcome.

TRI-STATE GRIEF FELLOWSHIP: Next Saturday, Sept. 21st, 11:30-1:00 p.m. at the St. Clair Ave. Church of Christ.

MEN'S DAY: Saturday, Sept. 28th, 10:00 a.m.-Noon, Lubeck Church of Christ, Washington, WV. Speakers: Ed Melott & Rodney Nulph. Lunch provided. Additional details on the bulletin board.

PANTRY: Saltines.

SICK & SHUT-IN: At Home: Mike Martin, Becky McKitrick, Lois Hissom, Sue Haught, Dean Spencer, Rich Robinson, Harry Huff, Peggy Linger, er, Nancy Cox, Barbara DeLong, Cheryl Renfro Walker. **Fox-Chester:** Audrey Geer, Janice Hutchins, Mary Johnson. **Elsewhere:** **Carloyn Carbone**, Care Haven Center, 2720 Charles Town Rd., Martinsburg, WV 25405. **Brenda Harris**, 102 Cardinal Dr., Rockwell, NC 28138. **Herman McHan**, 7401 Elmwood Dr., Lisbon, OH 44432.

Gospel Meetings

Brookville, PA..... Sept. 15-19..... Allen Webster
Pennsboro, WV Sept. 15-20..... Tim Hatfield
Bridgeport, WV Sept. 29-Oct. 3 Different Speakers
Salem, Glen Easton, WV Sept. 29-Oct. 4 John Board
Lake Milton, OH..... Oct. 18-20 Ed Melott & David Deagel

(Additional details on the Bulletin Board)

Jesus Never Had Family Trouble

A man's wife had deserted him for another man. She succeeded in taking away their children. The estranged husband became depressed and lost his business.

Brokenhearted and ruined, he became obsessed with the enormity of his troubles and refused every offer of encouragement and hope. He attended a church service and heard a great sermon on Christ's having been "in all points tempted like as we are" (Hebrews 4:15). Rather than being comforted by it as others were, he resented the sermon and told the preacher, "Yes, Jesus suffered many things, but he never had a wife and family stolen from Him. He was never married, never had children, so that's suffering He never knew."

The preacher responded, "An accomplished violinist plays a great variety of music. There are only four strings on his violin, but they can produce both joy and dirges. The same four strings can cover the whole range. No, Jesus did not experience your trials in the same details, but He endured the broad range of disappointment, desertion, grief, pain, and even dying, so that the strings of His heart can vibrate with all the sad songs of life's bitterest experiences."

— David Pharr (*House to House Heart to Heart*) —

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." - Hebrews 4:15