

My Favorite Scripture

This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. Psalm 118:24

I have a favorite scripture, do you? Mine is Psalm 118:24, and you may be surprised to learn that I start every day by reciting this old call and response. It's critical to my faith because joy is the mark of a Christian. Theologian and philosopher Teilhard de Chardin put it this way, "Joy is the most infallible sign of the presence of God."

So often joy is confused with happiness, but they are not the same thing. Someone once said, "Happiness is a feeling. Joy is a reality based on a relationship." Happiness can be taken from us by the first ill wind that blows our way, but the basis of our joy is much deeper than that. Our joy, our true joy, is rooted in our lasting relationship with the Lord, and our joy in the Lord stands firm against the winds of negative feelings.

Joy is more than a gift. Joy is the Christian's primary duty. That does not mean that we go around with a fake smile plastered on our face. It does mean, however, that we participate in our relationship with God. God is always there for us, yet it is we who need to do the remembering that God is there. We must intentionally trust God in all our endeavors, and when we do, others will see our quiet confidence that God is with us. When the joy of the Lord is in us, others will see it on our face, and then they will seek the relationship we have with God for themselves.

Many years ago, during the years of the western gold rush, some men were panning for gold in Montana, and one of them found an unusual stone. Breaking it open, he was excited to see that it contained gold. With this discovery the men worked all the harder and then found an abundance of the precious metal. They were exceedingly happy and they began shouting with delight, "We've found it! We've struck gold! We're rich!" They had to interrupt their celebration, though, to go into a nearby town and stock up on supplies. Before they left camp, the men agreed not to tell a soul about their find. Indeed, no one breathed a word about it to anyone while they were in town.

When they were about to return to camp, they were shocked to see hundreds of other men prepared to follow them. When they asked the crowd to tell who "squealed," the reply came, "No one had to. Your faces showed it!"

What is the witness of your face? It's amazing, isn't it, how many people who follow Jesus, have trouble trusting Him? They worry, they fret, they doubt, they fear. They look for the dark cloud behind every silver lining. They forget to continue building their relationship with God. What a waste! This is the time to celebrate God's love for us. This is the time to celebrate the presence of Christ in the world. Joy is the Christian's witness of God's love to the world.

If we allow it, joy can be a powerful force in our lives. Joy can improve our relationships with others, enhance our physical well-being, refresh our spirits. Yet like any strong relationship, we must do our part to strengthen it.

Suppose we started off each day by speaking aloud that wonderful verse, "This is the day that the Lord hath made, I will rejoice and be glad in it". Then we can look in a mirror and gave ourselves a big smile. It might change our lives. It might, change the life of someone who sees your joy.

This is the day the Lord has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

Rev. Dell King

Interim Associate Pastor

Reaching out to transform lives by extending God's love to all.
www.colliervilleumc.org

