

Ser20-48 "Be the JOY to Others You Want for Yourself" ad 3 tucc

Isaiah 6:1-4 & 8-11 & Luke 1:46b-55 12-13-20

OPENING

1. things a man might not ever say.... Show slides and then say:

Never hear a man say

- Here honey, you use the remote.
- While I'm up, can I get you anything?
- Honey since we don't have anything else planned, will you go to the wallpaper store with me?
- Why don't you go to the mall with me and help me buy some shoes?
- Aww, forget Monday night football, Let's watch Desperate Housewives.
- Hey let me hold your purse while you try that on.
- We never talk anymore

2. "maybe it's our hard wiring – whatever, we men just don't seem to get joy in saying much less doing those things.

3. wired differently....

STORIES

1. Sports – Judd and Shaem – stay away when they lost a game
--- hugs and high fives on a win

2. Not much joy these days

IMAGES OF OUR BEING JOYFUL

1. children

2. older people

3. love is joyful

4. music

LAUGHING JESUS – best way to make that point – pic. In my office.

1. Jesus was all about abundant living – “I came that you might have life and have it abundantly...
2. Jesus’ life offers us joy – joy in being part of the kingdom of God – the kingdom of God here on earth.
3. that kingdom is not a rose garden – there are struggles and brokenness and pain and war and oppression....
4. life is sometimes hard – it sucks.

In Isaiah --- not much JOY

1. when in verse 5 of chapter 6, the prophet says: *“Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet y eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.”*

2. Of course Christians are told to be joyful always and to give thanks in all things. “Rejoice in the Lord always,” says St. Paul (and this, by the way, when he was in prison about to be dragged off in chains and killed.) Rejoice in the Lord always, and give thanks in all circumstances. It’s a hefty commandment, to rejoice always.

ROBBED OF OUR JOY?/??? – ASK THE QUESTION:

1. What are the things that rob you of your joy? (The congregation answered: fear, war, illness, worry, anger....)
2. Did you listen to the evening news? Did you read the morning paper? We could be here all morning listing things that threaten to rob us of our joy:
 - our country’s challenges over political division;
 - the uncertainty about the distribution, even the availability; added to the lack of trust by some in the vaccine’
 - the awful season of devastating hurricanes;

- The back rent, averaging about \$5,000, for many Americans;
- The lack of time....never enough time...for some and too much time for others;
- Can't worship in beloved sanctuary.

Do I need go on?

But there is a counter to all this worry and devastation and struggle; it is the gift of joy that is still ours to have...if we choose.

GOGGLING GOD: (32,200,000)

1. "Joy is the one infallible sign of the presence of God."

Teilhard de Chardin once wrote

JOY AS GRATITUDE:

1. Karl Bath, the swiss theologian who died in 1968 speaks of joy as gratitude -- ...Joy is the simplest form of gratitude.."
2. Gladys Browyn Stern quote: "Silent Gratitude isn't much use to anyone"
3. Last year there was a story that appeared on NPR that reported that the most popular course at Harvard University was Psychology 1504, Positive Psychology, subtitled, "How to Get Happy." It had an enrollment of over nine hundred students. Both our men's retreat and our women's retreat over the last few years have used material from Dan Baker's book on positive psychology called, "What Happy People Know." And there's good advice in this positive psychology movement, and all of the ideas, I believe, can be supported in the teachings of our scriptures. The Harvard Happiness Course offered six tips:

1. Give yourself permission to be human;
2. Do things that are both pleasurable and meaningful;
3. Keep in mind that happiness depends on your state of mind, not the state of your bank account;
4. Simplify your life;
5. Exercise, eat right, get enough sleep; and
6. Express gratitude.

These are all good things. And the perhaps the greatest is the last: express gratitude. Gratitude is the key to unlocking joy.

JOY AS A VERB --- AS ACTION

Rumi....when we do something from the soul – a river moves in us, a joy”

- Engage in at least one ministry of love and gratitude.
- Become a joy to at least one other person other than your family.

Do those two things....focus your life on those two actions:

Cries of thankfulness become the dominant characteristic of your life, and the byproduct of gratitude in action is joy. We're not joyful and then become grateful – we're grateful, and that makes us joyful.

The Speed Of Soul Blog

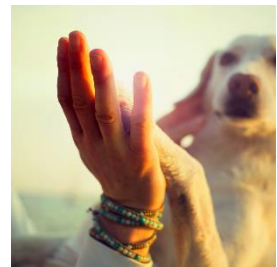
Three Gratitudes (For Thanksgiving)

Every night before I go to sleep

I say out loud

Three things that I am grateful for,

All the significant, insignificant



Extraordinary, ordinary stuff of my life.
It's a small practice and humble,
And yet, I find I sleep better
Holding what lightens and softens my life
Ever so briefly at the end of the day.
Sunlight and blueberries,
Good dogs and wool socks,
A fine rain,
A good friend,
Fresh basil and wild phlox,
My father's good health,
My daughter's new job,
The song that always makes me cry,
Always at the same part,
No matter how many times I hear it.
Decent coffee at the airport,
And your quiet breathing,
The story she told me,
The frost patterns on the window,
English horns and banjos,
Wood Thrush and June bugs,
The smooth glassy calm of the morning pond,
An old coat,
A new poem,
My library card,
And that my car keeps running
Despite all the miles.

And after three things,
More often than not,
I get on a roll and just keep on going,
I keep naming and listing,

Until I lie grinning,
Blankets pulled up to my chin,
Awash with wonder
At the sweetness of it all.

By Carrie Newcomer *From "A Permeable Life: Poems
and Essays"*

May it be so in your lives and in mine. Amen.