

SOURCES OF JOY

Visit of South African Group

Dr. Fred Fourie ~Sunday, September 24, 2006



Psalm 100 Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come into his presence with singing. Know that the LORD is God. It is he that **made** us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name. For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

Philippians 4:4 8 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your

gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. [<Here ends our Scripture readings – may you and I receive what we came for today>](#)

In case, you have not noticed. It is that time of the year again! With the approach of the mid-term elections, the pollsters are once again having a field day. Most politicians would try to tell you that they do not heed the polls – but don't you believe them! We know **that** they do and we know **why** they do! Public polls seem to have a mesmerizing effect on people. "Well, if the polls say so ... **who am I to argue?**" **They even had a poll on music.** The question was, "If you were banned to an island forever and allowed to take **only one piece of music. What will it be?**" **Overwhelmingly music lovers voted for Beethoven's – Ode to Joy!** How can anyone listen to that music without being touched and changed from the inside out? It captures the **essence** of abundant joy! The music **conquers** the soul and lifts it to higher places where the air is clean, where there is harmony, peace and real joy!

Joy is the echo of God living within us. Someone observed that **a bird does not sing because he has an answer—but it sings because it has a song!** It utters the sound that lives deep within. My favorite example **is to be as the little boy** who was playing near a country road far away from town. The same car passed by, in both directions a couple of times. Finally, the man stopped and got out with a tattered roadmap in his hands. Obviously, he had no idea where he was. He called out to the little boy, "Hi Kid, do you know where **Fairview** is?" The boy said, "No," the man said, do you know where **interstate 40** is? The boy said, "No!" the man got angry and shouted, "You don't know much of anything, do you?" The small boy looked squarely into his eyes and said, "Mister, I know one thing, **I know that I am not the one who is lost!**"

On the highways and byways of life, it happens that people search without direction – totally lost. Have **you** ever had those moments in your spiritual journey when, for whatever

reason, it **felt as if your faith means nothing much** ~ and you do not have any inner security and joy left in your life? How can that possibly happen, even to people who so much love to explain and even argue their faith?

True joy is **not** a thing of moods, **not** a capricious emotion, tied to fluctuating experiences. It **is** a state and condition of the soul. It survives through pain and sorrow and, like a subterranean spring, waters the whole life. It is intimately **allied and bound up with love** and goodness, and is ~~ deeply rooted in the life of God.

Lasting joy can never be **circumstance centered!** Some people are not living ~ they are being lived! **The morning news will decide for them how their day is going to be! Joy for them is determined by how others treat them or by the condition of their pocketbook!** Will other people or circumstance decide for you how your day will be?

There is the inspiring true-life story of Robert Reed? He has cerebral palsy. His hands are twisted and his feet are useless. Strips of Velcro hold his shirts together. His speech drags like a worn-out audiocassette. Yet, Robert Reed became know for the slogan of his life that he so often quotes, **"I have everything I need for joy!"** "The disease keeps him from driving a car, riding a bike, and going for a walk. However, it did not keep him from graduating from high school or attending University, from which he graduated with a degree in Latin. It did not keep him from teaching at a junior college or from venturing overseas on five mission trips. Robert's disease did not prevent him from becoming a missionary in Portugal. His shirts are held together by Velcro, but his life is held together by JOY." **Joy depends on your orientation to life.** It has nothing to do with the events of your life but with the deeper orientation of your life. Joy is a gift that comes when your life is centered on God, and when you learn to see life and those around you, no longer through your own **biased, judgmental, discriminatory, eyes** – but through the eyes of an all knowing, all understanding, and all loving God. Joy is a gift. **Inner security and joy become yours when you can truly and convincingly say, "I was lost, but now I am found. I was blind, but now I see!"**

The first Christians preached and believed Jesus as one come from God to lead men and women to the experience of true joy. This is why we love to call Jesus the "Good Shepherd," Leading us to JOY! Many of us are here today because we followed the Shepard of our faith, and discovered the quiet water and bubbling source, deep inside!

A certain executive recently received a **prank gift** for his birthday, a penguin. He decided to play along with the spirit of the pranksters, so, after the party, he called one of his employees and said, **"Will you please take this penguin to the zoo?"** The employee never returned to work that day. That night, however, he appeared at the executive's house, still with the penguin. Exasperated, the business executive said, **"I thought I told you to take the thing to the zoo."** "I did," said the young employee. "And, He enjoyed it so much, tomorrow I'm planning to take him to the museum!"

We are confused about many things in our day-by-day experience of living. **However, one thing we need never become confused about! We cannot and should not confuse our spiritual orientation of life by worshipping the creature rather than the creator. Everything in life is still a poor substitute for God.**

Life without Faith is no life at all. It is a **PULSE** without purpose, heart without happiness, **EXISTENCE** without hope; **LIFE** without living. With Christ, we have a purpose **to live for**, a power **to live by**, and a person **to live with**. Jesus shows us the way to A NEW LIFE OF PURPOSE AND POWER in the presence of God. He gives us unending JOY. **Robert Reed discovered the secret of not dwelling on his illness.** He discovered his real self in the presence of God. He said, "I am determined that **no human limitation** shall ever strip me of my joy." **We can get bitter or we can get better.**

In our faith, we own a deep inner strength to continue on when the journey in life becomes difficult. **The joyful vitality of life is found in an unceasing appreciation and thankfulness for what God has given us.** If not filled with joy ~ bitterness so easily becomes all we have left.

The secret of joy for our restless spirits is to find rest in god. Is your spirit still restlessly seeking, or has it found its rest in God? More important than any **preference, taste, ambition,** ego, or the opinion of others is **knowing** the inner peace that only God can give. This is the delight of a Christian. This is to be the priority of life. We find joy, or maybe I should correctly state that **joy finds us** ~ as we journey through life looking at life through they eyes of God. **Joy is that deep settled confidence that God is in control in every area of my life. Joy is the echo of God's life within us. Joy is the gigantic secret of the Christian.**

Grace taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved.

How precious did that grace appear, the hour I first believed!

AMEN