

Seek your joy in your Lord – Sunday July 29th 2012.

***Delight yourself in the Lord;
And He will give you the desires of your heart.
5 Commit your way to the Lord,
Trust also in Him, and He will do it.
Psalm 37:4-5***

Beloved in the Lord,

What do you delight in? Where do you seek joy? Where do you turn for advice? What is the guiding principle of your life?

The Bible speaks about and divides all people into two very different categories: The ungodly (or the wicked) and the godly (or the Righteous).

The ungodly does not seek God nor His ways, whereas the righteous person does. We read for example in Psalm 10: ***“In pride the wicked hotly pursue the afflicted;
Let them be caught in the plots which they have devised.***

³ For the wicked boasts of his heart’s desire,

And the greedy man curses and spurns the Lord.

⁴ The wicked, in the haughtiness of his countenance, does not seek Him.

All his thoughts are, “There is no God.”

This Psalm clearly states that the ungodly person does not seek God, and is caught up in his own pride and wickedness. Pride is the foundation of all sin. When a person is prideful and exalts himself, he is denying God and stealing God’s glory and honour. The more prideful a person is the farther away he is from God. The road to blessing is humility, to bow down before almighty God, but we will explore that issue at another time.

The ungodly person seeks his pleasure in the world, in possessions, in pursuit of his own desires. The ungodly person’s life revolves around what he or she desires. In stark contrast, the godly person, the righteous person seeks his or her pleasure and finds true joy in the Lord.

The author of Psalm 37 is David. He wrote these words inspired by the Holy Spirit and tested in his own life and experience:

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While David lived by these principles he was blessed. However, when he turned his eyes away from God and these truths, he found himself in trouble.

This is even more dramatic in the life of his son Solomon. Solomon started off really well. He walked with the Lord and The Lord blessed him with a great degree of wisdom. Not only that, God opened up the doors of heaven and poured out blessing upon blessing. Over time Solomon turned his sight away from the Lord and began to seek happiness elsewhere. He began to disobey God, and ended up going off the rails. In Solomon's own words from the book of Ecclesiastes:

I said to myself, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure. So enjoy yourself." And behold, it too was futility. ² I said of laughter, "It is madness," and of pleasure, "What does it accomplish?" ³ I explored with my mind how to stimulate my body with wine while my mind was guiding me wisely, and how to take hold of folly, until I could see what good there is for the sons of men to do under heaven the few years of their lives. ⁴ I enlarged my works: I built houses for myself, I planted vineyards for myself; ⁵ I made gardens and parks for myself and I planted in them all kinds of fruit trees; ⁶ I made ponds of water for myself from which to irrigate a forest of growing trees. ⁷ I bought male and female slaves and I had homeborn slaves. Also I possessed flocks and herds larger than all who preceded me in Jerusalem. ⁸ Also, I collected for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces. I provided for myself male and female singers and the pleasures of men—many concubines.

⁹ Then I became great and increased more than all who preceded me in Jerusalem. My wisdom also stood by me. ¹⁰ All that my eyes desired I did not refuse them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart was pleased because of all my labor and this was my reward for all my labor. ¹¹ Thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold all was vanity and striving after wind and there was no profit under the sun. (Ecc.2:1-11)

Did you notice what Solomon said? He sought after pleasure in all sorts of things and people and came to the conclusion that it was all in vain. It was vanity and chasing after the wind. He rightly understood that there is never any profit under the sun. This means apart from God. There is no profit if you do not place God first and foremost in your life.

Unfortunately Solomon had forgotten the clear warning of his father David as recorded in 1 Chronicles 28:9 :

"As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever."

This principle is still in force today. The truths of God's Word are immutable, they do not change. If we set ourselves to seek the Lord with all our heart, with all our mind, then He will bless us.

Jesus put it in these words in the Sermon on the mount: ***“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” (Mt.6:33)***

Clearly Jesus is teaching us to put the Lord first and foremost. Not somewhere near the top, but at the top. To seek after His will, His Kingdom, His glory. To seek the answers and help that we need in our lives in Him. To treasure and obey His Word. If we do so, He promises to take care of us.

When we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, then He arranges everything in our lives to work for our good and His glory. That is how God works.

It is never futile, never in vain to seek the Lord. Jesus taught: ***“ Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.” Mt.7:7-8***

Could Jesus have made it any clearer? Ask, seek, knock. God has so ordained it that we need to ask, seek and knock. When we do, we show that we have faith that He will respond. We show the Lord that we want, that which He has ordained for us in our lives.

In order to comfort us and to give us further assurance Jesus continued:

“Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? ¹¹ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!” (Mt.7:9-11)

God, your loving Heavenly Father will only give you the best. He will give us that which will ultimately bless us. He loves us. He loves you and me so very much that He gave us His only begotten Son, who shed His blood on our behalf to pay our sin debt in full.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

We cannot even begin to imagine how great is His love and grace, His patience, His wisdom, His desire to help us.

We can have it all if we seek our joy in Him.

As our text today admonishes us:

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Amen.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.