

*I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye over you . . . Psalm 32:8*

# **I'VE GOT THE JOY, JOY, JOY, JOY DOWN IN MY HEART . . .**

Remember that old camp song? I can remember singing that song ever since I was a little kid! In Sunday School. In Bible Camp. Even in boy scout camp (a scout is reverent!). More fully, the lyrics go like this:

***I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy***

***Down in my heart (Where?)***

***Down in my heart (Where?)***

***Down in my heart***

***I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy***

***Down in my heart***

***Down in my heart to stay***

***And I'm so happy***

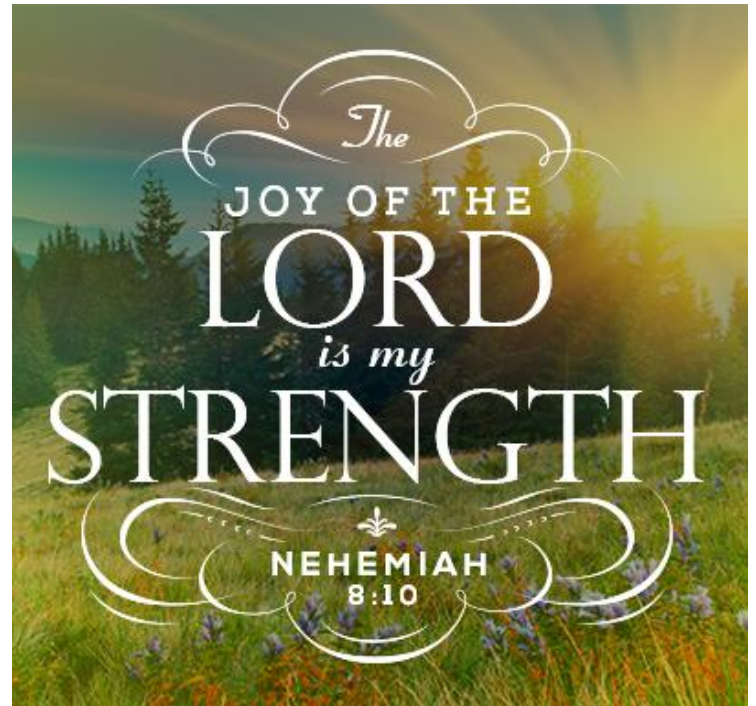
***So very happy***

***I have the love of Jesus in my heart (down in my heart)***

***And I'm so happy***

***So very happy***

***I have the love of Jesus in my heart . . .***



So, let me ask you today: Have you the joy, joy, joy, joy (of Jesus) down in YOUR heart?

As I wander somewhat purposefully (and sometimes aimlessly) through life, I meet a lot of people. A lot of church people. And a lot of Christian people. And I have to suggest, and conclude, that those who truly seem to have the joy, joy, joy, joy down in their heart . . . are few and far between! Why is that? Why is it that we can't find more JOY in our journey with Jesus, the Joy-Giver?

Well, that is the topic for this Sunday, September 17th, as we learn more about DEEP FAITH (our new sermon series.)

The message is entitled 'DEEP JOY', and will provide three reasons why we can experience the JOY of JESUS, no matter what's going on around us.

Have you ever witnessed the rare bird (OK, rare human person) who seems to be able to experience JOY no matter what? I have. Right now, we are focused on several hurricanes, and the mop up efforts in Texas (Harvey) and Florida (Irma). You might see on the news a family or individual, in the aftermath of the storm, who are praising God, despite much damage to their personal property, because a) their family survived the storm, and b) the Lord has sent many loving people into their lives to help them recover.

I was part of one such disaster relief effort following Hurricane Katrina. Katrina arrived on our U. S. shores just three weeks after I was installed as Associate Pastor here at Salem on August 1st of 2005. Here is a synopsis of that storm from the online encyclopedia Wikipedia:

***Katrina caused severe destruction along the Gulf coast from central Florida to Texas, much of it due to the storm surge and levee failure. Severe property damage occurred in coastal areas, such as Mississippi beachfront towns where boats and casino barges rammed buildings, pushing cars and houses inland; water reached 6–12 miles from the beach. The storm was the third most intense United States landfalling tropical cyclone, behind the 1935 Labor Day hurricane and Hurricane Camille in 1969. Overall, at least 1,245 people died in the hurricane and subsequent floods, making it the deadliest United States hurricane since the 1928 Okeechobee hurricane. Total property damage was estimated at \$108 billion, roughly four times the damage wrought by Hurricane Andrew in 1992 in the United States.***

I became part of a relief effort led by our own Tim Wilmot that fall, a number of men and women from Salem and other area churches headed down to the gulf coast in Louisiana to help families impacted by the storm. We were working with Samaritan's Purse, a Christian relief agency headed by Franklin Graham (son of Rev. Billy Graham). We were housed in an area church in the evenings, and during the daylight hours we went out and mucked out damaged houses, ripped down wet drywall, treated soggy and moldy framing with a bleach solution, applied new roofs to houses that had lost their roofs, and created piles of junk for the trash collectors to eventually remove.

What we observed in several cases, were homeowners who were expressing the JOY, JOY, JOY, JOY of JESUS despite the personal calamity of having their homes very nearly destroyed by the hurricane, and by being made homeless for a long stretch . . . they were so thankful, and grateful, and expressing praise to the Lord for His goodness to them!

I wish more of us could experience that kind of DEEP FAITH and DEEP JOY - that lifts us up and beyond our circumstances. I wish we could mount another hands-on relief trip to Texas, or Florida, so that more of us can be blessed to become the hands and feet of Jesus, and to witness the powerful faith of those afflicted by these terrible storms!

So, how do we get that kind of overcoming faith that leads us into JOY? We need to go DEEP with the Lord. It may seem scary, or intimidating to go deeper with the Lord, to become more spiritually minded people than we currently are, but it is so blessed to get really close to Jesus!

And, clearly, this is what Jesus wants for us - His disciples. He wants us to experience TRUE JOY. No matter what. Hope to see you Sunday, 'Lord willing, and the creek don't rise!'



# CONNECT TO SUNDAY SCHOOL

## THIS SUNDAY: SUNDAY SCHOOL CONNECT!

This Sunday, at the beginning of the Sunday School hour (9:30 AM) we (adults) will all join together to hear an overview of each of the Sunday School classes that are available this fall. We have six adult Sunday School classes available; some are arranged by age group (Ignition: post high school young adult group; Christ's Ambassadors: mostly seasoned citizens), and some are broader in demographic appeal and are not defined by age group (Steps of Faith, Journey, Digging Deeper, God's Glorifiers.)

A representative from each class will talk about the format of the class, what may distinguish their class from others, and what they are currently studying.

Many of us have played monopoly, and we are familiar with a card called 'Get Out of Jail Free.' Well, Sunday School Connect is a time when we can 'get out of jail free.' We may be feeling some internal pressure, like we feel we could grow more, or meet more new people by rotating to a different Sunday School class. And that is perfectly OK! This represents the perfect opportunity to make a change, to play musical chairs, with no guilt, and no issues. Even in God's Word, King Solomon declares 'to everything there is a season . . .'

So, come Sunday morning at 9:30 AM, listen to the various Sunday School representatives, and let your heart determine your path . . . to Sunday School!

And, by the way, as pastors, we do recommend this 'second mile' of attending Sunday School. Sunday School is where we get close and personal with one another, and with God's Word. It's where we begin to feel like part of a caring family. It's the place where someone notices if you are missing, or sick, or going through hard times, and can therefore reach out to you when you need your church family the most. It's the place where we can be best held accountable for our walk with Christ - the place where we can perhaps open up about our struggles, and get some help and guidance in a caring, small group format. ***Long story short: Sunday School! It's for everyone!***

## FAMILY NIGHT STARTS TONIGHT!

Yep, it's back - FAMILY NIGHT! Here is yet another opportunity to GROW in CHRIST. (Remember: KNOW-GROW-SERVE-SHARE?) For adults, we have this year five elective offerings, as follows:

- ✚ Christian Care Giving, A Way of Life; led by Sandy Ibaugh and Pastor Art, in the Library.
- ✚ Grief Share Support Group; led by Sally Wadel, in the Digging Deeper Classroom (overlooking ball field)
- ✚ Insights for Influences, led by Jason and Julie Bakker, in the Journey Classroom (next to food pantry)



- ✠ Prophecies of Isaiah, led by Bob Conway, in the God's Glorifiers Classroom
- ✠ Prayer Group, led by Jody Diehl, in the Sanctuary.

At our first session, tonight, group leaders will give an overview of their program, and then we will be able to depart to the various locations, as above.

Here is the weekly schedule, starting tonight (September 13):

- ✠ 6:15 PM: Desserts and Fellowship Time
- ✠ 6:45 PM: Sessions
- ✠ 8:00 PM: Conclusion (parents, please pick up children promptly)

We also have nursery, and three youth groups for children. See you tonight!

## HELP WANTED!

Let's recall what Jesus said about serving: ***"The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."*** (Matthew 20:28)

We are Jesus disciples, His followers, His students. Our aim - is to become like Him, His hands and feet that are present and accounted for, and serving, in our world today.

One of our ministry values here at Salem: 'Every member a minister.' We all have been uniquely crafted and created to serve the Lord in some way; perhaps inside the church, perhaps outside the church.



We always have need of more servants, who can bring to life the good news of Jesus Christ. Here are some current needs:

- ✠ Children's Ministry: We are working towards a new, exciting phase for our children's ministry; redecorating the children's ministry area, improving safety and security features to keep the kids safe, strengthening the number of volunteers we have, finding relevant and exciting curriculum that can motivate our students, and make teaching fun and easy for our leaders. Contact Amy Elliot! (530-3649)
- ✠ Nursery: It takes a lot of people who love children to cover our weekly nursery schedule - we are open for business on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings. What a blessing it is to young families to be able to entrust the care of their small children to our loving nursery staff, so that they can attend adult Sunday School classes and Wednesday night elective groups. Otherwise, they would have to remain home and provide child care, and miss what the Lord has for them here. So, please contact Jessi Nicholson to volunteer some of your time! (372-4916)
- ✠ Senior High Youth: If you love teenagers, and connect well with them, you may enjoy working with Slugg and our great, energetic, committed group of One Way Youth staff. The youth staff has been challenged by a number of illnesses and emergencies of late, so new candidates are always welcome. Contact Slugg for an application! (263-4123)

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✝ Property: Dave Brenize is our property manager, and our 'Jack of all trades' trying to keep our three buildings and expansive grounds operating fully and in good repair and of good appearance. He could sure use more helping hands - with light maintenance activities, and with grounds keeping. Contact Dave if you could spare an hour or two a week to help out with God's house here! (423-5823)

✝ Congregational Care: Under the guidance of Sandy Ibaugh, we are launching a new ministry, 'Stephen Ministry' to help provide good spiritual care to those who are grieving. (Note: King Street has this ministry, and Mt. Pleasant church is developing their new ministry at the same time as we are!) If you would like to get involved in caring for people who are sad, or lonely, or going through a tough transition in life, please seek out Sandy. (263-9423)

Thank you and God bless you for your servant hearts - many hands, and many hearts make light work! Let's remember the words of Isaiah: The Lord: "**Whom may I send? Who will go for me?**" Isaiah: "**Here I am! Send me!**"



#### **SALEM PRAYER CORNER . . . Please be in prayer for . . .**

✝ Ministry Needs:

- Potential Salem relocation to North Pointe
- Leading new Grief Share group: Sally Wadel
- Pastor Lascase, safe return from Haiti
- Renewal of Children's Ministry area
- Teachers and Helpers for Children's Ministry

✝ Our Nation

- Response to Hurricanes Harvey & Irma
- Renewal of national purpose
- Healing of racial divisions
- Collaboration of political parties

✝ Hospital, or recovery

- Jeff Rohrer, broken leg, skin graft
- Betty Newman, hospitalized for breathing and kidney function
- Doris Guyer, hospitalized, weak heart, fluid retention
- Tracy Sellers, hernia surgery recovery

- Chloe Fisher, serious auto accident
- Judy Lindley, healing from infection
- Gladys Bennett, Irregular Heartbeat
- Jen Ross, recovering from bad fall
- Margaretta Young, October hernia surgery
- Lisa Sattazahn, Knee Surgery recovery
- Jerry Paisley's grandchild, Tori
- Mike Hotchkiss, Back surgery 9/18

✝ Suffering from pain, discomfort, illness, treatment

- Earl Ross, severe arthritis, legs
- Essie Knouse, hospice care
- Julianna Shubert, ongoing disorder
- Bob Paxton - compression fracture spine
- Ray Bricker, Parkinsons

✝ Grieving

- Kim Myers, loss of father, Dick Hoffman

## LAST WORDS: SERVE!

Years and years ago (in college), I had to memorize a speech from Shakespeare. I chose the famous Hamlet 'to be, or not to be' speech. Let me change that up a little bit:

### **TO SERVE, or NOT TO SERVE**

*To serve or not to serve--that is the question:  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of serving my Lord  
Or to resist the difficulty and inconvenience of serving  
And by saying 'no', to avoid them*

*To lay down, to sleep--  
To serve no more--and by a sleep to say we end  
The confusion; the chaos of serving in ministry.  
To sleep--perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub,  
For in that leisurely sleep what dreams may come  
When we have shuffled off this serving path  
Must give us pause.*



Yes, serving the Lord in ministry can be hard. It can be challenging. It means getting up off the comfortable barcalounger, turning off the TV set, and doing some productive serving for the Lord!

If we read God's Word (and we should, daily) we will encounter passages that tell us how blessed we are for serving, for suffering, for prevailing for the Lord, in our service to Him. In eternity's view, it is better to serve, than to rest. We have an eternity to rest one day, now is the season of serving . . . of making disciples . . . of pouring ourselves out to advance the cause of Christ!

***May He bless you for your service to Him!***

Pastor Art

