

October 2019

THE HERALD

Newsletter of the Orrville Grace Brethren Church

This is the Day to Fight for Joy

Steven Demme

This summer I was driving along a familiar stretch of road and I found myself feeling despondent. I had been in a good mood up to this point, but I felt myself slipping into patterns of unhealthy thinking and begin to yield to a cloud of sadness.

However another spirit arose to my rescue and I was compelled to begin singing a familiar chorus “This is the Day that the Lord has Made” by John W. Peterson. As I was alone in the car, I lustily sang this inspired song and sadness was replaced with joy.

I continued to sing the verses several times while replacing the plural “we” with the personal pronoun “I” to make it personal.

This is the day, this is the day, that the

Lord has made, that the Lord has made.

I will rejoice, I will rejoice, and be glad in it, and be glad in it.

This is the day that the Lord has made, I will rejoice and be glad in it.

This is the day, this is the day, that the Lord has made.

Power of Song

The strength of inspired song coupled with the vitality of truth changed the dynamic in the spiritual atmosphere in my heart and in the car and my spirit was uplifted. I thought of Isaiah 12. “God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation. With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.” (Isaiah 12:2-3)

A New Level of Urgency

A few weeks later, I felt myself yielding to depressing thoughts and began to sing again, “This is the Day that the Lord has Made” but I did not experience the same results. I fought the cloud of depression for a few days until God made

another breakthrough in my spirit.

I began rehearsing inspired truth and acknowledged that I am a child of God who has been adopted into the family of God. Once I began moving down this track in my thinking, I continued to remember more truths such that God loves me for who I am and His love doesn't change. Romans 8 declares that nothing can separate me from His care and affection. He is with me always and will never leave or forsake me.

The more I declared and embraced truth, the greater my joy as my spirit lifted. Some times I have to raise the level of urgency to latch on to what God has freely provided in Jesus. Now when I sing "This the Day" I change the end of the verse to: "I will rejoice and be glad in Him."

This is the day that the Lord has made, I will rejoice and be glad in Him! The Spirit of God had reminded me that it is not the day, nor the circumstances, that give me joy, but HIM. He alone is faithful.

Fighting for Joy

As I reveled in this newfound joy, I thought back to a talk I had heard Joni Eareckson Tada give a few years earlier. It was a small gathering and she opened her heart and gave us a glimpse into her own struggles of daily fighting for joy. She related that many mornings she awakes and the prospect of another day

combating fatigue, pain, and life in her wheelchair make her want to give up. As she battles these thoughts alone in her room it seems that it would be easier to go and be with Jesus. She has been confined to her chair for fifty-two years, recently battled cancer, and experiences pain 24/7.

As she lies in her bed and looks down the hall before her husband or personal care team reach her, she chooses to fight for joy. She begins to sign hymns, quote scriptures, and cry to God for strength and help. As she fights this good fight, she begins to experience joy. She does this regularly and has been supernaturally helped by the Spirit.

I had never thought of joy being fought for until that day when I heard her speak. I thought joy was something that you either had or didn't have. The thought of wrestling for joy struck a chord with me. Instead of yielding to whatever mood possesses me when I wake each morning, or when I am tempted to give in to despair, I can engage in spiritual warfare and lay hold of joy. I am not bound to negative patterns of thinking, but with God's help, can break these cycles of despair by appealing to the living God for divine assistance in this struggle of hope and joy.

Thank you Spirit

Jerry, a brother in Christ, related to me that he believes every time a believer in Jesus chooses to stand up and contend for joy instead of giving in to despair or depression, a mini-resurrection occurs. I believe the same powerful Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead gives new life, fresh hope, and joy to all who call upon Him.

“If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.” (Romans 8:11)

I am learning that I don't have to have ideal circumstances, or perfect health, or all my ducks in a row before I taste joy and rejoice in the Lord. I have even modified “This is the Day” to “This is the Minute.” It goes like this: “This is the minute, this is the minute and the Lord is in it, and the Lord is in it.” Paul discovered this truth many years ago and then exhorted the church in Thessalonica to: “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit.” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-19)

Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow

Some days I have to fight harder than others because it is not a mood I am

seeking to change, but an enemy who has to be overcome. We have an enemy who comes to “steal, kill, and destroy” (John 10:10). One of the things he steals is our joy. Jesus comes to give us life to the full, and the devil seeks to take it from us. With the sword of the Spirit and behind the shield of faith, I bind the strong man in Jesus' name and resist the devil.

An inspiring hymn that I sing to remind myself that there is always strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow is “Great is Thy Faithfulness” which is based on Lamentations 3:21-24. Even in the midst of horrific circumstances as Israel was about to be taken into captivity, Jeremiah was enabled to get His eyes on God, lay hold of God, and live in hope.

“This I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; His mercies never come to an end;

They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.

‘The LORD is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘therefore I will hope in Him.’”

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. (Romans 15:13)

Steve

FUNNIES

An exterminating company was giving free termite inspections, and a homeowner phoned for an appointment. After the inspector checked out the house he said to the homeowner, "you don't have any termites, right now, but there's a bunch of them in that firewood out back. When they've eaten their way through it, I guarantee they'll head for your house." The homeowner was silent for a moment. Then, in his slow drawl, he replied, "Well, from the prices you quoted, I figure it would be cheaper for me just to buy the termites another cord of wood."

Thomas Henry Huxley once arrived late in a town in which he was to deliver an important lecture. Jumping into a cab, he cried to the driver. "Top speed!" in a hurry the cabby whipped his horse into action and the vehicle went bumping along the streets at a wild clip. The lack of dignity and organization in the proceedings dawned upon Huxley, and above the clatter of the wheels, he shouted to the driver, "Here, here, do you know where I want to go?" "No, you Honor," called cabby, cracking his whip the while, "but I'm driving as fast as I can!"

Some years ago the US Consumers Products Commission bought 80,000 buttons for a campaign promoting safe toys. The buttons had to be destroyed because they were too sharp and were coated with lead paint.

Jake plans to make a fortune with his invention. It's a big metal box with a slot in one side and sign that says, "How gullible are you? To find out, insert \$50.00."

Susie, Age 4, had been put to bed upstairs. Her daddy was in the living room reading the paper.

Susie called out from here bed, "Daddy, will you please bring me a drink of water?"

Dad answered, "No, Susie, you've already had your drink of water."

Five minutes later she again called out, "Daddy, will you bring me a drink of water?"

Daddy replied, "No, Susie, you've had all you need. Now go to sleep and don't call again." Five minutes later there was a third call. "Daddy, please bring me a drink of water."

Dad answered sternly, "No listen, Susie. If you don't quit calling I'm going to come up and spank you!"

Susie replied in a small voice, "Daddy, when you come up to spank me, will you please bring me a glass of water?"