

## "HAPPY IS THAT PEOPLE WHOSE GOD IS THE LORD"

"Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord." Psalm 144:15.

An infidel was addressing a crowd in the open air. He was trying to persuade them that there was not any God, any heaven, any hell, any resurrection, any judgment or any life to come. He advised them to throw away their Bibles and ignore all preachers. He recommended that his listeners think as he did and be like him.

An old lady looked him directly in the face and spoke loudly and said, "Sir, are you happy?" The infidel looked scornfully at her and refused to answer. She then asked, "Sir, I ask you to answer my question. Are you happy? You want us to throw away our Bibles. You tell us not to believe what parsons say about religion. You advise us to think as you do, and be like you. Now before we take your advice we have a right to know what good we shall get by it. Do your notions give you much comfort? Do you yourself really feel happy?"

The infidel stammered, and shuffled, and fidgetted, and tried to change the subject. He said he "had not come there to preach about happiness." But it was of no use. The old lady insisted on her question being answered, and the crowd took her part. The infidel dared not say that he was happy, so he turned and walked away. When a person rejects the teachings of God's Word, ask him if he can say, with honesty and sincerity, that his unbelief makes him happy.

Happiness is not something that we attain through increased possessions or through the achievement of some ambition. Happiness is an attitude of life, a spirit within our own souls. If we do not have it on a small income, neither will we have it when our income grows larger. If it is not found where we are today, it will not be found in some place we may go tomorrow or next year. It is a flower that we may grow in the secret places of our own natures, and nowhere else in all the universe.

Happiness is satisfaction and delight. It is as natural for us to desire to be happy as it is for us to breathe. This desire for happiness forms one of the earliest and one of the most powerful principles of our nature. Dr. William Lyon Phelps wrote: "No matter what may be one's nationality, sex, age, philosophy, or religion, everyone wishes either to become or to remain happy." The founders of our Republic wrote into the Declaration of Independence those unforgettable words, "The inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Truly, the desire for happiness is implanted deeply in the human heart. Whether young or old, rich or poor, educated or uneducated, saved or unsaved, everybody is pursuing and trying to achieve happiness. Much of the effort to obtain happiness is made in the wrong way, and consequently it is never achieved even though it is desired and anticipated.

While all are pursuing happiness, it must be frankly admitted that the multitudes are not happy. Very few are satisfied with what they have, but think that if they had what others have they would be supremely happy. They fail to realize that it is impossible for a covetous soul to be

happy, regardless of how much he may possess. Happiness does not consist in what one has, but in what he is.

True happiness is not perfect freedom from sorrow and discomfort. If it were, then there would not be any such thing in the world. True happiness does not consist in laughter and smiles. Thousands laugh loud and are merry in company, but are wretched and miserable in private. Worldly merriment is not real happiness. To be truly happy one's highest wants must be met and satisfied. It is utter nonsense to pretend that food and raiment and earthly things can make men happy. There cannot be any true happiness until the needs of the soul and conscience are satisfied. To be truly happy one must have sources of gladness which are not dependent on anything in this world. Things of earth are stamped with the mark of instability and uncertainty. The things that money can buy either leave us or we are obliged to leave them.

To be really happy one must be able to look back to the past without guilty fears, to look around without discontent, and to look forward without anxious dread.

Happiness cannot be obtained by running after it, because the source of happiness is within instead of without. Balzac said, "Happiness depends on what lies between the sole of your foot and the crown of your head." Real and abiding happiness is not dependent on what we have in our hands, but upon what we have in our hearts.

Happiness is not to be found in unbelief. Voltaire, an infidel of the most pronounced type, wrote: "I wish I had never been born." Happiness is not to be found in pleasure. Lord Byron lived a life of pleasure, if anyone ever did. He wrote: "The worm, the canker, and the grief are mine alone."

Happiness is not to be found in money. Riches cannot enable anybody to possess inward peace. Jay Gould, the American millionaire of another generation, had plenty of money. When dying, he said: "I suppose I am the most miserable man on earth."

It is a mistake to imagine that learning can give happiness. All the secular knowledge in the world will not give a man any satisfaction or happiness when he thinks on death and the grave.

Happiness is not to be found in military glory. Alexander the Great conquered the known world. After doing so, he wept in his tent and said, "There are no more worlds to conquer."

You might as well try to make an elephant happy by feeding him with a grain of sand a day as to try to satisfy that heart of yours with rank, position, fame, riches, learning, power or pleasure. Solomon, the king of Israel, had power, wisdom and wealth, but he gave his personal testimony in the melancholy words, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit" (Ecclesiastes 1:14). So, young friend, do not seek happiness where it cannot be found. Seek it not in rank, position, fame, riches, learning, power or pleasure. All of these are splendid fountains and their waters are sweet. A crowd is standing around them, and will not leave them, but over each of these fountains the Lord has written these words: "He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again" (John 4:13).

Even though happiness is earnestly desired and, in one way or another, is universally pursued, the melancholy fact is that it is but partially enjoyed. After devoting years of fruitless labor in the search for happiness, many have all but arrived at the conclusion that its attainment is impossible. The reason is that they have sought happiness everywhere except where it can be found.

Only saved people are really happy. But you may say, "How do you account for the fact that many Christians are not happy?" That is an easy question to answer. They are living outside the circle of God's will for their lives. Sins of omission and commission fill them with unrest and unhappiness. Any Christian who lives within the circle of God's will for his life will be happy.

There is a sure road to happiness if people will only take it. Nobody ever travelled in that way and missed the object which he sought. This road is open to all. One does not have to have rank, position, fame, learning or wealth in order to travel it. It is for the poor as well as for the rich. The only ones who are excluded are those who exclude themselves. The way to be happy is to be a genuine Christian.

Christ said, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). As long as the wrath of God is abiding on a person he cannot be happy. The only way to come into the actual possession of true happiness is to know Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour. Salvation from sin will make anybody happy. It was out of a glorious experience of salvation that the author wrote the old hymn which says in part:

"Oh, happy day, that fixed my choice,  
On Thee, my Saviour and my God!  
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,  
And tell its raptures all abroad.

Happy day, Happy day,  
When Jesus washed my sins away.  
He taught me how to watch and pray,  
And live rejoicing every day.  
Happy day, Happy day,  
When Jesus washed my sins away."

Are all Christians equally happy? No! All have their ebbs and flows. There are babes in Christ's family as well as old men and old women; there are weak members as well as strong ones; there are degrees of grace and degrees of faith. Those who have the most faith and the most grace will have the most happiness. But all, when compared to the children of the world, are happy. The true Christian has sources of happiness which are entirely independent of this world. He has something which cannot be affected by sickness or by death, by private losses or by public calamities, namely, "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding."

To those of you who are caring for nothing but the things of time and who are planning about many things besides eternity, let me ask you, "Are you happy?" You know that you are not happy. You might as well expect to feel the sun shine on your face when you turn your back to it as to expect to feel happy when you turn your back on God the Father and Christ the Saviour.

"Happy is that people whose God is the Lord." They are happy because they enjoy the peace of God. That, "there is no peace to the wicked," is a fact -- a truth which reason suggests, revelation asserts and experience demonstrates. The "people whose God is the Lord" are happy in the possession and enjoyment of the love of God. They are happy in their hope for the care and bounty of a good providence as long as they remain in this world. Their Heavenly Father knows what they need and can take care of them and provide for them. Hoping for grace to live well and to enable them to die well, they are greatly encouraged by the statement, "My grace is sufficient for thee." "Happy is that people whose God is the Lord." The happiness of God's obedient children has a past, a present and a future. It is unending. It will continue with us as long as we are in this world, it will go with us through the valley of the shadow of death, and it will be possessed and enjoyed by us for ever and ever.

If Christ has saved you from your sin, and, if you really want to be happy, then spend your life in submission to Christ, in service for Christ and in sharing with others. Commit your ways unto the Lord and follow His leading every day. He knows the way and you will not fail to be happy if you will follow Him. With gratitude for all past blessings, strive to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ and thereby receive an increase in happiness in His blessed and glorious service.

If you have not been saved, remember that Christ is able and anxious to save you, and that you will never come into possession of happiness apart from Him. He not only wants to save you, but He will do so the very moment you receive Him as your personal Saviour. Just now say to Him:

"Lord Jesus I long to be perfectly whole;  
I want Thee forever to dwell in my soul;  
Break down every idol, cast out every foe;  
Oh wash me and I shall be whiter than snow."