

## HOW TO BE HAPPY IN AN UNHAPPY WORLD

Frequently one is asked, "Is there any such thing as 'a happy life' in a world of unhappiness, sin, suffering and sorrow? If so, what is the recipe for it?" Surely anyone would be willing to pay a big price for such a recipe. But, there are as many recipes for happiness as there are recommended cures for a cold. However, in thinking of happiness as a permanent possession only One has an infallible recipe for it. I want to pass that recipe on to you because it never fails. Here it is:--

"Whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he." Proverbs 16:20.

"O taste and see that the Lord is good: happy is the man that trusteth in Him." Psalm 34:8.

"Happy is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungedly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord." Psalm 1:1-2a.

"Happy is that people whose God is the Lord." Psalm 144:15.

In the light of these glorious truths, and the fact that there are two classes of people--the happy and the unhappy--let us consider three things.

### I. The Pursuit of Happiness.

Everybody has a desire to be happy. Happiness is one thing for which all mankind is striving. Whether young or old, rich or poor, educated or uneducated, saved or unsaved, all are pursuing happiness. Study the faces of people as they pass by on the street. What do those faces reveal that the people are thinking about and striving for? Is it money? Is it knowledge? Is it power? No, it is something behind all of these. It is happiness. Each one is trying to achieve happiness.

Some are concentrating all their energies in the pursuit of happiness, while others seem less hopeful, and more faint-hearted in their efforts. But, if the efforts that are being made to achieve happiness were only put forth in the right direction, many of the cups of happiness would be filled to overflowing. Much of the effort to secure happiness is made in the wrong way, so happiness is never achieved although it is desired and expected.

### II. The Preventatives of Happiness.

While all are pursuing happiness, it must be frankly admitted that the multitudes are not happy. Very few people are satisfied with what they have, but think if they had what some other people have they would be supremely happy. They fail to realize that a covetous soul can never be happy, even if it owned the whole world. Happiness does not consist in what you have, but in what you are. There are so many things that prevent people from being happy, but time permits me to mention only a few of them.

1. An impossible or unattainable ambition.
2. A self-interest which is so strong that it will not admit a social interest.
3. An unsatisfied craving, whether it be physical, social or mental.
4. A tormenting conscience.
5. An irritating or uncongenial environment.
6. Uncontrolled fear and anxiety.
7. Misdirected energies.
8. A spirit of covetousness.
9. An unsaved soul.

One can never experience happiness until his sins are forgiven and his soul is saved. "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked." Isaiah 48:22.

While an unsaved person is never happy, the Word of God says, "Happy is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Happy is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Psalm 32:1-2.

10. A disobedient life.

Saved people only are really happy. But one may ask, "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. Any Christian who lives inside the circle of God's will for his life will be happy.

God is the fountain of life and the source of all joy. Happiness is not something that we attain through increased possessions or through the achievement of some ambition; it 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.

Ever remember that an unhappy Christian is a reproach to Christ because Christianity is a religion of happiness. Jesus Christ was ushered into this world with the anthem of an angelic choir. He impressed those with whom He associated, not with sadness, but with gladness. His presence drove away the shadows of life for multitudes. Even the children enjoyed being with Him, which, in itself, is an absolute proof that He was not a kill-joy. So, those who follow Christ closely are happy and radiate good cheer.

III. The Possessors of Happiness.

Since all of us are in quest of happiness, and the Lord wants us to be happy, let us consider the best way to come into possession of happiness. One thing is certain, happiness cannot be found merely 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." Some say, "Give us everything we want, the money we want, the recognition we want, the pleasures we want, and we shall be happy." Listen! Money and happiness are not synonymous. Neither can you buy happiness. Real and abiding happiness is dependent not upon what we have in our hands, but upon what we have in our hearts.

Happiness is not to be found in unbelief. Voltaire was an infidel of the most pronounced type. He 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. Jay Gould, the American millionaire, had plenty of that. When dying, he said: "I suppose I am the most miserable man on earth."

Happiness is not to be found in position and fame. Lord Beaconsfield enjoyed more than his share of both. He wrote: "Youth is a mistake; manhood a struggle; old age a regret."

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

Where, then, is happiness to be found? In Christ alone. He said, "I will see you

again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." John 16:22.

In the light of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, if you ever become the possessor of genuine happiness, it will come to you through the following channels.

1. Salvation from sin.

Only saved people are truly happy. Of course, there are many unsaved people who think they are happy, but they only think so. One could never be happy as long as the wrath of God is abiding on him. Jesus 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. 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 anyone happy. It was a glorious experience of salvation that gave birth to these words from the old hymn:--

"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."

2. Submission to Christ.

Since Christ has bought us back from Satan at the great price of the shedding of His own precious blood, and we now belong to Him, certainly we should definitely submit ourselves to Him and place our lives and influence at His disposal. This attitude and spirit are always conducive to genuine happiness. When we are submissive to Him, He will enable us to concentrate on the things that are vital and essential, and at the same time enjoy true happiness.

3. Service for Christ.

If one has been saved from sin and is submissive to Christ, he will spend his time and energies in service for Christ. Some are foolish enough to think that if they had nothing to do they would be happy. This is a delusion, for the happiest people in the world are those who work hard. There is no substitute for honest and faithful work at congenial occupations. There is no place in which to sit and to sing your soul away to everlasting bliss. For your work to produce the greatest amount of happiness there must be a combination of circumstances to suit your own peculiar temperament. The athlete asks for strength and obstacles in the way. The scholar asks for a quiet hour and a book. The capitalist asks for business and an organization. The preacher asks for a subject and a congregation. The lawyer asks for a case, a brief, and a jury. In fact, industrious people, who are saved from sin, submissive to Christ, and serving Him, are the happiest people in the world.

If our lives are to count for the most in service for Christ, we should do certain things, namely,

- (1) Care for our health.  
Health has three phases--physical, mental and spiritual.  
Good health is closely related to happiness in service for Christ.
- (2) Cease from worrying.  
Worry is discounting future troubles in order to have present misery.  
Worry always makes happiness impossible. If you can do better, do it; if not, why worry?
- (3) Control our thoughts.  
It has been said that "God governs the rocks by gravitation, He governs the tree by a natural law, He governs the animal by instinct, and He governs man by reason."

#### 4. Share with others.

People who live only for themselves--their own pleasures and their own selfish interests--sooner or later get bored with themselves. The happy heart is an unselfish one. To find happiness we must lose ourselves in love and in service. To live within the circle of the will of God and to be helpful is to bring happiness. To keep happiness you will have to give it away. Whenever we lift another's burden we always lighten our own. It is far more desirable to communicate happiness than to receive it from others.

It is said that one night when Jenny Lind was singing to a great audience and after they had repeatedly encored her, she walked back to her room and dropped into a chair. Putting her face in her hands, she said, "Such cheering and applause is just killing me. They are only enjoying my voice. And I want to help humanity." About that time a man walked in and said, "Are you the singer, Jenny Lind?" She informed him that she was and inquired what she might do for him. He told her that a girl was dying in the slums of that city, and that it was the greatest ambition of that girl to hear Jenny Lind sing.

Miss Lind went with the man to the home of that poor girl. She found her lying on an old straw pallet, coughing her life away. When she placed her hand on the brow of the girl, she looked up and said, "Who is this?" She answered, "It is Jenny Lind. I have come to sing for you." She did not sing any of the classical numbers she had been singing, but sang some old gospel songs. And out of those words as they were framed by that marvelous voice, that girl got a glimpse of Christ, accepted Him as her Saviour, and then she died with the glory of salvation in her soul. Jenny Lind stated that the look in the face of that redeemed girl was worth ten thousand times more than singing for the world.

If you have been saved from sin, and really want to be happy, spend your life in submission to Christ, in serving Him, and in sharing with others.

If you are not saved from sin, remember you will never find happiness outside of Christ, but that He wants to save you, and He will save you the very moment you accept Him as your personal Saviour. Accept Him now. 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."