

# *It Is Written*

*A weekly publication of the  
Junction Highway church of Christ in Kerrville, TX.  
Vol. 1                      September 22, 2019                      No. 38*

## Is There a Basis for Your Joy?

*By Stan Adams*

Do you feel good about yourself? Your relationship with God? Do you feel good about those with who you have spiritual fellowship? Do you have joy without measure? A peace which passes understanding? Does a smile invariably crease your face when you contemplate your eternal welfare? It does? Good!...Now for the most important question. Upon what do you base all of these positive emotions?

Hopefully, you have a ready answer to this last question. The proper answer would be, "From a study of God's word, I recognize that I have been obedient to His will, and am a partaker of the blessings that are reserved for His children." Now, you might not word it in exactly the same way, but the point is that your good feelings, your emotions, are based upon an intellectual recognition. You know you have been obedient to God. You know that God has promised blessings to those who are obedient. You know that God keeps His promises. Therefore, you are happy. However, many experience that same happiness without that intellectual foundation.

Emotions are peculiar in that respect. You can be happy, sad, peaceful, worried, etc., without a proper foundation. A mother can be worried about the safety of her child, when in reality the child is perfectly safe. A city can sleep peacefully in the supposed safety of its beds, not knowing an earthquake is imminent. A follower of Mohammed can glory in his certainty of an eternal reward, not knowing that salvation is to be found only through Jesus (cf. John 14:6). An emotion is valid only if it is based on fact. Worry is appropriate only if there is the potential of harm; a feeling of peacefulness only if there is actual safety; spiritual joy only if a relationship with God actually exists.

Herein resides the problem with the emotionalism prevalent among religious people today. Too many believe themselves saved, not because they have the facts, but rather because they feel good about themselves. We see that it would be unreasonable for a mother to fret about the safety of her child when she sees and knows her child is safe. Why is it so many cannot see how unreasonable it is to base their salvation upon a "feeling in my heart." There is a popular notion that the facts don't matter. That we should stop emphasizing the scripture, and just love one another. That we should emphasize the Man instead of the plan. That it does not matter what you believe, so long as you are sincere. This is simply not so.

I feel good about myself and my eternal destiny because I have obeyed the gospel of Christ. I have heard the saving gospel, and have believed it (John 3:16). I have repented of my sins, and have been baptized to have them washed away (Acts 2:38). I have confessed and am willing to confess the Lordship of Jesus before men (Romans 10:9-10). As such, I know that I have the hope of heaven. I worship and work with Christians who follow God's word in matters of worship, work, and daily living. We have a "thus saith the Lord" for all of our practices, and are willing always to defend what we teach and do for God.

Are you happy? It is an important question. But the second is more important. WHY? Upon what do you base that happiness? Think about it.

## God's Plan For Your Life?

*By Marc Smith*

God has plans customized for each one of us? Jeremiah 29:11 RSV, "For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Please Notice the difference between the translation used here and that found in the NKJV:  
"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."

Of course this passage was used prophetically during the Mosaic Law period and was used for a different purpose than why people might use it today, I wonder if it is not popular now because it seems to substantiate the Calvinistic concept that many Christians enjoy thinking, and that is that God has a plan for your day to day life and there is nothing you can do that will alter that. That thinking is not from God, but man. So when something discouraging comes along, we are to just shrug and say "God has a plan for me" which is saying I cannot understand him, but I will trust that everything will work out to my good. Remember, God is no "respector of persons" and that means that God expects for us to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling". Right? That means that we are to think about what the NT says, mull it over in how it effects our lives and then act out of faith. The Lord does, of course, listen to the prayers of his children so providential acts truly occur. However, we are responsible for our acts and our faith. Fate is not predetermined! Our future and our hope is eternal salvation. Our knowledge of God's word directs our steps as his word dwells within us.

## THE RELUCTANT DISCIPLE

*By Jonathan Perz*

The nature of "church" combined with the religious freedoms and sense of entitlement bestowed in our culture has led to a rise in what we might call "the reluctant disciple." Where Jesus calls us to eagerly, passionately and zealously follow Him, this world naturally discourages such radical discipleship. Where discipleship demands a whole-hearted, absolute and determined commitment, this world encourages a much softer and looser approach to one's faith. Thus, the rise of the reluctant disciple.

A reluctant disciple is only willing to go so far in his service to God. There are things the Lord asks that are just too much. Modern ideas of what makes one a "Christian" allow the title to be worn despite an unwillingness to serve the Lord as He commands, expects and deserves. "Suffer for His name's sake"—not a chance. "Give all that I have"—no way. "Lay down my life"—absolutely not. "Love my enemies"—who does this?

It's not just the exceptional things, but the more daily things Jesus asks that overwhelm the reluctant disciple. Assembling more than once each week is just too tasking. Opening my home for hospitality, study and fellowship is not my cup of tea. Talking to others about my faith, the gospel and about Jesus Christ is a little too open for my taste. Confessing sins makes me feel way too vulnerable. Laying by in store is just too demanding. There always seems to be a line that the reluctant disciple is unwilling and hesitant to cross.

Christianity is not for the weak, hesitant and unwilling. It requires total commitment. It came at an incredible price and there is a cost that must be counted and paid (Luke 14:25-33). If we are only willing to follow Jesus when it is easy and convenient, then we have no idea what it means to be a His disciple. The Suffering Savior bore so much to bear our sins on that great cross of shame. How is it that we believe we can follow Jesus at a distance and still please a Heavenly Father who exacted so much from a Beloved Son to save our souls?