



# Are You Happy?

Message for August 2018 - 9

**International Missionary Society  
Seventh-Day Adventist Church  
Reform Movement  
YOUTH DEPARTMENT OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE**

Dear Youth:

I greet you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and ask that His blessings, love, and direction be upon you in abundance.

## **A false idea**

On this occasion we shall meditate on the text of Psalm 32:11, ***Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous; And shout for joy, all you upright in heart!***

Are you happy dear youth? Obviously, you would have to be if you have accepted Jesus as your personal Savior, but it's not so easy being happy, right? Have you ever wondered what it means to be happy? Do you know what true happiness is? Why do you think that most people are not happy? The dictionary defines happiness as *the state of mind of the person who feels fully satisfied to enjoy what he wants or to enjoy something good.*

If we take a gander at the world through the window of mass media, we will discover that there are too many conflicts and problems, too many diseases, innumerable crimes, violations, and abuses of power. Planet Earth overflows with evil and it seems that it is impossible to achieve true happiness in this life, because there is always something that disturbs us and steals our happiness, especially when we hold to the idea that happiness is the outcome of everything going well.

However, for those of us who know the Gospel, a door opens to a new dimension. Happiness is not the result of possessing, but of being. It is not a destination, it is a path. How can one be happy if he does not have what he wants? The concept that happiness is the result of living the way we like and possessing those things that satisfy us will not produce lasting joy; we will not always have the circumstances that we'd like, nor will we have everything we want, and even if we did it does not mean that this would make us happy.

In the case of those who believe: that money buys happiness, facilitates the forbidden delights, or that the pride that comes with possessing everything one's heart desires, and having a great wealth of knowledge will bring with it felicity, it will suffice that we examine some examples of people who possessed all this and yet declared to be void of such delectation. This is the case of Solomon, who became the richest man of his time.

God gave him the promise to give him wealth and glory, because he had not asked for them, "... there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days." 1 Kings 3:13. Solomon possessed everything you can imagine. Please read Ecclesiastes 2:3-10, and you will corroborate what I have written. The last verses say: "Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart rejoiced in all my labor; and this was my reward from all my labor." Ecclesiastes 2:10.

Surely, the experience of Solomon will awaken the envy of many people. He possessed *everything* necessary to be happy according to the schema of the world, but if we continue with his story, we will find a sincere declaration of the wise man that will leave more than one of us jaw-dropped: "Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done and on the labor in which I had toiled; And indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun." Ecclesiastes 2:11. *All was vanity and grasping for the wind! There was no profit under the sun!* Isn't this shocking?

Christina Onassis, the daughter of the Greek magnate Aristotle Onassis, received at the age of 24 the sum of five hundred million dollars. She lived surrounded by the opulence ordinary people crave, and yet Christina attempted suicide. A famous singer of Spanish origin dedicated a song to her where he said, *she was so poor that she had nothing but money*. Christina used to say, "I have everything that money can buy, but I lack the love of a family." She died in Argentina at age 37 of a heart attack.

To those who think that celebrities enjoy a higher level of happiness than other mortals, it is enough to remind them that although these people have what many desire, such as money, fans, luxury, physical beauty, unlimited pleasures, etc., none of this really satisfies them. It is known that many of them suffer from depression and feel unhappy. For example, the famous comedian and actor Robin Williams received many awards for his artistic work, such as: an Oscar, five Golden Globes, and several other actor awards. He appeared in hundreds of movies and television series, but ended his life committing suicide by hanging.

## **True happiness**

The Lord Jesus taught that humans can only reach true happiness in this world if they accept the offer of salvation He offers us. True joy is that which awakens faith that rests in the promises of God. When we accept Jesus as our personal Savior, we believe His words and make them our own, a new stream of vitality permeates our being. Authentic happiness is possible in this life if we focus on loving God and our neighbor (Matthew 22:36-40).

When we live to please God, respecting His Holy Law of love, we inevitably see other humans as someone to love, help, and respect. A person who genuinely loves God will love his spouse, children, parents, friends, and will still treat those who harm him well. He will not base his happiness on the things he possesses or circumstances that he has to live, because all this is transient and fleeting.

When we unconditionally give our heart to God, the Holy Spirit creates in us, through His working grace, new feelings and emotions, new aspirations and longings. He who loves Christ as his personal Savior is a new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 5:22-23). This is what the great men and women of the Bible learned.

The apostle Paul was a happy man; he had learned to live life in God's way and this gave him great inner joy: "... I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." Philippians 4:11, 12.

Note that his way of understanding happiness was to focus within and not on what one has or is living. His mental disposition was to be grateful to God in whatever situation he was in; to experience the joy of salvation even in the worst of circumstances. That is why he was able to sing while he was a prisoner (Acts 16:25) and urge every Christian to be happy: "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!" Philippians 4:4.

His secret then, dear youth, was not to focus on the positive, to make an effort to improve oneself. No, because although this helps, it is not the solution to overcome our misfortunes, but to place oneself in the hands of Christ: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13.

The apostle Peter had the same criterion about happiness: "... but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy." 1 Peter 4:13.

## **Conclusion**

If we understand the counsel of the Word, it will be much easier to learn to be happy. This explains why the Lord Jesus was a fully happy man despite living surrounded by people who hated him and sought his death. In doing the will of the Father, he felt full of happiness and joy, because living in harmony with

God, through the observance of his Holy Law, produces inner peace. Isaiah 48:18.

The prophet Habakkuk also teaches us that happiness is not the product of everything going well and the circumstances we live in being convenient, but that even if we have to travail contravening circumstances, we can rejoice and choose to be happy in Christ. “Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls— yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.” Habakkuk 3:17, 18.

Dear youth, I invite you to rejoice in the Lord. All Christians have reasons to be happy, because God has made us co-inheritors in Christ Jesus of all his promises of love. Do not listen to the enemy who urges you to be morose, depressed, or discouraged. By faith obey the command to rejoice and live life with joy. God wants to see you happy. I suggest you speak at the meeting when you read this writing of the foundations of true happiness, according to the Word of God. May the Lord bless you. Amen.

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