

### Call to Worship from the Psalms

Taste and see how good the Lord is! The one who takes refuge in him is truly happy! Those who put their trust in the Lord, who pay no attention to the proud or to those who follow lies, are truly happy!  
**Shout triumphantly to the Lord, all the earth! Be happy! Rejoice out loud! Sing your praises! Praise the Lord! Those who honor the Lord, who adore God's commandments, are truly happy!**

Those whose way is blameless— who walk in the Lord's Instruction—are truly happy! Those who guard God's laws are truly happy! They seek God with all their hearts. **Those who pay close attention to the poor are truly happy! The Lord rescues them during troubling times. The people who have it like this are truly happy! The people whose God is the Lord are truly happy!**

### Prayer of Invocation

Lord, you protect us and keep us alive; and we are widely regarded throughout the land as happy people.

**Those who put their strength in you are truly happy. The nation whose God is the Lord is truly happy! But all who take refuge in the Lord are truly happy! Lord of heavenly forces, those who trust in you are truly happy!** Because you've made me happy, Lord, by your acts. I sing with joy because of your handiwork.

The people who know the celebratory shout are truly happy! They walk in the light of your presence, Lord.

**The people you discipline, Lord, are truly happy— the ones you teach from your Instruction. The people who uphold justice, who always do what is right, are truly happy! Everyone who honors you, Lord, who walks in God's ways, is truly happy! Amen.**

### The Word Matthew 5:3-11, Psalm 32:1, Luke 19:1-10

A rich tax collector: Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through town. A man there named Zacchaeus, a ruler among tax collectors, was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but, being a short man, he couldn't because of the crowd.

**So he ran ahead and climbed up a sycamore tree so he could see Jesus, who was about to pass that way. When Jesus came to that spot, he looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, come down at once. I must stay in your home today." So Zacchaeus came down at once, happy to welcome Jesus.**

Everyone who saw this grumbled, saying, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner." Zacchaeus stopped and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my possessions to the poor. And if I have cheated anyone, I repay them four times as much." **Jesus said to him, "Today, salvation has come to this household because he too is a son of Abraham. The Human One came to seek and save the lost."**

"The one whose wrongdoing is forgiven, whose sin is covered over, is truly happy!" "Happy are people who are hopeless, because the kingdom of heaven is theirs. **Happy are people who grieve, because they will be made glad. Happy are people who are humble, because they will inherit the earth. Happy are people who are hungry and thirsty for righteousness, because they will be fed until they are full.**

Happy are people who show mercy, because they will receive mercy. Happy are people who have pure hearts, because they will see God. "Happy are people who make peace, because they will be called God's children. **Happy are people whose lives are harassed because they are righteous, because the**

**kingdom of heaven is theirs. Happy are you when people insult you and harass you and speak all kinds of bad and false things about you, all because of me."**

"Be full of joy and be glad, because you have a great reward in heaven."

Living the Word

How can we begin to list all of the things that make us smile? Sometimes we smile without even knowing the smile is on our face... Sometimes we smile inside. Sometimes we smile with our eyes as well.

Your responses – in no order this week. Just sit and enjoy the things that each one brings to your mind, then smile if they move you...

Fluffy clouds

I smile when someone smiles at me

My Grandchildren

Hummingbirds speeding from one feeder to another outside my window

A therapy dog doing its thing

Compliments

My Daughters

Seeing a loved one or a friend

A beautiful Summer day

When my mom smiles at me

My little house

Watching Children Play

Seeing an old friend

Having my husband say 'Pretty Fancy' when I give him dessert

Getting a Gift

Food

Birds at the feeder

Spring Flowers and sunshine

Receiving a handmade card

Kid's laughter

Hearing a good joke

Sometimes looking in the mirror

Doing something nice for someone

Hearing great news

The happy face of a child

Singing in the choir and being able to hit the high notes

When I see my grandson getting out of the car at my house

I counted your smiles. Just hearing the responses that have been given this week by the people around you here, made you smile. Even if you came in grumpy this morning and haven't experienced the joy directly as these responses were read, you still smiled. Sharing your joys can be for your benefit, it is good to hear yours told, but it also can bring joy to others within the hearing.

Did you realize that every time you share something that makes you smile, it makes others smile? Just as every time you share a concern, others around you will pray. That is what it means to be in community together. When we go out, beyond our comfort zone and share a positive experience with someone, it can make a difference.

My sister Cindy and I were chatting about how well things went on Tuesday evening with her presentation as we walked through the parking lot and into Walmart on Wednesday afternoon. Someone stopped us and asked, "What church do you go to?" Cindy said, "The United Methodist Church." And I chimed in with "It is the octagon church on Hwy B with the copper spire."

When I said the word 'copper,' her face lit up and she told us that she knows where it is, and she grew up in a Methodist Church. We chatted for a few minutes – Cindy telling her I was the pastor, and me sliding in the worship time and invitation to stay for fellowship. Then we were on about our day.

I turned to Cindy whose whole life is 'telling the story', and I said, "see how easy that happened...I need to be present in the community more." Will that person come here to worship? That is the wrong question. The question is more about if a connection was made; a relationship created. I hope to see her again so I can continue to connect.

Life is like a 'Tactical Escape.' Have any of you taken the opportunity visit the newer business in town named Tactical Escape? I believe it is like playing the board game "Clue" only in a live setting. A group goes into a room and they have to figure out the clues in order to get out of the room again.

Life is like a tactical Escape: We are born into a certain place and situation. God just says, 'Bloom where you are planted.' We then grow up within a certain culture and environment that molds us into something never to be matched by any other person; we are each unique and different.

If we have the opportunity, to grow up in the Christian belief, we are given clues by Jesus, how to live our lives. Jesus who said he would always be with us. Trying to guide us to the keys which open our gifts and talents, is God's Holy Spirit, ready to help us be free to be who we were created to be.

As we live into these things we are, as Wesley said, "moving on to perfection" and becoming. As we fulfill who God has created each of us to be, I believe that God's face smiles. What then, would make God smile? Here are some 'happy' God verses:

1 King 8:66 *On the eighth day, King Solomon dismissed the people. They blessed the king and went back to their tents happy and pleased about all the good that the LORD had done for his servant David and for his people Israel.* When we are thankful, we smile and surely God must smile.

Job 5:17 *Look, happy is the person whom God corrects; so don't reject the Almighty's instruction.* Sometimes we get going in the wrong direction and God has to help us redirect. It is done to make our lives better.

Psalms 1.1 *The truly happy person doesn't follow wicked advice, doesn't stand on the road of sinners, and doesn't sit with the disrespectful.*

Life is worth smiling about if we can avoid the things that take us on a downward spiral away from God.

Psalms 32:2 *The one the LORD doesn't consider guilty—in whose spirit there is no dishonesty—that one is truly happy!* And then so is God, happy for us.

Proverbs 23:25 *Your father and your mother will rejoice; she who gave you birth will be happy.* Honor your father and mother...that makes them happy as well as God.

Isaiah 56:2 *Happy is the one who does this, the person who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath.* But you already know that because you are here...

Luke 1:44-46 *Elizabeth said, "As soon as I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. Happy is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill the promises he made to her." Mary said, "With all my heart I glorify the Lord! Think of God's joy as this scene plays out...*

All good comes from God. You are just blessed in your life because you are deeply loved unconditionally by the one God of the whole Universe. All good guidance comes from God. You are blessed through following the Creator's directions specifically for your life. Listen and I will give you a personal John 3:16: *For God so loved you, that he gave his only Son, and if you believe in him, you shall not perish, but have eternal life.* The moment you believe it and live into it... God smiles for sure.

On our facebook page, I asked this week what do you think Jesus smiled at? I received a response that I will share with you from Rev. Paul Yoder: "I'm sure Jesus smiled at a good joke, hearing a baby laugh, witnessing people exercise care (love) of others, especially those society rejected, seeing old love and new love." Some pastors are so reflective...

I also immediately pictured Jesus with the children.

Luke 18:15-17 *People were bringing babies to Jesus so that he would bless them. When the disciples saw this, they scolded them. Then Jesus called them to him and said, "Allow the children to come to me. Don't forbid them, because God's kingdom belongs to people like these children. I assure you that whoever doesn't welcome God's kingdom like a child will never enter it."*

Then I remembered how Jesus was with those who were on the outside of society – Zacchaeus. He had to climb a tree to see Jesus. He believed enough to make the extra effort to attempt some kind of reaching for Jesus and Jesus invited him in by honoring him with a reverse invitation. *When Jesus came to that spot, he looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, come down at once. I must stay in your home today." So Zacchaeus came down at once, happy to welcome Jesus.*

The word smile isn't in the Bible, but facial expressions aren't recorded along with the scriptures. We know the tone of the words by what is said. It is safe to assume that along with the word 'happy' would come a smile.

We know who Jesus was by knowing the Beatitudes: "*Happy are people who are hopeless, because the kingdom of heaven is theirs.*" Jesus cared about the hopeless, those who grieve, those who are humble, those who are hungry and thirsty for righteousness, those who show mercy, people who have pure hearts, people who make peace, people whose lives are harassed because they are righteous, you when people insult you and harass you and speak all kinds of bad and false things about you, all because of me. Jesus cared enough to tell us what would make us happy and surely also make him happy.

We are blessed because we know who God is through knowing who Jesus is, from scriptures like the Beatitudes and learning what would make God smile.

The Holy Spirit is with us to motivate us to make others happy. Everything good that we do, comes by way of the Holy Spirit.

For example when we 'fall in love,' and want to be with our partner, we sometimes have to have to approval of others.

1 Samuel 18:20, 26 *Now Saul's younger daughter Michal loved David. When this was reported to Saul, he was happy about it. When the servants reported this to David, he was happy to become the king's son-in-law.* And the all lived happily ever after. Well if you have read the whole story, you know that isn't true. Even so, in the grip of new love Saul's approval meant he was smiling and he gave his smile to David and Michal. For the rest of the story, I encourage you to read the book!

The Holy Spirit also helps us praise God, recognizing who we are and whose we are: Psalm 65:1-4 *God of Zion, to you even silence is praise. Promises made to you are kept— you listen to prayer— and all living things come to you. When wrongdoings become too much for me, you forgive our sins. How happy is the one you choose to bring close, the one who lives in your courtyards! We are filled full by the goodness of your house, by the holiness of your temple.*

The Holy Spirit is present to keep encouraging us: Psalm 128:2 *You will definitely enjoy what you've worked hard for— you'll be happy; and things will go well for you.* Like a cheerleader – go, team, go! We are blessed because we are offered guidance each moment by God through the Holy Spirit.

I think Jesus smiles inside sometimes. Remember how impetuous and predictable Peter could be? Matthew 14:22-33 *Right then, Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead to the other side of the lake while he dismissed the crowds. When he sent them away, he went up onto a mountain by himself to pray. Evening came and he was alone.*

*Meanwhile, the boat, fighting a strong headwind, was being battered by the waves and was already far away from land. Very early in the morning he came to his disciples, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified and said, "It's a ghost!" They were so frightened they screamed.*

*Just then Jesus spoke to them, "Be encouraged! It's me. Don't be afraid." Peter replied, "Lord, if it's you, order me to come to you on the water." **[Impetuous]** And Jesus said, "Come." Then Peter got out of the boat and was walking on the water toward Jesus.<sup>30</sup> But when Peter saw the strong wind, he became frightened. As he began to sink, he shouted, "Lord, rescue me!" **[predictable]***

*Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him, saying, "You man of weak faith! Why did you begin to have doubts?"<sup>32</sup> When they got into the boat, the wind settled down. Then those in the boat worshipped Jesus and said, "You must be God's Son!"*

When Peter stepped out of the boat – God smiled.

When Peter starts to walk on the water and then sinks – Jesus smiled.

Peter's call out to Jesus, asking for help, that is when the Spirit of God has gone to work in him.

Our smile is a blessing, 'God given' to all, to share the joy in life with others...We are blessed by it and can bless others by using it.

So I end with this – from Numbers 6:24-26

*The LORD spoke to Moses: Tell Aaron and his sons: You will bless the Israelites as follows. Say to them:*

*The LORD bless you and protect you.*

*The LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.*

*The LORD lift up his face to you and grant you peace. Amen.*