

In His Presence (Arthur Morgan Funeral)

Psalm 16:11 Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

- On my way to the hospital to visit with the family early Wednesday morning, this Scripture came to mind as I was thinking about Brother Arthur Morgan. I guess the reason it was this verse over any other verse is that he just loved to be in the presence of the Lord, at church services, or any place that he could get prayed for. He wasn't the least bit embarrassed about letting people know that he was "feeling the presence of the Lord."
- The Bible says that in God's presence is "fulness of joy" – that's what Arthur Morgan had. People everywhere say, "I just want to be happy." There's nothing wrong with that. But Brother Morgan had something far better than happiness. **What we need in your life is not happiness; what we need is joy.**
- Joy is very much different than happiness. Most people think, "If only I could ..." or "If only someone else would ..." then I could be happy! They have DESTINATION DISEASE. But life is not a destination, it is a journey! You'll never "arrive!" The grass may be greener on the other side of the fence, but the water bill is higher over there too!
- After people make drastic changes, walk away from marriages, quit decent jobs, switch careers, move across the country, build a new house, buy a new car, or get a great promotion, THEY STILL HAVE TO LIVE WITH THEMSELVES, SO THEY ARE STILL UNHAPPY!
- **Nowhere in the Bible does God advise us to pursue happiness – because happiness is not a Biblical concept!**
- The word "happiness" is only used 22 times in the Bible (NT – 6X, OT – 16X), and it NEVER means what we have been conditioned to think of today! In the Bible, "happy" doesn't mean, "having everything go my way." It means, "blessed or favored by God."
- Happiness is extremely vulnerable!
 - Happiness wrapped up in people is insecure because people let us down.
 - Happiness centered in possessions is unsure because material goods deteriorate and depreciate.
 - Happiness based on health is unreliable because time takes its toll on all of us.
 - Happiness grounded in social achievement is unpredictable because a new star eventually eclipses you!

- Everything we build our happiness on eventually double-crosses us! That is why the world is full of cynical and discouraged people; this is why we live in an age of despair. People have tried everything to attain happiness, and it never lasts! We are basically BORED!
- In contrast to happiness, the Bible uses the words JOY, JOYFUL or REJOICE over 160 times. And it teaches us that joy only comes from the Spirit of God living within us! This is how it works:

Happiness is external	Joy is internal
Happiness is temporary	Joy is permanent
Happiness is based on chance	Joy is based on choice
Happiness is based on circumstances	Joy is based on Christ

- Joy in our lives doesn't come from receiving, it comes from giving! Humanly speaking, you are wired to receive. But when you have God in your life, His Spirit "rewires" you to give!
- **Acts 20:35b (CEV)** Remember that our Lord Jesus said, "More blessings come from giving than from receiving."
- The first key to joy is that you've got to focus on somebody else rather than on yourself. Joy doesn't come from making me happy, joy comes from making other people happy. God designed it that way!
- One popular myth goes like this: "When I get all my problems solved, I'll be happy." That's not going to happen! Life is simply a series of solving problems. If the only time you learn to have joy is when you've got all your problems solved, you're never going to have joy. You must learn to have joy even in the middle of problems!
- You say, "I'm exhausted, I don't have anything left to give." That's why you need Jesus Christ on a daily basis. That's why you need His power to give you joy when human energy runs out.
- **Philippians 4:11** Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.
- **Philippians 4:4** Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.
- **How is it possible to always be joyful?** When Paul wrote this he was in prison. He was about ready to be executed. He was writing to the Philippian church and he wrote "the book" on joy. Nineteen times in the book of Philippians he used the word "joy" or "rejoice". Paul wasn't counting on his circumstances to bring him happiness; he was counting on the Holy Ghost to give Him joy!
- Today, Arthur Morgan is in the PRESENCE of the Lord, where he always wanted to be; it's not strange to him! Jeff said to me the other morning, "You always think they'll live forever." I replied, "That's the wonderful thing here – he is living forever." IN GOD'S PRESENCE!