

Welcome

Hi this is Pastor Melinda, Tancrede, and Sophia from Shiloh UCC. This is our midweek message. I hope everyone's well and healthy. This week let's meditate on the Psalm suggested by the Lectionary for Sunday.

Psalm 100 **All Lands Summoned to Praise God** **A Psalm of Thanksgiving.**

- 1 Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.
- 2 Worship the Lord with gladness;
come into his presence with singing.
- 3 Know that the Lord is God.
It is he that made us, and we are his;
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
- 4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise.
Give thanks to him, bless his name.
- 5 For the Lord is good;
his steadfast love endures forever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.

Papaji, a spiritual master from India, said: *"To be unhappy, you need many things.¹ But to be happy you need nothing..."* I will say that one more time so it can sink in... *"To be unhappy, you need many things. But to be happy you need nothing..."*

Happiness does not come from nice houses and cars. Happiness does not come from health, wealth, or prosperity. There are billionaires who are unhappy. To be beyond pleasure and pain, all you need is God. And everyone can love God. You don't need a big church to pray in, or a full belly. Happiness is the perfume from living the spiritual life. And anyone can live a spiritual life regardless of the zero's at the end of your bank account.

Having said that, I have a big question for you. Is it crazy to be happy right now? Can you be happy even during the Coronavirus?

Our world is in turmoil. We are experiencing life threatening illnesses, pandemics, natural disasters, wars, and killings daily. People are suffering for so many reasons. Even children are struggling to comprehend what's happening in our wild world.

With all this suffering, can we "...make a joyful noise to the Lord"? Can we "enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise." Can we sing "Alleluia, alleluia" in these times?

1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HrVAXogSItg>

Sometimes, it's hard to praise God. It can be hard to be grateful, when all you can think of is your physical, emotional, or spiritual pain. We forget about the temporal pleasure which precedes the pain. We forget the cycle of identification with sense pleasures and then the suffering that follows. Whenever a sense object becomes more important than God, we suffer.

But can we awaken from this hellish cycle of attachment and repulsion, if someone points to it? Can we hear what our minister is actually saying?

It's difficult because we have been trained by the world to judge by appearances. We do not get a God's eye view of life outside of time. Our consciousness has been brainwashed by the world to be unhappy. So it's hard to see past the finger pointing to the moon.

However, this psalm reminds us that joy is our second nature. To quote Van Morrison, "*We were born before the wind. All so younger than the sun. And the body boat was One, as we sailed into the Mystic*".²

We were born with joy but because of our conditioning we have learned to be grumpy adults. We have forgotten about play. We have become so serious that we have abandoned our bliss. We are chasing the wind, when joy is at our door, knocking, "Won't you let me in?"

To be happy you need nothing. To be unhappy you need many things. You need a big screen TV to look at all the madness. You need a computer to Google all the crazy things said on Twitter. To be unhappy you have to work hard. But to be happy you need nothing. You can be homeless and destitute, but be in step with God's purpose for your life. ***To be happy all you need is God, and you have that right now...***

So why all the unhappiness? With God you can lay down all your worries at the feet of the cross. With God, you can shut that serpent mind off and rest. When you lay your head on the pillow, you can slip off into wonderland without a care. With God, you can be truly free.

No matter what kind of entertainment news they pump into our living rooms, our God is unchanging and holy. God loves us, and cares about us, no matter what this world says or does. Our God is so awesome that even if we die, we will live. So how can we worry about anything? If God is with us, who can stand against us? If we have given our lives to Jesus and said our prayers, how can we be upset?

To be unhappy you need many things. But to be happy all you need is God.

2 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_6r2P4W9Yog

Before I close, let us listen to the words of Psalm 100 again:

1 Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

2 Worship the Lord with gladness;
come into his presence with singing.

3 Know that the Lord is God.

It is he that made us, and we are his;
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise.

Give thanks to him, bless his name.

5 For the Lord is good;
his steadfast love endures forever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.

Hymn “Alleluia, Alleluia”

Benediction

Thursday morning at 10:00 AM let's have another drive-through event at Shiloh UCC. Come, wave and say “hello” to your Pastor at the main entrance. Stay well and healthy. Bye-bye.