The Joy of God's Promises Part 2 (Mike Kaye, CE Elder)

Two weeks ago, our "mini-lesson" was on The Joy of God's Promises. It illustrated how God's blood covenant with Abram anticipated Jesus' death for our sins so that, through grace, when we accept Christ as Lord and Savior: 1) God credits us with the same type of undeserved righteousness Abram gained when he "believed God" (Genesis 15:6); and 2) we gain claim to God's promises, including eternal life in Jesus!

That should bring deep-rooted joy to every Christian! And that joy is super-important, because it should be a stimulant to loving God--each member of the Holy Trinity--in return for God's incredible love for **YOU** personally. When you truly love someone, you just cannot be blasé about interacting with them or about showing your love through your actions, words and happiness when around them.

Isn't that a great theory? But one of the dangers about being with someone thru life is at times (or worse) taking them for granted. It can happen to us with people we love and it can happen in our relationship with God (like praying "hallowedbethyname" without thinking of what that means as we race thru the prayer Jesus taught.) Our Monday class recently discussed the letter to the church at Ephesus. (Revelation 2:1-7) Jesus praised them for good works, faith, discernment, and perseverance in the face of persecution. In fact, they were known as the "Apostolic Church" prior to this letter. Such a label indicates a passion for Jesus that leads to preaching and living the Gospel and taking that Gospel out to the world, for which they **had** (past tense) been known.

But Jesus said to them in verse 4: "*But I have this against you: You have abandoned your first love.*" Without passion for Christ in their hearts as the motivator, all they did was as dry/barren as the motions of the Pharisees. As He declared in verse 5: "*Therefore, keep in mind how far you have fallen. Repent and perform the deeds you did at first. But if you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.*" Think on that--all those good things they did could **NOT** make up for their growing cold in their love for Jesus! And their lampstand (which represented their church) **was** removed--it declined with the city, which today is just ruins to visit.

How can you maintain a passion in your heart for Jesus? I think it's linked to the joy you feel from knowing your salvation is assured. I especially feel a renewal and enhancement every time I read/study God's Word and see new connections and applications to walking with Christ. The Bible is incredible--fully internally connected, showing God's love and comprehensive plan for **us** that He made before Creation. And as a result of such enhancement, I try to grow in returning His love and seek opportunities to testify to others to share that joy.

That joy in each of us should also stimulate commitment to Christ with our promises of giving our talents, prayers and money during our stewardship campaign.

You really should check out what you've been missing in info and fellowship!

- **Sunday, 9 am: Sermon topic of the day**; Cher Kaye
- **Sunday, 9 am: Book of Romans**; Melissa Vande Mark
- **Monday, 2:30 pm; Book of Revelation**; Mike Kaye