

Bermudian Church of the Brethren

WEDNESDAY'S WORD – a midweek thought from Pastor Larry M. Dentler
to share a word of inspiration ... encouragement ... challenge ... a smile ... in the middle of your week
August 15 in the year of our Lord 2018 - #753

Tears

Recently a quote in the evening devotional that Cathy and I are currently using really made me stop and think. The author said that Christians should be the happiest persons on earth, no matter what we are facing, because of the salvation we know through Christ and the richness of His love and promises. And yet, as the author noted, often believers don't reflect that.

Isn't it interesting that the Bible never records Jesus laughing? But a couple times the Bible makes special note of His tears. One of those notes we all know well. It's the shortest verse in the Bible. John 11:35. Just two words in English. "**Jesus wept.**" One can make several different assumptions from this. Either Jesus never laughed or smiled, which some portrayals of Jesus seem to believe. Or that His normal demeanor was so happy and joyful that when they saw Him cry they made special note of it. I believe the latter. No long-faced, smile-less Jesus for me. I believe the implication of Scripture is that He was warm and friendly and people young and old were drawn into His presence. I believe His normal countenance was a warm smile. I believe He laughed with the children. I believe He teased with His disciples. I believe He danced joyfully the Jewish dances of His culture. And when the Gospel writers saw Him weep ... it took everyone by surprise ... it was so out of character for Jesus ... that they made note of it. And no big explanation was necessary. Simply ... "**Jesus wept.**"

So no matter what we are facing. A U.S. political mess. A Church divided. Family stress and brokenness. Difficult health issues. Heart wrenching loss. Let us reflect the joy of the Lord! If I'm suffering, I can find joy in the presence of the Lord always with me. If I feel alone I can put on a smile knowing that Jesus is by my side. If I'm anxious, worried, stressed ... Jesus understands and loves me so much. And the truth that Jesus died ... even for me! And the wealth of sure 'take-em-to-the-bank' promises that are mine as an heir of Christ. Happy!

But sometimes joy & tears mix? That's been my experience lately. We had such an amazingly wonderful *Vacation Bible School*. And I found myself standing back and observing all my dear sisters & brothers who were working so hard to share this VBS with a packed church of children & youth. I watched the joy on faces. The children singing praise to the Lord at the top of their voices. And my eyes filled with tears.

Then I stood at our *B2SB (Back 2 School Bonanza)* outreach ministry where we offered back packs and school supplies, and haircuts, and Bibles, and Gospel bracelets. I watched the joy in the eyes of our Team. I watched Pastor Jonathan Bream speaking to shy Hispanic families explaining to them how to get the items. I watched little girls with bright pink back packs nearly as big as them with pony tails bouncing joyfully. And little boys with crisp, clean new haircuts smiling shyly. I watched thankful parents, and wide-eyed children. And I got so choked up I needed to step aside to compose myself.

Then I stood on the church parking lot last Sunday before a long row of farm tractors on our *Drive-Your-Tractor-To-Church Sunday & Farm Family Blessing*. These farm families work so hard every day of their lives. The work is hard. The hours are long. The markets are uncertain. The work often dangerous. And yet they find time to serve the Church. They serve on Boards & Committees. They serve in the kitchen & with our ministries. Every time I sit down to a meal there are farmers behind that meal. And whoever takes time to thank them? Whoever takes time to bless them? Whoever takes time to honor them? We at Bermudian do.

I watched the bright eyes of Ben as he stared in amazement at the trophy his grandfather had just won for the *"Best Restored"* tractor. A little IH Farmall Cub that had belonged to Ben's Great, Great Grandfather. That trophy will stay in Ben & Adam's room at grandpa & grandma's house he told me! I watched the pride in Cory's face as he posed for a picture with his *"People's Choice"* trophy for the little Wheel Horse tractor he had restored as his senior project. Cory didn't say much. His eyes did. Several farmers, big tough hard working guys, came to me to say *"thank you for this."* For what? For remembering and caring about them.

And I thought of my Dad in heaven. He loved tractors and he loved the farm community. This farm community. He serviced tractors and installed milking parlors in some of the very farms that now are part of this church I am privileged to serve. And tears of joy welled in my eyes.

Yes, we as the children of the Lord have so very, very much to be happy about. Saved! Forgiven! Loved! Embraced! Called! Equipped! Blessed! And when we have the privilege to serve others in the Name of Jesus, and see others come to faith in Christ, that should put a broad smile on our face ... and just maybe ... a joyful tear in our eye!

"...don't be sad. The joy that the Lord gives you will make you strong." Nehemiah 8:10 GNT

"The Lord is my strength and shield. I trusted Him with all my heart. He helped me, so I am happy. I sing songs of praise to Him." Psalm 28:7 ERV

Happy! Pastor Larry <><