



Today's Lesson

Grinning On The Inside

Power Point notes available at:
www.unityofbakersfield.org

Grinning On The Inside

Today is the 4th Sunday of Advent. During this week, Unity as well as other Christian churches are celebrating the meaning of joy in their life and affairs.

When the teacher asked the class what joy meant, Mary raised her hand and said, "Joy is the feeling of grinning on the inside."

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These things have I spoken to you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. (John 15:11)



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When Scrooge discovered the love that was his to share, it was told that he became filled with joy, giddy as a school boy, grinning on the inside.

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With the idea that giving of a gift will somehow bring an element of joy to the receiver, Hallmark has been running commercials showing the gift buyer playing out joyful responses from their family and friends as they share the chosen item. You can almost feel the purchaser grinning on the inside as they play out the scenario in their minds.

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Something to think about:

It has been said that if you can't find joy in the path you are on and what you are working toward now, how do you expect to find joy once you get there?

A gift given in love will no doubt bring joy to both the receiver as well as that the giver. As an old Proverb states: Gifts make their way through stone walls.

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Phillip White the retired editor for Unity Magazine related this story of gifting in the Nov-Dec 2002 UM:

One day in early December many years ago, snow was beginning to fly outside the biology lab at the Maryland University. At student desks stood microscopes, those tubular windows into the mysteries of life beyond the naked eye.

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Out of the corner of my own naked eye, the falling flakes momentarily distracted me from my last project of the fall term—as study of cell division. As I adjusted the microscope, the spectacle of living cells dividing suddenly came into my view. One was becoming two. Life was happening before my eyes.

Here was the power of giving in all its elegant simplicity. A dividing cell willing gives the gift of part of itself so that a new cell may live and grow. Its gift is in every life, and it lives to make that gift. Such gifting goes on in our bodies all the time.

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Parents who have raised children understand this truth at a deep, even unconscious level. Without gifts—with the unearned nurturing, support, encouragement, faith, and care, indeed, the very life of a parent or parental figure a child cannot live.

Somehow I get the sense that our Divine Parent is trying to tell us something: Gifts are everywhere, and nothing of significance exists without them.

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These are some of the insights I received from Philip's article when it comes to finding joy through gift giving:

1. There is no joy in individual achievement without gifts from others.
2. There is no joy in education without the gifts of teaching.
3. There is no joy in learning without gifts of commitment.

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4. There is no joy in communication without the gift of listening.

5. There is no joy in communion with God without gifts of receptivity and silence.

To quote Robert Louis Stevenson, "Find out where joy resides, and give it a voice far beyond singing. For to miss joy is to miss all."

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So why miss out on the joy that is ours? It has been said that joy is realized once we understand that we can take back our lives, to reclaim what we thought was lost, to restore balance to an out of control life; to rejuvenate and recharge ourselves, bringing healing to the wounds we carry inside us, and bringing into a fuller manifestation and demonstration the wonderful persons that each of us are can be summed up in this well know quote: What you are is God's gift to you, what you do with yourself is your gift to God.

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Everyday activities are our gifts to the world of family, friends, loved ones, co-workers, the community in which we live. A stone thrown into a pond creates a rippling effect that touches the entire ponds, so do our everyday activities. So how are you gifting, how are you reclaiming the joy that is yours?

Many people have experienced the joy of gifting themselves to a project bigger themselves. Case in point: Habitat for Humanity.

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Millard Fuller, founder of Habitat for Humanity related this story about one woman who was receiving the keys to her new home:

When asked for her thoughts on that occasion, she reflected on her experience watching the house being built. As she looked at Jimmy Carter mixing mortar, she saw drops of his sweat falling into the mortar. With tears, she said she could never forget that image because it so graphically spoke of the reality that the gift of his life was literally built into her house.

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Phillip White had this to say in his article:

We often think that our gifting must be an activity that is centered around Christmas, birthdays, or special occasions. For many people it is easy to receive gifts around these activities because is some why they think they earned them. But what about the unexpected gift given? How do you feel then? Joyful or very uneasy? We humans have figured out how life's good comes.

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It comes not by gifts but by reward for something we do. So, if we feel we are not good enough then we feel the gift is unjust. What we fail to realize is that it is the "unearned" gift that is the most prevalent and has the greatest power to transform.

As the late Rabbi Liebman once stated:

The primary joy of life are the gifts of acceptance, approval, the sense of appreciation and companionship of our human comrades.

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The real gifts we all have can be given anytime and any place for they are the gifts of love, forgiveness, compassion, encouragement, and yes even the sweat of our brow. Everything you are is a gift to the world and God. Allow yourself the opportunity to experience the joy of gifting.

