



Volume 10, No. 12, December, 2022



Sing and Be Happy

*If the skies above you are gray,
You are feeling so blue,
If your cares and burdens seem great
All the whole day through,
There's a silver lining that shines
In the heavenly land,
Look by faith and see it my friend,
Trust in His promises grand.*

*Often we are troubled and tired,
Sick with sorrow and pain,
There are others living in sin
Blest with earthly gain,
Take new courage we cannot tell
What the morrow may bring,
When the dark clouds vanish away,
Then your heart truly can sing.*

*Oft we fail to see the rainbow
Up in heaven's fair sky,
When it seems the fortunes of earth
Frown and pass us by,
There are things we know that are worth
More than silver and gold,
If we hope and trust Him each day,
We shall have pleasure untold.*

Refrain:

*Sing and you'll be happy today
Press along to the goal,
Trust in Him who leadeth the way,
He is keeping your soul;
Let the world know where you belong,
Look to Jesus and pray,
Lift your voice and praise Him in song,
Sing and be happy today.*

WORDS: Emory S. Peck (w. 1940)

MUSIC: Emory S. Peck (w. 1940)



CELEBRATING A MILESTONE

We like to celebrate, don't we? We celebrate birthdays, promotions, anniversaries, graduations, Valentine's Day, Mother's and Father's Days, Christmas, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, family reunions, and so on.

Spiritually, we celebrate the births of new Christians. We also celebrate the Lord's Supper each Lord's Day. Even in the midst of sorrow, we celebrate lives well lived in service to God, the victory of faithful Christians, and their transitions to Paradise!

This month, I have a very personal reason for celebrating. This month marks a full 10 years since Sunrise began. It began with my dream of sharing encouraging thoughts



with as many Christian women as possible. When I retired from my job, I asked my dear friend and neighbor, Kathy Webber, to join me in launching Sunrise. She graciously agreed and has contributed over the years, especially during that first year.

Many others have also contributed over the years. Lorna Smith of Lubbock, Texas, became the first regular contributor. She has a unique talent for writing short articles with good messages, often with a humorous twist. Sadly, she has retired from Sunrise, and I miss her deeply. Wilburta Arrowood began writing for Sunrise as a resident of Missouri. She now resides in Napoleonville, Louisiana. She graciously stepped into Lorna's shoes and contributes her wisdom and vast experiences each month.

Almost 50 women have contributed over these past years. Also, several men, many of them from Rolla Church of Christ, have allowed me to use some of their writings in Sunrise. Women from states including Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas have also contributed to Sunrise.

The elders of Rolla Church of Christ have been very supportive, and Jeff McKune is especially helpful with his technical expertise. He sends out each Sunrise issue to approximately 450 email subscribers. My husband, Loyd, is one of my two best proofreaders. He has also contributed articles from time to time over the years. My son, Ken Waite, also contributes his talents to the appearance of Sunrise. All the headers that you have seen over the years are his productions.

Thanks to all who have contributed and continue to share their talents. Also, a huge thanks to all our subscribers for your support of Sunrise. You are all deeply appreciated.

As gratifying as this celebration is, there is a far greater day coming—***a day of rejoicing for all who belong to God!***

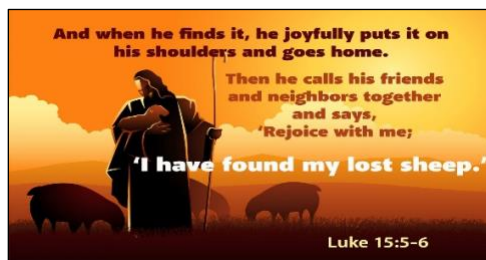
Evelyn Waite, Rolla, Missouri



Rejoicing in Heaven

Luke 15 is filled with joy. The three parables Jesus tells all end on a note of celebration.

A shepherd loses one of his sheep, searches until he finds it, and carries it home, followed by celebration. “And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me, I have found my lost sheep’” (Luke 15:5, 6).



In the second parable a woman loses a coin and searches until she finds it. Verse 9 says, “And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me, I have found my lost coin.’”



In both parables there is a spirit of joy. A joy that must be shared with friends and neighbors.

When we come to the third parable, we learn the younger son’s wild living has left him penniless and in the pigpen. He finally comes to his senses and wants to come home. The welcome and reaction from his father is not at all what he expected. Rather than harsh words or a lecture, he gets a hug and kiss. He receives a ring, robe, and sandals. The fattened calf is killed. There must be a celebration. The father’s joy cannot be contained. When a sinner repents, it not only brings joy on earth, but there is also rejoicing and celebration in heaven.

A contemporary father-son relationship reminds us of another transformation.

Arthur Millard got custody of his 3-year-old son Bart, after he divorced his wife. Bart’s father was abusive to him through much of his childhood. Their relationship was strained and complicated. When Bart was a teenager, his father was diagnosed with cancer. The cancer was to Arthur, what the pigpen was to the prodigal son. It brought about change. First, Arthur found God. Second, it changed his relationship with Bart, and they became closer. These two transformations brought joy both on earth and in heaven.

When Arthur died, Bart called his dad “the Godliest man I’d ever known,” which helped Bart seek his own relationship with God.

At his father’s funeral, his grandmother said to him, “I can only imagine what your dad’s seeing now,” referring to his father’s new life in heaven. This phrase stuck with Bart, and he turned it into the hit song, “I Can Only Imagine.” MercyMe released the song over two decades ago; Bart Millard, the lead singer, imagines what it will be like to go to heaven. The lyrics include images of walking with Jesus, standing in the sun, and feeling a sense of inexplainable joy and celebration.

“I Can Only Imagine” is the best-selling Christian single of all time, having sold more than 2 million digital copies.

I am thankful the prodigal in Luke 15 came home. I am thankful Arthur and then Bart both found a relationship

with God. And I am thankful that all who are lost and find God can look forward to a joyful celebration in heaven that none of us can imagine!

Sally Shank, Edmond, Oklahoma



Celebrate

Who doesn't like a party? I believe God intended for his people to be joyful, for he instigated numerous occasions for the people of Israel to celebrate. Some of the more prominent we remember are Passover, the feast of harvests, the feast of booths, and of course, the Sabbath. They were to celebrate the new wall in Jerusalem after returning from captivity. Those were all occasions for celebration and joy. There were others as well.

This month we have reason to celebrate a great accomplishment. This is the tenth year this publication has blessed the women who read it. The very dedicated editor, Evelyn Waite, has diligently sought and offered articles meant to encourage, inspire, and bless each of you. We should celebrate those blessings. Sing a song, (suggested in many of the recent issues), send a note of congratulations, read, absorb, and enjoy the articles. Be joyful!

The word *holiday* derives from "holy day." As New Testament Christians there is only one of those that we celebrate. By example we know the disciples gathered to worship and partake of the Lord's supper on the first day of each week. Acts 20:7, "On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight."

Christians were to give of their means on that first day of each week. I Corinthians 16:2, "On the first day of every week, each of you is to put aside and save as he may prosper, so that no collections need to be made when I come." Ephesians 5:15-20 tells us, "So then, be careful how you walk, not as unwise people but as wise, ¹⁶making the most of your time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷Therefore do not be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸And do not get drunk with wine, in which there is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your hearts to the Lord; ²⁰always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to *our* God and Father..." In Colossians 1:25 Paul says, "I was made a minister of this church according to the commission from God granted to me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, ..."

Thus, we conclude that we are to gather on the first day of each week to worship, to give of our means, to partake of the Lord's supper, to sing and pray and to be nourished through the preaching of the Word of God. For Christians to celebrate a holy day any other way is not scriptural. However we do have national holidays which are not holy, but rather breaks from our normal routine. We can scripturally celebrate those so long as we do not break any of God's commands in the process.

So how do you celebrate those? A favorite is a large family gathering, sometimes just to visit and sometimes to have a special meal. We know Christmas is not a holy holiday as the contemporary world tries to celebrate, but it is a national holiday when we often have more free time than usual to facilitate such gatherings. Giving of gifts and decorating is a tradition associated with this day each year, and although it is not a part of any holy day, it can be a part of our national holiday if we so choose. Let me emphasize, if you find that celebrating in any of these ways is an offense to you, you absolutely should not do so. On the other hand, if you recognize it is not a religious activity, in my opinion it would fall under the same distinction as Paul advising the church in I Corinthians 8:4-6 to not eat meat if it offends another.

Valentine's Day, Easter, and Halloween are other holidays that are not holy holidays sanctioned by God's word, but to many they carry religious overtones. Those days are national holidays where we can enjoy family and/or free time. Other holidays such as the Fourth of July and Labor Day, Mother's Day, and Father's Day do not carry such secular concepts of religious overtones, so are not so controversial for us. We do have certain restrictions regarding our Christian walk, but sometimes we tend to over think and bind things that are not included in God's word. These things need to be given serious thought, and decisions made on a personal level. Don't ever offend your own conscience, but we need to be very careful to not bind others with our personal opinions.

The word *celebrate* is found 68 times in our bible and *rejoice* is found 203 times. God means for his people to be happy. Let us have a party and rejoice and celebrate the fact that we have avenues such as this one to remind us of all the joy to be had in our Christian walk. Philippians 4:4-9, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say, rejoice!"

Wilburta Arrowood, Napoleonville, Louisiana



CELEBRATIONS

We all love celebrations. We celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, and all kinds of holidays such as Christmas,

Thanksgiving (my favorite), Valentine's Day, and others. We look forward to and prepare for celebrations because they're fun. We enjoy time with our families; we laugh and enjoy an abundance of food. (For the Christian, each day is a day of thanksgiving). We very recently celebrated the tenth anniversary of two congregations merging into one, a sign of unity and the love we have for each other. Family reunions are great, whether spiritual or physical. Praise God for celebrations and the times of remembrance they bring!

We celebrate golden wedding anniversaries of those married 50 years, which is a wonderful milestone. I remember the golden jubilee held for Queen Elizabeth II in 2002 honoring her 50-year reign on the British throne. It was a huge celebration with much fanfare as all earthly royal events are.

When I began to write this, I studied the Jubilee celebration God set up for His people, the Israelites. It



was to be celebrated every fifty years. In the fiftieth year, the Jubilee year, all land was to be returned to its original owner, and they were to return to their own clan. Slaves were to be freed and trumpets to be blown. Read Leviticus 25 for the entire story. What a celebration and family reunion that must have been!

More importantly, we remember and celebrate the sacrifice Jesus made for us on the cross on the first day of each week. We remember that Jesus willingly took away our sins there, and I am grateful we remember that every week lest we forget. Acts 20:7 says, "Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul spoke to them..." This specifically means the Lord's Supper. It was the reason the early Christians came together, and so do we. It reminds us of the body and blood of Jesus on the cross. The emblems are unleavened bread and fruit of the vine (grape juice) which are simple and easily obtained. Every other act of worship we do – singing, praying, giving, teaching, and preaching can be and is done on any day of the week. But the Lord's Supper is reserved for the first day only. It is a solemn remembrance but also is one of great joy.

Of all the events we celebrate on this earth, nothing will equal the heavenly jubilee that awaits us at the end of time. There will be great rejoicing for those who are saved. Jesus allowed John to "see" the splendor of heaven, and John recorded it for us in a way that we can understand a little. We see some of that splendor and glory in the church now. Read Revelation 21.

Revelation 22:1-5 describes the eternal heaven – God's dwelling place. "Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life (see Genesis 3:22) bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city and His servants will serve Him. They will see His face and His name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign forever and ever."

I am looking forward to that celebration!!

Mary Ann Melton, Rolla, Missouri



Sunrise is a monthly newsletter written and/or assembled by members of the Rolla Church of Christ. Sunrise is printed and distributed (primarily via email) to individuals and congregations around the country. All previous issues can be accessed by going to <http://www.seekgrowserveLove.org>. Click on the Resources tab, then on Sunrise Newsletter. You will find the current issue plus all previous issues.

