

## Is there Joy in the Resurrection? Pastor Gus Barnes

Where, O death, is your victory? Where O death, is your sting?  
1 Corinthians 15:55

As we will be celebrating the birth of Jesus in December, we must not forget the resurrection of Jesus we celebrated in March of 24. Grief in his death, as foretold was transformed into joy as foretold.

Joy is located in the bible some 430 times, yet in the NRSV where we get our weekly assigned readings, joy is found some 49 times. Joy is defined as choosing to respond to external circumstances with inner content and satisfaction. We are assured that God will use our experiences to accomplish his work in and through our lives. The biblical meaning of Joy is a fruit of the spirit. A comforting content, a space full of peace. There is an enduring attitude sense of the heart and spirit due to natural parts of the christian faith. When we choose to fully follow Jesus, pursue a christian life, the possibilities are endless!

I find joy each day when I begin my day by asking God "who will you send to me today" I find joy on my monthly drives to Milwaukee to dine with my niece, I witnessed joy when I baptized our newest member Jon A. on June 15th, I find joy when my spouse and I get into the car to go for a drive to seek out a small town restaurant or thrift shopping/garage sales. There is a sense of joy at the birth of a child, there is some joy when a loved one has struggled with a chronic illness, and has found peace in death.

I remembered my own beloved mother, one day was having a conversation with her eyes closed. I asked her who was she speaking to, she told me it was her mother and all her siblings waiting in a Cadillac. I asked her if she was ready, I held her hand and said don't worry about us, we will be okay. Those near death want our permission to die. She told me she was not ready, I took a chance and said tell grandma you're not ready. She did so

I slept with the lights on for a few weeks in fear of a visit from grandma from beyond. Mom passed away a few weeks later.

Resurrection in many bibles is found 42 times and found in some 40 verses in the bible. Resurrection is defined as the restoration to life, the raising from the dead. Jesus was the one and first resurrection foretold, there is also the resurrection of the just, there is the resurrection of the damnation and the resurrection of the unjust. For us in order to rejoice in the resurrection is an act of faith. From God's perspective, it has already been accomplished, Christ is the first born from among the dead 9 Col. 1:18.

Paul asks-"what if there was no resurrection"(1 Cor. 15:13-18) if that were the case if Christ was not raised from the dead, our faith appears somewhat useless, and the gospel was not fulfilled. If this were true our baptism did not save us, and the dead would remain dead. Today we have created many choices when death comes, cremation, burial, there is now a water based cremation, and places where one is buried in burlap and planted in the ground. When death comes some believe we rest until Jesus returns on that unknown time and place, some believe souls leave this temporal World. As a Pastor, there is no right or wrong answer.

Friends so Christ did rise from the dead, then so we will as well. "For Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes through man. For as in Adam all die, so in turn: Christ, the first fruits then, when he comes, to those who belong to him." (1 Cor. 15:13-18)

Our faith is powerful, the gospels are true, we are saved from sin to proclaim the good news of Christ to those who will listen. There is indeed Joy in the resurrection!