

July 2018

From the Desk of Rev. Chuck

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Dear Friends,

As I write this, people across America are getting ready to celebrate July 4th, Independence Day. The United States Declaration of Independence was drafted by Thomas Jefferson, and then edited by the Committee of Five, which consisted of Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, and Robert Livingston. It was then further edited and adopted by the Second Continental Congress on July 4, 1776. The second paragraph of the first article in the Declaration of Independence contains the phrase "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness".

As we all know, words used years and centuries ago had different meanings to the men and women of their day, than they do for us today. There is debate about what the word "happiness" may have meant in 1776. Current usage focuses on pleasant, positive emotions and having needs satisfied, whereas in 1776 the common meaning may have been "prosperity, thriving, well-being," in ones life.

The philosopher, Cicero, once said, "A happy life consists in tranquility of life." Thomas Jefferson also wrote that, "Happiness is not being pained in body or troubled in mind." And Ben Franklin wrote that, "Happiness consists more in small conveniences of pleasure that occur every day."

Each of these individuals has told us what happiness means to them. What does "happiness" mean to you? In the world and times we live today many people have said happiness is: having a good paying job, being in a loving relationship, having a nice place to live, money in the bank, being married / single, having children. Everyone at one time or another went after one or more of these things in hopes that they would bring them happiness. But did they?

Many people live their lives and the pursuit of happiness based on some future event or

circumstance, such as: I will be happy when I get that promotion or position; or when he or she notices me; or when I get that house of apartment I've looking at; when I leave for vacation; or I get pregnant; and for many, when I hit the lottery!

UNITY teaches that: If we keep looking to the people and events in our lives to supply us with happiness and joy, life becomes like a shooting gallery at a carnival where as soon as you succeed in knocking down one target, another one pops up! If you are looking for happiness in people and events, you will soon discover that looking to outer circumstances for your happiness and satisfaction will keep you on an emotional seesaw. So, herein lies the key to all happiness and joy in our lives: It can not be found outside of ourselves, it can only be found within us. True happiness and joy are already ours, gifts freely given by God to us, his beloved children.

What Jesus taught and many have discovered, there is no true happiness or joy without trusting God, for when you trust God you are aware that, whatever the situation, we are just an observer passing through, that things will work out right for all concerned, and everything really is okay. As we stop running after those things in life that we think will make us happy, and instead center our energy and focus our thoughts on God, we will come to know that:

1. True happiness is completely independent of what happens to us from the outside.
2. True happiness is part of our divine nature--built into our very being for it is the result of trusting God.
3. No matter what situation we may find ourselves in, once we make contact with the Christ center at the core of our being, we will feel an immediate rush of happiness and joy. And from that rush, things in our lives will be harmonized and healed.
4. True happiness and joy will give us a sense that everything is all-right with our world; peace of mind; and the freedom to express our divine gifts.

Happy 4th of July!