

Enthusiasm

Ps. 122:1-9

Webster says the meaning of enthusiasm/excitement is "to be stirred or thrilled." Enthusiasm comes from 2 Greek words meaning *in...God*.

Many get excited at ball games or golf or other events. Some will be thrilled at the by getting a new dress or suit. Don't you think it is far better to get excited over the things that will last for all eternity?

We fight for a front seat at a concert or a sporting event...how about for church? We hear a great joke and can't wait to tell our friends – or we get good news and want to tell everyone we know. But how about being excited to share the gospel with others?

A.W. Tozer: "If we evangelicals had one-third the enthusiasm of some of the cults we could take the continent." Brethren, I'm wondering about our enthusiasm? I realize it is difficult to find anyone interested in listening these days – I know because like you I am always sensitive to others spiritual situation. But do we really take advantage of every opportunity that God puts in front of us? When that friend says, "I can't believe that he/she did that" – do we turn that into an opportunity? Whatever "that" is in that scenario we can probably bring God and the gospel into it. What keeps us from it??

Jesus calls us "salt and light" because Christians are a preservative of the gospel for society. Jesus also cautions us in Lk. 14:34 ***"Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned?"***

The point Jesus is making is that as salt we can lose our ability to affect others if we lose our enthusiasm. Over the years I have collected writings about enthusiasm. There have been statements written or stated by very successful people that have impacted my thinking about enthusiasm in life and in my life as a Christian. Let's listen to a few of them.

Charles Schwabb, the American Industrialist who rose from poverty and later formed the US Steel Corporation, said: 'You can succeed at almost anything for which you have unlimited enthusiasm.'

Ralph Waldo Emerson said: 'Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.'

Henry David Thoreau: 'None are so old as those whom have outlived enthusiasm.'

This is my favorite:

Norman Vincent Peale: 'Years wrinkle the skin, but lack of enthusiasm wrinkles the soul.'

The Bible also has much to say about Enthusiasm:

Ecclesiastes 9:10 *Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.*

Mark 12:30 *And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment.* [dozens like this!]

Rom 12:11 *not lagging in diligence fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;*

1 Cor 9:24 *Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.*

Col 3:23 *And whatever you do do it heartily as to the Lord and not to men*

JESUS CAUSED EXCITEMENT TO HAPPEN

1 - His triumphal entry into Jerusalem--Mark 11:9-10 *Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" Blessed is the kingdom of our father David That comes in the name of the Lord!"*

2 - His birth - Luke 2:14-16 *“Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men! So, it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us. And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.”*

3 - Everywhere He went the enthusiasm was contagious. When the Spirit of God indwells you, it will transform you from a lukewarm bump on a log, to a fiery Christian.

THE PEOPLE GOT EXCITED ABOUT JESUS

1 - the demoniac of Gadara Mark 5:20 *“And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.”*

2 the woman at the well Jn 4:28-29 *“The woman then left her water pot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?”*

3 - the blind boy in John 9:17 *“They said to the blind man again, what do you say about Him because He opened your eyes? He said, He is a prophet.”*

4 - the lame man at the gate in Acts 3:8-9 *“So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them walking, leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God.”*

Let me ask you, do you think it is time we joined these in getting about our relationship with Jesus? Brother Pickup would say all the time, Mike you can either be a thermometer or a thermostat. So, be a thermostat, not a thermometer! As a Christian turn up the heat.

WE SHOULD BE EXCITED ABOUT BEING SAVED

Do you believe that being a Christian is greatest thing that ever happened to you?

Nothing is better than knowing that in Christ I stand before God redeemed by His blood. Justified in the sight of God because Jesus died for me. I can live forever with God because of my relationship with Jesus. Matt. 10:39 *He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.*

WE SHOULD BE EXCITED ABOUT SEEING OTHERS SAVED

I remember in Virginia Beach we had one woman who was full of enthusiasm. She got a list from the folks who assigned housing to navy families new to the area. She gave them a day and then as they were unpacking she rang their doorbell with a coffee cake and a pot of coffee and treats for the kids as well. She just talked to them, welcomed them to the area, and told them if they needed a church family she wanted to recommend her church. Over a couple of years, we had 75 baptisms most all of them attributable to this one sister in Christ. Every time we baptized a person that Laurina had invited, she cried – tears of joy. I remember the feeling I had having been able to study with these folks and pray for them to finally see them obey the gospel. There is nothing that gets a church more excited than seeing people come to Christ.

WE SHOULD BE EXCITED ABOUT OUR CHURCH

Look how God has blessed us at West Side. We have many new families that have come our way. Though we have had lots of losses, God has sent Christians to us that complement the work here.

For a congregation our size, look at what we have accomplished physically on our property in the last two years. So many obstacles were in place but with prayer, dedication, sacrifice and hard work we have been able to overcome much of the things in our way. We still have much to do but with more prayer and dedication, sacrifice and hard work we will continue to bring our property into the 21st century. I honestly feel that we have every reason to be excited about the future of the congregation here at West Side.

From the spiritual side of the work, I believe in the coming months we may be able to add more Elders to our work as well as more Deacons. We have already begun a Lads to Leaders program that is well underway. We are planning a Ladies Day for the first time since I have been here. We have a wonderful group of young people that need guidance and teaching. That will require folks to step up for years to come. Brethren, we should be excited about the future!

Brother Pickup taught me as a new preacher, “don’t ever be one of the surprised ones – be one of those who are expecting great things.” We should never have the attitude of crossing our fingers to see what happens, be one to help make things happen.

Phil. 4:8 *“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.”*

1 Thess. 5:16 *“rejoice always”*

Phil. 4:4 *“Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say, rejoice.”*

POSITIVE THINKING

Plaque on the wall of Golfer Arnold Palmer's office:

If you think you are beaten, you are.
If you think you dare not, you don't.
If you'd like to win but think you can't,
It's almost certain you won't.
Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger or faster man,
But sooner or later, the man who wins
Is the man who thinks he can.

“Attempt great things for God, expect great things from God”

God's vision for this congregation goes beyond anything we've imagined or experienced to this time. I believe God's vision for us is beyond what any of us ever thought possible.

Remember that the word enthusiasm comes from the Greek for "In God". So, let's consider one more verse as we close.

Mark 10:27 ***"But Jesus looked at them and said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible."***

This church's future is bright because we are trusting in God for great things to happen in His kingdom. Let us **NOT LIMIT GOD.**