

## 09-04-19 Wednesday Musing

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HOPE... a little words that hold in it the power to improve any situation... no matter what it is or where that place may be... (Isaiah 40:31) - **"But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."** (Psalm 28:7) - **The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him.** For those that put their hope in the Lord... it is they that will not be disappointed... Many things in life beat us down... throw us a curve... and sometimes it seems as if life is just one thrashing after another... It is at these times, when we feel as if we are walking through the valley of the shadow of death, that we must cling to our hope... our faith in Christ must endure the challenges that life throws our way... and in that faith we will find the hope... that even in the darkest of days will bring joy to our hearts... God's promise to never leave us or forsake us was not made lightly... He will not... He does not ever leave our side if we but trust... if we have faith in Him... Him who died for you... Him who suffered for your sins... Him who was from the beginning... He who shall also be there to greet us when we enter heaven's gates... Jesus...

Some have forgotten how to HOPE... they have been disappointed so many times they do not want to risk being let down again... so they forge ahead resigned to live mechanically in a world in which God intended a life filled with breathtaking experiences... awe-inspiring beauty and overwhelming joy that filter in among our everyday routines that are our lives. But so many of us look for our hope in medicine... financial success... or power over others... and the list could go on and on...

No matter what is happening in our lives... we must remember that our story has an amazingly happy ending... Jesus secured that on the cross... Even if the way ahead of you... at the moment... looks dark.... There is a brilliant Light waiting to surround you... and me... at the end of our journey... And it is this thought that can bring unspeakable JOY to our lives now.

In Nehemiah 8:10b we read **"for the joy of the Lord is your strength"**... and can be better understood if you recognize that our purpose is not merely to exist mechanically... to not only 'do' things for the Lord... we are to live our lives for Him... with Him... and by His strength... we are to submit our will to His... in that lies the strength which is unbeatable... unshakable... and brings JOY to your very being.

It is this JOY that Jesus desires for each of us... in John 17:13 possibly Jesus' longest prayer is recorded... in it Jesus says **"But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves"** ... which we can understand to basically mean "Now I (Jesus) am returning to You (God). I am speaking this prayer here in the created cosmos *alongside friends and foes* so that in hearing it they might be consumed with joy."

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It is my wish... my HOPE for each of you ... that you would experience the JOY that comes through HOPE... for I have... I do... and it brings to my innermost being a peacefulness that goes beyond understanding... The JOY of the LORD is my strength! "13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:13.

As we lift our prayers to the Lord let us not forget all of those who have suffered due to the hurricane, all of those going to their aid ... that God would provide protection and wisdom... also let us remember Louise Walters, Betty Loy, Family of Elizabeth Woodlief—Mother of Peggy Johnson, Bobbye Mebane, Nancy Thomas, Anna Gerow, Family of Jeanne Williams, Family of Mary Jane Pettigrew, Frances Morgan, Harvey Sharpe, Donna Freeman, Doris Massey. And also friends: Family of Connie Long—friend of Connie Collins, Ann Tew, Marsha Langford, Jim Sinor, Claire Spence, Lester Griffis—father of Tina Paul, Randy Davenport, Larry & Becky Miles and son Bobby, Families of victims of mass shooting in Gilroy, CA, El Paso, Tx., and Dayton, OH., Barbara Garrison—Mark Garrison's mother, Children and Adults at our Southern Border. Please remember the families as well as the person listed.

This weeks sermon title is "The Kingdom Is A Relationship". The Scripture will be read from Luke 17:20-21 and Matthew 13:31-35,44-46.

May the JOY of the LORD be your strength,

Joan 😊

