



The Federated Church of Hyannis

320 Main Street
Hyannis, MA 02601
508-775-0298
www.federatedchurch.org
Reverend Derek L. White, Pastor

Sermon Notes for September 26, 2021. Series: “The Happy Church, Part II”.

Scripture: Philippians 4:4-8 King James Version

Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Part I. What does a happy church look like?

The first church Paul planted was in Philippi. He was on the outskirts of town down by the river where he came across a woman named Lydia, a dyer of purples. You may recall that this was Timothy’s grandmother, the first person Paul baptized into the faith. Timothy was Paul’s adopted son who became a young bishop in the church and to whom both books of Timothy in the Bible were written by Paul. Timothy became Paul’s disciple whom he mentored and trained in the faith to lead the churches Paul had planted as his successor in ministry. The church in Philippi, for Paul, was a happy church. It wasn’t a wealthy church like the church in Corinth. It wasn’t a problematic church like the churches in Galatia and Colossi. Philippi was a church of happy people who worked hard and gave generously to those in need. In some ways it was like a revivalist church with singing and dancing down by the river on a Saturday night. Paul had many happy memories of the church in Philippi, a community of good spirited people who rejoiced and praised God together. For Paul, Philippi was a place where the hearts of many were revived and many experienced new births, born again experiences.

Part II: What are Revivalists?

Last week you may recall that I spoke about the Greek word “Euangelia” which means the Good News and from where we get the word Evangelical.

Evangelicalism was a movement to get people to read the Bible and discover the Good News. Because they are responding to the Good News, they often are the jump up and down group for Jesus. They are high energy, clap for Jesus, praise the Lord, isn't it wonderful what Jesus has done crowd. Revivalists are somewhat in a similar category as the Evangelicals. Many revivalists look to the church in Philippi as the inspirational church where there was dancing and singing down by the river side. The book of Acts tells the story of how Paul was imprisoned in Philippi, and one night while praying and singing in the jail there was an earthquake that opened the jail doors and shook the chains free for Paul, Timothy, and Silas to escape. But they didn't run. The jailer converted to Christianity and was baptized. In Philippi there are many born again conversion experiences. For revivalists, the emphasis is on being revived, i.e., born again. The theme of “I was dead, but now I am alive” is a common one in the Book of Philippians and a major theme in the revivalist movement.

Part III. Conclusion

The methods and movements of the Church change, but the message remains the same. There are many different types of happiness in the world. Some prefer the extremely extroverted, over the top, high energy way of expressing happiness. But a person can also be happy in a beautiful space where there is peace and tranquility to be contemplative. One of the things I hope you will notice in this series is how different types of churches speak to different groups of people. What makes a church a happy church often depends on what people find enjoyable. There is no right way or wrong way to worship. Everyone is a child of God, and we all have different likes and tastes. All of us who have worked with children know different things make different children happy. God knows that too. Revivalist churches from the outside might look like happy churches, but not everyone is happy going to a revivalist church. A happy church is a church that enjoys the way they do things together. For Paul, the church in Philippi was his happy church. He had planted many churches, but there was something special about the way the church in Philippi did things that made Paul happy. As we work towards the end of this series I hope you will share some of the things here at Federated that make you happy. What do you enjoy with the other folks here at Federated? What are the things that make Federated a happy church?