

Message for September 20, 2020

I love music. I can't play any type of instrument, or carry a tune in a way that would be pleasing to the ear of anyone who heard me. But I love music! As far back as I can remember, music has always stirred me emotionally, and since becoming a Christian it has stirred me spiritually. There are many types of music and songs, and there are two that I particularly like: one type that is deeply worshipful and moving, and the other exceedingly exuberant in joyful praise to God. One might say that these are opposites of each other, but then again, opposites do attract, don't they? Even so, there are common elements to both, such as love of God, gratitude, and praise. Oh, how I wish I could play and sing! My life would be an outpouring of music and song in worship to God.

In thinking about this I am reminded of a particular tune by the group Casting Crowns called "Lifesong." Part of the lyrics is "Let my lifesong sing to You." Each of us has a lifesong, whether we realize it or not. Our appearance, words, actions, and attitude all convey a message to others, just as if we were singing a song to them. As I said earlier, there are many types of songs, and our lifesong may vary from day to day, or even moment to moment. But over a period of time, we generally express one type. What type of lifesong are you expressing to others, and to God? Is your song like a funeral dirge, sorrowful and somber, always downcast and gloomy? Or perhaps like a marching band, well orchestrated and pre-planned, rigid and without spontaneity? How about whimsical, as a fanciful daydream and seemingly without a care in the world? Is your song fearful, anxious, and cynical, flooded with negative thoughts and feelings? Perhaps it's dull, boring, and lifeless, even expressionless. Or maybe it's entirely something else. Of course the best lifesong is a joyful, positive one that expresses an unbounded love of life and God, filled with hope and anticipation of good things to come.

Regardless of which of the lesser lifesongs you may be currently expressing, you are not stuck in it for the rest of your life on earth.

God wants to elevate you to a higher one by setting you free from old habits, conformities, and ways of thinking. Now is the perfect time to examine yourself and the lifesong you are singing to the world. That's the first step, an honest evaluation and subsequent realization that there is an open door to a better, fuller way of life. It's available to anyone who wants it. God loves you so much and desires to help you lead a more abundant and joyful life. Talk with Him about it. Share with Him the desires of your heart. Ask Him to renew your mind and to open your understanding in order to see and accept new ways of doing things. Then by following His leading you will enter a new lifestyle with a new lifesong, one that will lift you up to new heights in your relationship with the Savior. A life of daily joy, one which honors God and is filled with His praises, will be yours, and your song will be seen and heard by everyone around you, lifting them up as well.

I pray that your lifesong will be such a one as this. And may your joy be full.

God bless you,
Pastor Joe

"I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." --- John 10:9-10

"Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart." -- Psalm 37:4

"He has put a new song in my mouth—praise to our God; many will see it and fear, and will trust in the LORD." -- Psalm 40:3

THREE QUESTIONS

There's a tale of a traveling priest who was confronted by a soldier in pre-revolutionary Russia. Rifle in hand, the soldier barked, "Who are you? Where are you going? Why are you going there?"

Instead of answering, the priest asked how much the soldier was paid — and offered double if the soldier would challenge him with those three questions each day as he passed by.

Those three important questions can guide us on our journey through the brand-new year ahead. For Christians, thankfully, the answers are clear:

- Who are you? "I'm a child of God!"
- Where are you going? "I'm going out into the world!"
- Why are you going there? "I'm going out of love for Jesus, who died for me!"

Place these questions and answers in a spot where you can see them each day. Then go forward confidently, knowing "whose" you are and what your purpose is.

THE POWER OF WEAKNESS

In *Tramp for the Lord*, Corrie ten Boom describes traveling to Russia during the Cold War — when Christians were being persecuted — to thank an old woman who'd been secretly translating Christian books (including ten Boom's). Ravaged by multiple sclerosis, the woman could move only an index finger. Yet with it she typed constantly, translating words while praying for people who'd eventually read them.

Ten Boom's reaction was, "Oh Lord, why don't you heal her?" But the woman's husband said God had a purpose in his wife's suffering. Although the secret police closely watched other Christians, they left this woman alone, assuming she couldn't accomplish anything.

Jesus works through our weaknesses, making his power perfect in them (see 2 Corinthians 12:9). He doesn't ask if we're capable — only if we're willing.



Take
delight
in the LORD,
and he will
give you the
desires
of your heart.

Psalm 37:4

"The Little Church That Could"
"Believing is Seeing"