

I John 5:9-13
John 17:6-19

Complete With Joy

What are your most used emotions? Anger, sadness, fear disgust or joy? These emotions were what was discovered as guiding the lead character Riley in the movie “inside out” As a young girl she experienced much joy in her life until the day she and her family had to move. It is a unique perspective about the emotions one has within as the individual faces a crisis. Joy seemed to be pronounced through her early years but through the challenges of change her joy seemed to fade into anger and sadness.

Much like parents who realize that at about age 2—their children are not perfect, but truly get into trouble without really looking for it. And it is in these moments that parents, mothers and fathers must look for patience even when children are trying to be helpful by feeding the dog. Parents must look for the joy which comes to them in their family and to grasp onto it for those trying indecisive years which follow. There is joy in the family but we might not always see it!

This is Christian Family Sunday and Mother’s Day, a day when we acknowledge and honour those individuals who gave birth to us, corrected us, looked after us and who will always love us for throughout their lives they have and continue to share the joy of life and God’s blessings. For many people, mothers have and do play key roles as their influence begins upon our recognition of them and then throughout our lives we are forever reminded of who we are through their actions and reactions-just like Jesus and God our heavenly father`1.

In our reading from John 17 Jesus praying to God as he is preparing himself before his arrest. Jesus is praying for his disciples- those with whom he has lived, walked, talked ate and camped together for 3 years. And he is asking God the Father to protect them that they may be one as we are one- Jesus wanted God to look after these followers because he loved them all. While Jesus was with them, he protected them and kept them safe. The only one lost was the one who would betray him so that prophecy was fulfilled.

Jesus is asking God to look after them so that that may have the full measure of my joy within them, so that they may have complete joy in Jesus. Jesus is asking God to look after the disciples so that they may be full of joy—the joy of Jesus. The disciples are not fully believing that Jesus was going to die or rise again. But Jesus knows and is asking the Father to look after them, to protect them so that they will experience Jesus’ death yet they will also experience complete joy knowing that they have loved and were loved by Jesus. But they knew him and

loved him just the same- they probably shared many joyful and wondrous moments together— during the times of the miracles, healings and when Jesus taught and people came to understand who he was and could be as their messiah. But only Jesus could give them complete joy. God offers this joy to us, but it is only through the son that we might receive it.

I share with you a wonderful story of family, love and a passion for art collecting. "Whoever Takes the Son Gets it All" whose author is unknown.

Years ago, there was a very wealthy man who dearly loved his family. With his devoted young son they shared a passion for art collecting. Together they traveled around the world, adding only the finest art treasures to their collection. Priceless works by Picasso, Van Gogh, Monet and many others adorned the walls of the family home. In time, the wife and mother within this family died. But the widowed, elder man looked on with satisfaction as his only child became an experienced art collector. The son's trained eye and sharp business mind caused his father to beam with pride as they dealt with art collectors around the world.

As winter approached, war engulfed the nation, and the young man left to serve his country. After only a few short weeks, his father received a telegram. His beloved son was missing in action. The art collector anxiously awaited more news, fearing he would never see his son again. Within days, his fears were confirmed. The young man had died while rushing a fellow soldier to a medic.

Distraught and lonely, the old man faced the upcoming Christmas holidays with anguish and sadness. The joy of the season, a season that he and his son had so looked forward to, would visit his house no longer. On Christmas morning, a knock on the door awakened the depressed old man. As he walked to the door, the masterpieces of art on the walls only reminded him that his son was not coming home.

As he opened the door, he was greeted by a soldier with a large package in his hand. He introduced himself to the man by saying, "I was a friend of your son. I was the one he was rescuing when he died. May I come in for a few moments? I have something to show you." As the two began to talk, the soldier told of how the man's son had told everyone of his, not to mention his father's, love of fine art. "I'm an artist," said the soldier, "and I want to give you this."

As the old man unwrapped the package, the paper gave way to reveal a portrait of the son. Though the world would never consider it the work of a genius, the painting featured the young man's face in striking detail. Overcome with emotion, the man thanked the soldier, promising to hang the picture over the fireplace. A few hours later, after the soldier had departed, the old man set about his task.

True to his word, the painting went well above the fireplace, pushing aside thousands of dollars of paintings. And then the man sat in his chair and spent Christmas gazing at the gift he had been given. During the days and weeks that followed, the man realized that even though his son was no longer with him, the boy's life would live on because of those he had touched. The father was completely filled with joy because of the actions of his son. He would soon learn that his son had rescued dozens of wounded soldiers before a bullet stilled his caring heart.

As the stories of his son's gallantry continued to reach him, fatherly pride and satisfaction began to ease the grief. The painting of his son soon became his most prized possession, far eclipsing any interest in the pieces for which museums around the world clamored. He told his neighbors it was the greatest gift he had ever received.

The following spring, the old man became ill and passed away. The art world was in anticipation! Unmindful of the story of the man's only son, but in his honor, those paintings would be sold at an auction. According to the will of the old man, all of the art works would be auctioned on Christmas day, the day he had received his greatest gift. The day soon arrived and art collectors from around the world gathered to bid on some of the world's most spectacular paintings. Dreams would be fulfilled this day; greatness would be achieved as many claim "I have the greatest collection." The auction began with a painting that was not on any museum's list. It was the painting of the man's son. The auctioneer asked for an opening bid. The room was silent.

"Who will open the bidding with \$100?" he asked. Minutes passed. No one spoke. From the back of the room came, "Who cares about that painting? It's just a picture of his son. Let's forget it and go on to the good stuff."

More voices echoed in agreement. "No, we have to sell this one first," replied the auctioneer. "Now, who will take the son?" Finally, a friend of the old man spoke, "Will you take ten dollars for the painting? That's all I have. I knew the boy, so I'd like to have it."

"I have ten dollars. Will anyone go higher?" called the auctioneer. After more silence, the auctioneer said, "Going once, going twice. Gone." The gavel fell, cheers filled the room and someone exclaimed, "Now we can get on with it and we can bid on these treasures!"

The auctioneer looked at the audience and announced the auction was over. Stunned disbelief quieted the room. Someone spoke up and asked, "What do you mean it's over? We didn't come here for a picture of some old guy's son. What about all of these paintings? There

are millions of dollars of art here! I demand that you explain what's going on here!" The auctioneer replied, "It's very simple. According to the will of the father, whoever takes the son...gets it all."

Puts things into perspective doesn't it? Just as those art collectors discovered that day, the message is still the same: the love of a Father, a Father whose greatest joy came from His Son, who went away and gave His life rescuing others. And because of that Father's love, whoever takes the Son, gets it all.

As we celebrate Christian family Sunday, honour our mothers and grandmothers and those who are mothers in our lives the prayer of Jesus still is being asked for all disciples of Christ. God will protect those who have faith, who believe in and serve Jesus, and God will enable all to be completely filled with joy. But only if we believe in Christ—we will receive God's blessings. We will have a full and abundant life. We will live as branches of the vine of Christ and we will live eternally. But we must believe in Jesus Christ the Risen Lord. Believe and live.

.