



FEAR NOT

BEHOLD, I BRING YOU GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY

LUKE 2:10

Joy to the world
the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King.









What do you get when you eat tinsel?

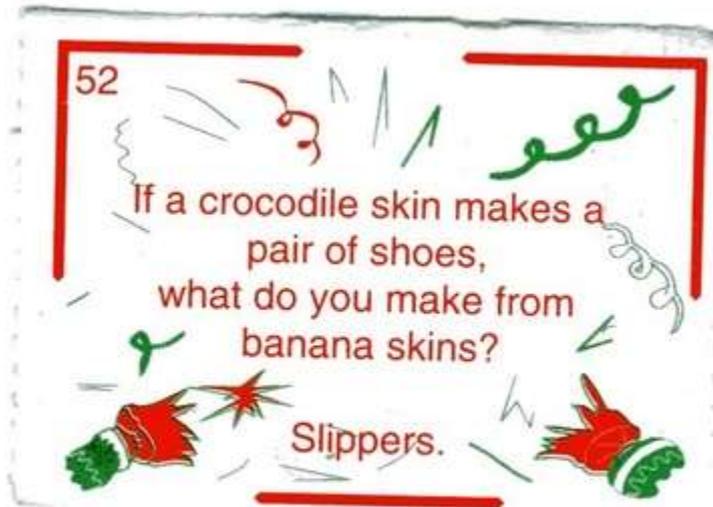
Tinselitis

What do you call a penguin in the Sahara desert?

Lost

What do you get if you cross a fish and two elephants?

Swimming trunks.



What do you call two robbers?

A pair of knickers.



Q. What do you get if you cross a stereo with a refrigerator?



A. Cool music.



Enjoy your life says the teacher

- *And people should eat and drink and enjoy the fruits of their labour, for these are gifts from God. (Ecc 3:13)*
- *Moreover, when God gives someone wealth and possessions, and the ability to enjoy them, to accept their lot and be happy in their toil--this is a gift of God. (Eccl 5:19)*
- *Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love Ecc 9:9*

What do you enjoy?

- Eating,
- drinking,
- sleeping,
- work,
- achievement,
- intimacy,
- friendships,
- exercise,
- buying stuff,
- watching movies,
- watching your kids,
- fulfilling your goals,
- resting,
- being in Gods creation,
- having a joke,
- being with friends,
- learning new things,
- learning old things again

Feelings of Happiness/Joy are important for us

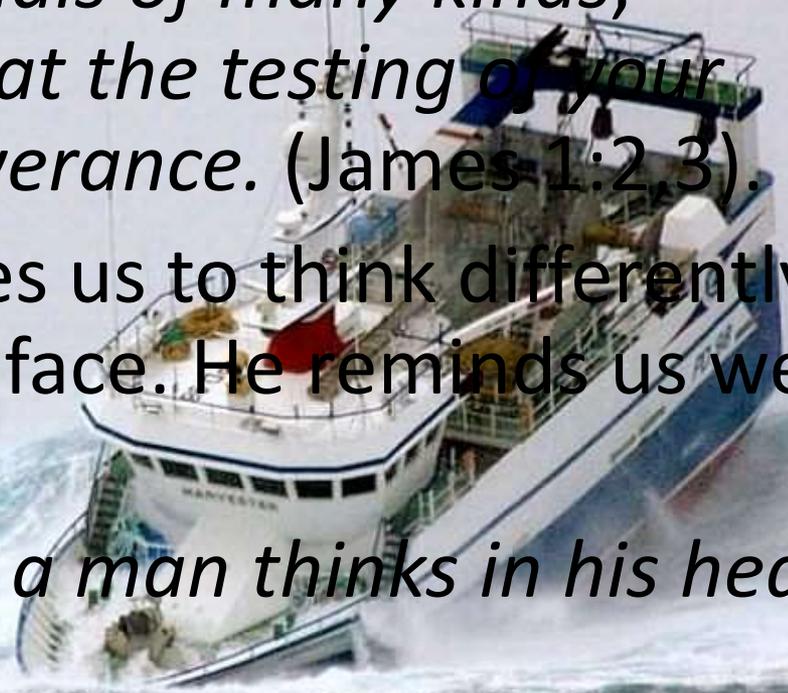
- God has blessed us with the ability to experience feelings of joy and happiness which help us to appreciate our lives and find purpose and meaning, hope and satisfaction in our living.
- Our lives are precious and the enjoyment we find in life helps us know that
- The teacher in Ecclesiastes points out that our enjoyment of these things helps us appreciate the life we have as gifts of God and gives us the strength to face what lies ahead

But there could be a problem

1. If I am not happy, am I no longer important?
 - There are many people who struggle with recognising the value of their life because they are not happy
 - Scripture is clear that challenging moments will come, but our life is still important
 - (This requires some sensitivity helping to point people back to God and find joy and value in him)

Can we choose to be happy?

- *Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. (James 1:2,3).*
- Here James challenges us to think differently about the storms we face. He reminds us we have a choice!
- Proverbs 23:7, *For as a man thinks in his heart, so he is*



Can we choose?

- Psalm 32:11 *Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!*
- Is this scripture saying that we can make a choice to be Glad?
- Can we practice being happy? Practice smiling?
- Why is it that we tell people the bad stuff?

Nehemiah's instruction (8:10)

- *"Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, **for the joy of the LORD is your strength.**"*

(This directive comes after people have heard the Law being read and are about to face an unknown future)

There can be another problem

- We have seen that enjoying life is God given
- But the pure pursuit of pleasure can be dangerous
- Basing our sense of wellbeing and identity and value on our feelings of happiness can lead to all sorts of problems for you and for others
- People can find pleasure in lots of strange activities that are harmful and not honourable to God who has gifted us with life. Eg the quest of power, riches, sexual pleasures, pain, drugs, food etc,

Which brings us back to the promise of not just Joy, but **GREAT JOY**

- There is great importance in choosing to be joyful and to *Rejoice in the Lord* (Phil 4:4-6) and this will significantly enhance our lives, and our sense of purpose but...
- The promise of the coming Christ, is the promise of so much more. Something foundational to our whole sense of meaning.
- Psalm 51 may help us.

King David knew pure joy – and lost it

- Psalm 51:10-12

*Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*

*Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.*

*Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.*

The Joy of Salvation is the Joy of Life

A Good News message from God that says:

- Your life matters because He says so
- Everything you have done can be redeemed and will not be held against you
- He will come and make his home in you (John 14:23) and you will be filled with his Holy Spirit the fruit of whom includes joy
- you can also enjoy God forever because you will go to be with him when you die

The Good News – The Gospel



The mystery of the power of the spiritual transformation which is at the heart of our Christian Faith and the secret of our ultimate enjoyment and sense of meaning

Joy to the World

- I think this is the promise the angel was talking about.
- When we have embraced this Great Joy, it changes the way we experience life to experiencing it as *fully alive*
- And when we have been transformed, it changes us, our situations, and our relationship with others and this Joy is great.
- People who are unhappy, do not treat other people well – but those at peace with God...that's a different story
- And this promise is not a “one time” transaction

Have you got Joy down in your heart?

- Are you struggling with life at the moment?
- Choose Joy, invite Jesus into your heart
- Is life going well, but it covers up what is really in your heart?
- Choose Joy, invite Jesus into your heart
- Do you find yourself being negative and that is affecting yourself and others?
- Choose Joy, invite Jesus into your heart



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(Put your name here)