

“Happy New You!”

by Kristin England

Happy? We may not always be “happy,” but we can have joy no matter how bad things are, have been, or will be. You can be a new person. A person filled with joy! “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (Philippians 4:13) Are you a new person or are you the same person you have always been? I hope as we begin this New Year that you begin it as a joyful new you!

As I drive to work in the mornings, I can’t help but shout the words along with Bekki Smith as she sings, “This joy that I have, the world didn’t give it to me. This joy that I have, the world didn’t give it to me. The world didn’t give it and the world can’t take it away!” Kelly, Michael and Samantha (My brother’s kids) love this song as much as I do and will sing right along with Bekki at the top of their little lungs. Then they yell, “Play it again!” This song is so very true. If you have the “Joy of Salvation”, nothing can take it away!

It breaks my heart to realize how many really don’t have a relationship with God. I wish everyone had the joy of salvation. God didn’t intend that any should perish but that all would come to salvation. I can’t imagine going back to the person I used to be. The dreadful sadness of being lost in my sins was overpowering.

Jesus said, “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.... Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 7:13-14, 21)

Can you say for certain, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that you are going to Heaven and have you experienced the great joy of knowing this? If your answer is “No” or “I’m not sure,” then you probably haven’t ever completely given your life to Jesus Christ. “Someone asked him, ‘Lord, are a few people going to be saved?’ He said to them, ‘Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to. Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, ‘Sir, open the door for us.’ But he will answer, ‘I don’t know you or where you come from.’ Then you will say, ‘We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.’ But you reply, ‘I don’t know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!’” (Luke 13:23-27)

Many of these are the people who attend church every week. Some even teach Sunday School and some are deacons. Most sadly, some of these are even pastors. No matter how much you do, you can’t be good enough to get into God’s Heaven. Jesus is the way...the only way! Jesus continues—“There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out.” (Luke 13:28)

Friend, I don’t want you to be one of these standing there weeping and pleading to enter Heaven. Don’t put off making Jesus your Lord and Savior another day. Today is the day to be saved!

I know many people who think they are having a fun time. They party and make fun of

me behind my back. I used to be a “party girl” so I know they think I’m an old “fuddy duddy” and they think my life must be very boring. They couldn’t be farther from the truth. My life is now exciting because I am thrilled to be a child of God, a joint heir with Jesus and certain of an eternal home in Heaven! I’ve been where they are so I know they are really miserable on the inside. “For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. But our [those who make Jesus their Lord and Savior] citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. Therefore...stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!” (Philippians 3:18-4:1)

If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, then you should be rejoicing in your salvation! “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things...put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.” (Philippians 4:4-9) This peace brings much joy! It puts a smile on your face and a song in your heart!

“To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.” (Jude 24)