2020 07 26 What a Surprise.

Genesis 29:15-28. Psalm 105:1-11,45b or 128.

Romans 8:26-39. Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52.

­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­? Have you ever been surprised by an unexpected joy?

Maybe a physical gift or happening or the way a cloud shaped a smile just for you?

I am always surprised – overwhelmed – by Gods’ patience with me – it leaves me breathless.

C.S.Lewis wrote a book called “Surprised by Joy” and he writes about searching for joy and never finding anything that was more than a happy occasion. He wrote that you can search and not find and then one day you will walk around a corner and be struck with it.”

And if you try and hang onto it you will lose it – it will fade because you concentrate on the joy instead of living in it.

I have had that experience – inner joy in the core of my chest and it became a thing of wonder in itself and I lost it. Yet I still have the memory which brings a smile.

“the joy of the Lord is my strength.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

“for the joy that was set before Him , He endured the cross, despising the shame”[[2]](#footnote-2)

“Jesus was anointed with the oil of gladness more than any person.”[[3]](#footnote-3)

This is a bit of a side track so let us look at the prescribed texts.

At the first few readings I found it to be, not easy, to connect the thread and even after referring to commentaries it is still a challenge.

A quotation from Tom Wright was helpful: referring to the state of the world and the disinterest in Jesus, except as a swear word (my comment) he writes “the tiny seed will grow. The leaven will work through the lump. The treasure is at present hidden, but those who find it will know its worth. One day the multiple and peculiar fish (? professing believers) in the net will be sorted out . Like Jacob we are called to patience.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

Couple that with Romans 8:26,27. “the Spirit Himself helps our weakness; because we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words … He intercedes for us (not according to our will) but Gods will.”

We do not know the future and do not ultimately know what is best for us and others.[[5]](#footnote-5)

The fact that Jesus is our judge[[6]](#footnote-6) and that Jesus, who became sin for us on the cross and filled us with Gods righteousness[[7]](#footnote-7) in His resurrection and the gift of the Spirit[[8]](#footnote-8) – Gods very Presence in us – this same Jesus, is at the right hand of God as our legal defence representative pleading our case[[9]](#footnote-9) - well there we have it all!

and v28 “everything *intermingling for the good of those who love God and are the called according to His purpose.”*

*Mrs Gundry.*

we cannot gain our own forgiveness and cleansing – it is offered to all yet some will not accept it – God knows this and in eternity God still know this – hence Romans 8:29 – “for those whom He foreknew (knew before hand) God brought them to be conformed ( to be in harmony with) the image of His Son.”

(quote John 3:16) “because God loved His creation so much He sent His only beloved Son so that whoever believes in Him will not perish but has eternal life.”

This is us – you and me.

**Psalm 128** brings us our day by day response to Gods love, Jesus obedience to the Father and the Presence of God in us.

“Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord,

Who walk in His ways. ”

It is not just a ramble through life or a “God forgives so do as you like”[[10]](#footnote-10) – it is a walk, a war, we are in an army and are fitted out[[11]](#footnote-11) to fight against the spiritual forces”[[12]](#footnote-12) and our own nature[[13]](#footnote-13) that would try and bring us down.

**“Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord,”**

The meaning for the word ‘blessed’ that stirs me most is “to have all your needs met in Him”

**Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52**

*What a surprise*  the smallness of what can blossom and fruit and be a blessing to others: a mustard seed.

? what do you like about mustard

? what are some of the small blessings that you have experienced?

The tininess of a little seed, is not as our western thinking patterns would expect – ‘the smallest seed’, because it is not, but in the relevance of its use in the world of Jesus’ day, and to the lesson that he was teaching them using their experience. Our faith can grow big enough to feed and house others. The mustard seed adds flavour to other foods and the smallest of kindness’, of our attitude to others can bless them and grow. “pass the grace on – a circle”.

V33 ‘leaven’ spreads and causes all in its area to grow bigger and be fuller and maybe tastier? It is the opposite of gossip – or maybe it is the good gossip – always find something positive to think or say about others – it will drive the gossipers crazy???

Leaven, like the growth of the mustard seed is not visible but it goes on and in time shows itself – so it is with our witness and words to others.

“the word of God will not return to Him void, but will accomplish all that God intends”[[14]](#footnote-14)

*? again Have you ever been surprised by an unexpected joy* – how did it make you feel – did it change you?

**READ** Romans 8:26-39. **Our Victory in Christ**

**26**In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings too deep for words; **27**and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the [[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%208%3A26-39&version=NASB#fen-NASB-28144a)]saints according to *the will of* God.

**28**And we know that [[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%208%3A26-39&version=NASB#fen-NASB-28145b)]God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. **29**For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; **30**and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

**31**What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us? **32**He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? **33**Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; **34**who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was [[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%208%3A26-39&version=NASB#fen-NASB-28151c)]raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. **35**Who will separate us from the love of [[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%208%3A26-39&version=NASB#fen-NASB-28152d)]Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? **36**Just as it is written,

“For Your sake we are being put to death all day long;  
We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

**37**But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. **38**For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, **39**nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­**Psalm 105:1-4.**

**“Oh, give thanks to the Lord, call upon His name;**

**Make known His deeds among the peoples.**

**Sing to Him, sing praises, (sing thanks to Him);**

**Meditate on all His wonderful acts.**

**Glory/boast in His Holy Name;**

**Let the heart of those who seek the Lord be glad.**

**Seek the Lord and His strength;**

**Seek His face continually.”**

***Surprised by joy – the Presence of the Living God is in me!***

**“Awake O sleeper and arise from the dead and Christ will shine on you”[[15]](#footnote-15)**

**The title “What a surprise …”**

**“What a surprise – I died – and where am I?”**

**The choice is ours individually – make it!!!!!**

1. Nehemiah 8:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Hebrews 12:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Hebrews 1:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. ‘Twelve Months of Sundays’ pg. 91 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Romans 8:26-39 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. “The Father has delivered all judgment into the hands of the Son.” [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. 2 Corinthians 5:21 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. John 14-16 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Romans 8:34 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Romans 6:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Ephesians 6:10-18 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Ephesians 6:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. The flesh Romans 8:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Isaiah 55:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Ephesians 5:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)