



How Far Is It To Happy Corner?

Can I be honest? I am weary of church. Don't take what I am saying wrong. I am not tired of the people, I am not tired of having church services. But I am tired of the pressures of having church. I want us to just relax, enjoy the atmosphere of God's presence and leave having been at the feet of Jesus.

I just want to talk out of my heart today. I may preach, I may teach, I may ramble and babble, (being honest remember?). I want to share something with you that God has helped me with.

Bro Alphin and I were talking a few days ago, and he made mention of a place out east of Jonesboro called Happy Corner.

I had never heard of such a place and when I made mention of that, he just chuckled that deep chuckle of his, and said, oh yes, it's a real place.

That got me to thinking...how far is it to Happy Corner?

I am not a world traveler, but I have done a lot of traveling. You know what? I have never found a place where everyone was happy.

I have witnessed a lot of happy people, but always, and I mean always, there has been at least one grump among them. I won't tell you how often I was the grump.

You know what? Ponce De Leon died having spent the better part of his life vainly searching for a fountain of youth.

If you and I aren't careful we will waste our days searching for the perfect situations, perfect jobs, perfect atmospheres, perfect schools. Etc.

Arizona. Mecca of retirement. Especially for golfers. Heard for years, if you ever get a chance to play golf in AZ do it. Perfect.

So this past September at General Conference I took my golf clubs. There were a couple of afternoons free to play a round with some long distance friends.

Know what? It was a long way from Happy Corner!

For a hacker like me, hacker is a term for poor golfer, it was anything but happy. I get pretty intense at times. Cactus. Some that if you bumped into them you had to have surgery to get the thorns out. A man I met told me he bumped into one and it stuck in his backside. He reached back in surprise and got his hand stuck too. Ugly picture. Scorpions. Giant bob cats.

Miss a fairway...ugh! I had to make a mental note to enjoy my company, and dismiss my ambitions of perfection.

Know what happened? Other things began to come into the forefront. Scenery. Friends. Sharing of dreams and goals for ministry.

I realized out there that my key to happiness wasn't a low score, it was enjoying the moment of time in life. I repeatedly said, this is so awesome! I am so thankful to be here with you guys. They probably thought I was nuts. But I meant it.

Folks! Stop living your life in search of a better Happy Corner!

Quit trying to live in pursuit of a better way all the time.

Too many people burn out when they should be burning brightest!

Rom 14:17 For the kingdom of ***God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.***

18 For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

KJV

When Tricia and I were engaged, I was flying from Tulsa to Houston to go to a banquet with her. All gussied up for the trip.

Buddy, I was excited. On my way to paradise! Been working in a machine shop 10 hours a day, got a break from sweaty, stinking guys, going to see my baby! Maybe even get a kiss or two.

New sport coat. New tie she bought me. New shirt.

Got on the plane in Tulsa sat on the runway for an hour. No problem...still gonna make it.

Stopped at DFW. I think every flight in the world goes through DFW! T-Storms in Houston. Can't go.

Sat on the runway for 2 hours! Ugh! Happy Corner is long gone!

All I could do was get mad. Stupid plane, stupid airport, stupid storm. I'm going to be late! I am on a restricted schedule here!

Going to miss the banquet! Stress city.

Got down in Houston finally. Stressed to the gills. Tie all undone...shirt sweated through, coat all wrinkled up. Peanut crumbs on my pants....

There at the gate....most beautiful girl....her mom and dad with big smiles.

I got off the plane apologizing....she said Oh I didn't really want to go anyway...off to a nice restaurant, The Strawberry Patch, crawfish etoufee....Happy Corner!

Hey church!

This walk with God isn't about every day going perfect and as you planned for it to.

Its not about god making sure you drive a late model car and live in a bigger house than your co-workers.

Its not about outbuilding the church down the street either! Its not a competition between preachers for who can get the biggest crowd the fastest. If so, I lose!

I have a friend that is so competitive he and his brother live in a constant contest. To the point that it interferes with their families.

I want to be real. I want a real walk with god. I want a real move of god.

This walk is about righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy ghost!

These words were written to a group of people that were stressed out because everyone didn't see the work of the gospel the same.

Gentiles that had been saved were eating what they had always eaten.

The Jews were lambasting them. You can't do that and be a child of God. You can't eat food offered to idols! This wasn't the law of Moses...it was the way of the Nazarites that had been adopted by the more orthodox of the Jews.

Paul had to let them in on some key thoughts. The Christian walk is not about what all you can't do. It's about what you can ***become***. The freedom to live as god has called you.

It is not, like many human religions, ***a system of regulations as to conduct or observances. It is not "eating and***

drinking."

You don't make it to happiness in Christ by pulling out a list of do's and don'ts. You don't reach Happy Corner by striving to make yourself better than others by the *length of your list!*

Happy Corner is found in these three keys...

1. Righteousness. Now not one of us is right in our self. We have nothing right to lean on. It is impossible for us to be righteous alone. Yet we are told that the key to the kingdom of God is righteousness!
 - a. Whose?
 - b. Christ in us!
 - c. Too many of us try to barter our way into Happy Corner.
 - d. I did this.
 - e. I did that.
 - f. This is about being right with God!
 - g. It means that the Christian must so live as to be counted a righteous man, and not a man whose *whole attention is absorbed by the mere ceremonies and outward forms of religion.*
 - h. We are made right by the;
 - i. Blood.
 - ii. Water.
 - iii. Word
 - iv. Spirit.

Somebody needs to put on your shouting shoes today! Hallelujah!

Are you looking for Happy Corner today? I want you to know the first place you are going to find it is in being made right with God!

Thank god for the *New Birth Experience!*

Can I get a witness today? Somebody shout amen. Somebody shout Thank you Jesus!

2. Peace. In our relationships with our fellow man - peace. Strife and hatred are the curse of human society. Christianity alone has discovered and applied the principle which remedies this evil. *True peace is based on righteousness*, on the prevalence of those principles which are in harmony with the nature of God and the constitution of human society.
 - a. When we come to the realization that we don't get right on our own.
 - b. When we allow others to have room to have righteousness created in them.
 - c. The tendency of the gospel is to *promote peace*, and to *persuade people to lay aside all causes of contention and bitter strife*,
 - d. Rom 14:22-23 Hast thou faith? Have *it to thyself before* God. *Happy is he* that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

I have to take a moment and deal with something here.

I am Pentecostal to my core. I believe our message to the core of my being.

But we must be cautious. We must be wary of judgmental attitudes.

Listen to Paul's words. **Happy is he** that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.

Translation? Everyone's convictions will never be identical!

We have got to learn to be at peace within our own borders!

Too many movements and churches are split because of the failure to recognize that all righteousness comes from God and not our legislation of tradition!

I have a burning desire within me to know the truth. Period. I want the truth. I want to be able to look you in the eye and present to you the truth. I will strive to preach it, live it and model it.

But we must give room for the Holy Ghost to work righteousness with peace in our midst!

The most miserable people in the church are those that try to impose their own personal faith on others!

Individual decisions are of great import, but there must be room for mutual concessions.

We can't let the strong condemn the weak as narrow-minded, nor the conscientious show disapproval of the liberty of others as an infraction of Christian morals.

Those that are teetotalers must not be guilty of ridiculing those that have not learned the strength of your convictions and traditions. Those that are not as stringent are equally guilty when they ridicule the self-denial of others.

Want to make it to Happy Corner? Let your heart be at peace with what god requires of you. Even if your brother does not have the same requirements!

Oh I have to be careful. I don't want you to get the wrong idea about what I am preaching to you. I am not giving you license to go out and start doing all the things you have been told were wrong in the past!

But some people are so distraught over what others are doing, or not doing, that they cannot enjoy what god is doing in their own life!

I am telling you that we must understand that god's work in this hour is not a work of supreme legislation.

Thank God, we can have righteousness and peace in Jesus Christ!

Go to a mission field....things that we are horrified by....they have to live in. things that *we* call sin...not bible sin....they live in.

We have to give the Holy Ghost unilateral room to bring righteousness to the church!

1 Cor 4:21 What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a whip, or in love and with a gentle spirit?

How far is it to Happy Corner? Righteousness, peace....

3. Joy in the Holy Ghost. Cheerfulness, serenity, happiness, - these are the portion of the sincere believer in Christ, the loyal subject of Christ.

a. "Rejoice evermore!" is the Christian admonition;

b. "always rejoicing!" is the Christian motto.

c. The power of the Holy Spirit accounts for this change from the forced gaiety of the world, and the cold gloom of the skeptic, to the gladness of him **who is at peace with God**, and who cherishes a good hope of eternal life.

d. Cheerfulness, exceedingly full of joy

Rom 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Hey church! When you get joy filled over what god has done in your life...you will realize that you are living at Happy Corner!

- No...every day is not Sunday.
- Every day is not miracle day.
- Every day is not perfect day.

But you know what?

- Every day is a gift from god.
- Every day is a reminder that god saved you.
- Everyday is a sign that God delivered you.
- God freed you!

I still think somebody ought to put on your shouting shoes today!

How far is it to Happy Corner? Just as far as it takes for you to turn your heart away from judgment and to grace!

Just as far as it is for you to put away your verdicts of righteousness and accept what god is doing!

I believe god is rising up a church right here that is going to make it all the way to Happy Corner!

Think about this with me today. This is a genuine counterpart of heaven;

- RIGHTEOUSNESS without sin,
- PEACE without inward disturbance,
- JOY without any kind of mental agony or distressing fear.

Come on church! Where are you living today? Grumpy lane or Happy Corner?

Let's get our eyes off of each other and turn them to Christ!

Let's get our eyes on the kingdom. Let's allow mutual working of the Holy Ghost among us!

Wanna know something? Happy Corner is real. You can reach that place today!

Stop dilly dallying around waiting on everyone and everything to get right before you sell out.

Stop waiting on all of your questions being answered. Trust God! Enjoy what he is doing in your life!

We need to spend some time this morning in the joy of the Holy Ghost.

Jesus told the disciples to rejoice for their name was written in the book of life!

Not because they were of one sect or another. But because of the placement of their name!

Let me close with this fact.

Rom 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy *in the Holy Ghost*.

Somebody say

- ***Righteousness***
- ***Peace***
- ***And Joy***

All three are in the Holy Ghost. Not just joy.

Whenever God's people realize that we never earn anything. We never merit anything. We never achieve anything. Everything is a gift of god in us. That's when we can make room for the Holy Ghost to work in us!