

- Also read Psalm 96, by way of contrast, during the service

## Pleasure, Happiness and Joy

### Pleasure

- Immediate enjoyment
  - taste - food
  - touch - affection, hug, sex
  - sight - beauty, whether it is art or tidiness or landscape or architecture...
  - sound - music, a loved one's voice, the ticking of a clock associated with a pleasurable place...
  - smell - food cooking, a bonfire in the autumn, the smell of bike oil to a bike fanatic...
- Some of these slide into what have sometimes been called the "higher pleasures", which are pleasures of the mind:
  - listening to a symphony - some people get it, some don't - the difference is in the mind
  - the beauty of mathematics, or a powerfully explanatory equation in Physics, or idea in many fields that fits together all that is currently known in a better way (Plate Tectonics!)
- Those are all wonderful God given pleasures
  - and as such they are dependent on circumstances
  - if the food isn't good, we won't enjoy it
  - if the touch is rough and careless, a hit rather than a hug, we won't enjoy it
  - if the sight is the drab concrete of a litter strewn town centre on a wet, cold afternoon, we won't enjoy it
  - if the sound is one of those sounds that sets our teeth on edge, or the ceaseless pounding of machinery, the thump of a pneumatic drill on the street outside our house, we won't enjoy it
  - if the smell is animal dung, we won't enjoy it!
- They are fleeting, dependent on situation...

### Happiness

- Happiness is something else - not unrelated to pleasure, but not the same
  - you can be unhappy and feel a passing pleasure
  - you can be happy and not be feeling pleasure at a particular moment
- More lasting than pleasure, to do with our personality as a whole, not just one sense...
  - and happiness is in great demand - even the title of a recent film "The Pursuit of Happiness"
- *Happiness is of longer duration, has a sense of harmony and of wholeness*
  - it pervades more of life, and it is somehow stable; it may be less intense than pleasure, but it lasts...
- Happiness has its limitations, though!
  - we can't be happy all the time
  - it is still rooted in circumstance, even if less immediately than pleasure - root of word is "hap", or chance ("happenstance")
  - compare with Arab proverb: "all sunshine makes a desert!"

### Joy

- Which brings us to joy
  - for that was what Paul and Silas had in that prison cell (Acts 16:25)
  - it certainly wasn't pleasure, locked in the dark, beaten, fearful...
  - and it doesn't seem to have been happiness - their situation was too dire for that!

## The source of all joy is God

- God is love, we spoke of last week...
  - and out of that defining characteristic springs his joy...
  - he creates, and recreates, he makes and he makes whole - *and this is joyful!*
  - when he created the world, *the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy* (Job 38:7)
  - of God's creative activity, in Psalm 65:9-13, all of creation *shouts for joy and sings*
  - and we could multiply examples!
- Tellingly, when Jesus comes he comes in joy:
  - he is the bridegroom, and at his coming the disciples should not be in mourning (*Matthew 9:15*)
  - in the upper room, before his death, as he is most closely focused on the redemption he is about to bring, he speaks of his joy: *I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.* (John 15:11)
  - *joy of forgiveness, of recreation, of redemption*
- *All joy comes from God*

## This joy of God comes through Jesus

- Revealed and embodied in Jesus
  - we receive it through our response to and relationship with him
  - *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.* (Romans 15:13)
- *All joy comes as we know Christ, our Saviour*

## Joy springs from love

- Wherever there is love, there is joy
  - God's redemption springs from his love for us, despite our sin
  - and that brings joy, reconciliation, hope even when he fail and fail again
- *All joy comes because we are loved by God, and can love in return*

## Joy is the by-product of creative activity

- Generally true of creating and making and fixing things
  - particularly true of Christian service, at its best!
  - *Scripture Union camp or mission...*
- *Joy can be experienced as we make, particularly as we engage in the work of salvation*

## Joy is expressed in worship

- Witness Paul and Silas in the prison cell!
- *Joy shows in our worship*

## Joy is partial until heaven

- *"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.* (Revelation 22:12)
- *There's more joy to come!*