

Lutheran Women in Mission



Fruit of the Spirit - JOY *by Eileen Brandt*

Opening

Sing "Rejoice, My Heart, Be Glad" (*LW* 424, *TLH* 535), "Rejoice, the Lord is King!" (*LW* 179, *LBW* 171), or "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" from *The Other Song Book*.

Introduction

Where do you look for joy? Is it in the constant busyness of work, school, or social and volunteer activities? Do you look to your family or friends to bring you joy? Have these sources of joy every disappointed you? Do the important people and activities in your life ever distract you from the true joy God gives? Share your thoughts.

True Abiding Joy

The joy we have as children of God is much more than a positive attitude or a pleasant emotion. This joy rises above our earthly circumstances and focuses on the very character of God. In the following passages, why does the psalmist rejoice?

- **Psalm 31:7-8**
- **Psalm 33:3-5**
- **Psalm 71:23**
- **Psalm 119:162-163**
- **Psalm 126:3**

Where is true, abiding joy found?

- **Psalm 16:11**
- **Jeremiah 15:16**
- **Romans 15:13**

How does the joy of a Christian compare to that of an unbeliever?

- **Job 20:4-5**
- **Romans 5:1-5**
- **1 Peter 1:8-9**

This abiding joy given by the Holy Spirit does not depend on what we do or how we feel, but on what God has done for us and in us. It looks beyond the present to our full salvation. The Holy Spirit dwelling in us produces faith and the fruit of the Spirit. This took place in our baptism and is sustained by the means of grace.

Rejoice Anyway

The Apostle Paul suffered many hardships because of his faith, but he was still able to focus on the source of his joy. How is this illustrated in the following verses?

- **Romans 5:6-11**
- **2 Corinthians 7:4**
- **2 Corinthians 11:22-31**

What reasons does Peter give for rejoicing?

- **1 Peter 1:3-7**

At what times in your life are you without joy? How can these Words of our Lord change that?

Sharing our Joy

God does not intend for us to hide our joy. How can we share it with others so they will know of God's love and redemption?

- **Luke 15:8-10**
- **Romans 12:15**
- **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**

Who has God placed in your life that needs to hear about this life-saving joy? a neighbor, acquaintance, family member or colleague? Prayerfully consider how you can share the joy God has given you.

We have many reasons to rejoice! Our awesome and loving God has sent His only Son to redeem us. Keeping our eyes fixed on Him (Hebrews 12:2) we can live in joyful obedience, sharing that joy with others.

Closing

Take a few minutes to reflect on the joys in your life. Then sing "Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing" (LW 218, TLH 50, LBW 259) or "The Lord Bless You and Keep You" from *The Other Song Book*.

Eileen Brandt lives in Ute, Iowa with her husband who is pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church. They have two children. She participated in an Iowa District West LWML short-term mission trip to Belize in February 2003.
