

Lutheran Women in Mission

Joy! Salt! Light! by Gretchen Gebhardt

Opening

Sing "In You is Gladness" (LW 442, LBW 552, All God's People Sing 137) or "Rejoice, My Heart, Be Glad and Sing" (LW 424, TLH 535) or "Rejoice in the Lord Always" from *The Other Song Book*.

Finding Fault

The program went well, the devotion was inspirational, and plans for our next project were progressing nicely. We had not always agreed, but we had worked together. I thought it was a good meeting, but as I saw my neighbor moving towards me, I knew she had a complaint of some kind. Why is she so quick to find fault? Can't she see that her whining and complaining rob us of our joy?



Do you know someone like my neighbor? Are you able to see the negative side of the situation much better than the positive? What effect does this have on you and those around you?

Wailing all Night

When Joshua and Caleb came back from spying out the Promised Land, they gave a glowing report describing the land God was ready to give to them. But the Israelites cried all night because they listened to the wrong people.

Read **Numbers 14:1-9**. What did God's faithful leaders do to try and win the people back to Him?

The Lord was weary of the complaints of His people. Read **Numbers 14:10-12**. What does He suggest?

Read Moses' response in **Numbers 14:13-19**. Summarize his argument. Which of his words bring joy to your heart?

Once again our loving God forgave His people, but there were consequences to pay. Read **Numbers 14:20-25** to discover them.

What hope do we have when we face the consequences of our sin? See **Romans 5:1-5**

Following the Light

God turned His people back into the desert, but He never turned His back on them. He led them with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Read the following verses and list the ways God continues to light our way.

Psalm 19:8

John 8:12

2 Corinthians 4:6

A Beacon for Others

The majority of people can sometimes be wrong, even if their intentions are good. How can we be certain that we are not being led astray by our leaders?

Mark 14:38

Ephesians 6:11, 17

How does God intend us to light the way for others?

Matthew 5:14-16

1 Peter 2:9-12

Share the Salt

The Israelites cried all night when they could have been preparing to move joyfully into the Promised Land. They looked at the situation through human eyes and saw the risks instead of looking through eyes of faith and seeing God's certain deliverance. They were influenced by men with limited vision and weak faith.

Our words also reflect our faith and can influence how others look at their circumstances. Read **Colossians 4:6** and discuss the importance of keeping your words well seasoned. How will the following verses help you to do that and thus bring joy to others?

Acts 4:29

Colossians 3:12-17

Choose a virtue mentioned in the last reading and discuss with a partner a time when this virtue might be needed. What words can you say to illustrate it? e.g. I need patience when my neighbor whines and complains. I can illustrate my patience by

Closing

Sing or say together the fifth verse of "Thy Strong Word." (*LW 328, LBW 233*)

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