

## HAPPINESS IS A RESULT OF FAITHFULNESS

Ben Wright

The story is told that Andrew Jackson's boyhood friends just couldn't understand how he became a famous general and then the President of the United States. They knew of other men who had greater talent but who never succeeded. One of Jackson's friends said, "Why, Jim Brown, who lived right down the pike from Jackson, was not only smarter but he could throw Andy three times out of four in a wrestling match. But look where Andy is now."

Another friend responded, "How did there happen to be a fourth time? Didn't they usually say three times and out?"

"Sure, they were supposed to, but not Andy. He would never admit he was beat -- he would never stay 'threwed.' Jim Brown would get tired, and on the fourth try Andrew Jackson would throw him and be the winner."

Picking up on that idea, someone has said, "The thing that counts is not how many times you are 'threwed,' but whether you are willing to stay 'threwed'."

James wrote, "Behold, we count them happy which endure" (5:11). When a person is faithful to God there is contentment with life. The word "happy" in this passage does not mean what we think of "happy" meaning. Happiness to us is based on outward circumstances. A person can be happy one minute but sad the next. Guy N. Woods stated of this word, ". . . the blessedness which the word indicates is inward, and results from the peace which reigns in the hearts of those who faithfully serve the Lord." (A Commentary on The Epistle of James, pg 283).

God has promised His children many things. There are redemption, justification, mercy, grace and many other things. The reception of each blessing is dependent upon our faithfulness. Do we wish to be saved? God has provided His grace and we must provide our faith. "For by grace are ye saved through faith . . ." (Ephesians 2:8). "Therefore being justified by faith . . ." (Romans 5:1). The very next verse tells us that we have access to grace by faith.

The happiest people I have ever met have been those who are the most faithful. Their lives have problems like everyone else has problems. There are pain, suffering and loss. However, they like Job in James 5:11 persevere by faith.

I read a small bulletin article written by a preacher named Albert Reeves. It was entitled, "Unforgettable Experiences." In this article he wrote of a member of a congregation who was confined to bed. This person was picked up for worship and his folding bed was placed in the trunk. Upon arrival to the building, the man was placed on this folding bed and brought in the building to worship God. Not knowing this individual, I would venture to say this person was incredibly happy.

His happiness was not based on outward circumstances. His happiness was based on the peace offered by the Lord to those of His who are faithful to Him.

Each of us knows Christians who are miserable. Those who are miserable are also those who

have the least faith. They complain and groan all the time. They make those around them miserable because of their lack of faith.

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him . . .” (Hebrews 11:6). We might easily amend this verse to say, “But without faith it is impossible to be happy.” Without faith there is no inner peace. The inner peace comes from believing in the words of God and faithfully following them out.

Are you a happy person? Or, in the words of one of Andrew Jackson’s friends, do you “stay throwed?” The Christ came so that we can live an abundant life (John 10:10). Our life will be as abundant as our faith is.

May we all be like Andrew Jackson in that we refuse to “stay throwed.” Better yet, let us all be like Job and receive the mercy and pity of the Lord because of our faithfulness.