

Empire Church of the Brethren

## *Sunday Service Sermons*

**11 June 2023**

Having a Happy Family

Did you have a happy family growing up?

If you did then did you create a happy atmosphere for your family?

I can remember a few happy times in my family.

Like vacations in Yosemite and Santa Cruse.

I have heard of many of your happy days when you were growing up in Empire.

Or other places.

What is happiness?

Kathy did her best to have a happy family in our life together.

She did have a happy home growing up.

I had many happy times with her family.

How do we have a happy home and a productive home?

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Put God and His kingdom first and he will supply your every need.

Do you believe this?

Does your life and family life demonstrate that you believe this?

If this is true for you, and your family, then there should be a degree of happiness in your home.

Is happiness a goal for your home?

Happiness is not the goal of the gospel for our lives.

Obedience to God must always take precedence over the fleeting pleasures of sin.

If we define happiness as a sense of well-being, of contentment, of joyful purpose in living, then happiness is, at least, what most people are looking for in life.

I do not center on happiness, I center on peace.

I believe that if there is peace in your soul you are on track with God.

For only God can give a person peace.

Joy and peace come from living for God.

Jesus came to show God’s love and provide what is needed for a life that puts God first and satisfies the longing of the soul.

Jesus taught how to find true happiness.

How to not be anxious about life.

It all comes together in our trust of God taking care of his people.

We can find happiness in the midst of life.

And Jesus wants us to find it.

But first we need to recognize that we can miss happiness in a frantic effort to gain it for our family.

Ways we miss having a happy family.

We miss having a happy family when we are never satisfied with what we have.

Yes, we should strive for excellence but, at the same time, we must be content with our present achievement.

Being content does not mean we stop striving.

Happiness will never be found if it is the destination.

It has to be the way we travel toward the destination.

We can pass by happiness in our quest for something else.

Do not miss the gift of joy a child’s smile or giggle can bring today.

Do not miss the joy of the moment by looking for what is coming to be the answer to all your

longings.

We sum this up in the saying, stop to smell the roses.

We miss having a happy family when we value happiness too much.

If the state of happiness dominates your life it puts things out of order.

We must value being courageous, or responsible, or obedience to God above all else.

What do we seek first?

Happiness is never the goal, it is the side effect of right living.

We must never think that happiness can come to us from another person or set of circumstances.

Happiness comes from within.

I have seen marriages dissolve because one mate believes that the other mate does not make them happy.

No one can make you happy!

A state of being happy comes from knowing we are on the right path for the right reason.

We miss a happy family when we are not willing to do God's will.

If we will not seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, he cannot add to us the needs and desires of our hearts.

God's will does not always lead us to easy tasks or give us smiles and laughter.

Sometimes we walk with him through the darkness of suffering or in the outer reaches of rejection as we seek to follow him.

But the testimony of Christians is that deep joy can be known in obedience and faithfulness to his will.

Paul said, "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." *Romans 8:18*

Ways we can have a happy family.

We can have a happy family when we value each other.

Our heavenly father feeds the birds of the air.

But how about us?

He values us more than the birds, so we can be sure he will take care of us.

We are given value by our Creator and no one can take that value from us.

People are happy when each member of the family recognizes the value of every other member.

People are unhappy in their homes when they do not treasure one another.

We are each God's gift to the other members of our family.

God stands behind the value of every person and guarantees it.

The next time we are tempted to ignore our children or shout at our spouse or ridicule someone's efforts, we should remember that we are dealing with someone God loves and has created and shares with us for our joy and fulfillment.

We can have a happy family when we understand that life is more than externals.

Life is more than food and drink, clothes and shelter.

As important as they are, they are not the goal of life.

It is ironic that in most Christian congregations, talk about food, clothing, and houses is a discussion of status symbols, while in much of the world that same discussion is a debate about survival.

It isn't just food, but dining at the right restaurants.

It isn't just a pair of jeans, but designer jeans.

It isn't just a house, but the address that we're interested in.

God saves us from explaining our poor giving habits by pleading that our bills are so high, when much of our world does not have the luxury of even having bills.

A happy family puts sufficient emphasis on the necessities and desire of life to provide motivation for work and thrift, but it is not consumed by a passion for gadgets and expensive toys, nor by anxiety about life's essentials.

Jesus doesn't tell us not to worry about food and clothing because they are unimportant.

Just the opposite.

In *Matthew 6:32-33* Jesus asserts that the Father knows we need these things and will provide them.

They are so important that God will not leave their provision entirely up to us.

He intends to provide for his own.

We can have a happy family when we find the purpose in life God has for our family. *Matt.6:33*

When a family sees itself as a unity of love and service, that can be offered to God for his use in blessing and redeeming the world, that family is on its way to happiness.

Happiness is what happens to us when we are doing God's will.

A family is happy when its members are fully committed to seeking the kingdom of God first.

This verse reminds us of the necessity of setting priorities for life.

If God is at the center of life, everything else fits into place.

Parents can help their children if, by example and precept, they teach them how to live by loving God as they love nothing else and loving their neighbor as they love themselves.

You can have a happy family.

It won't be easy, but it is possible.

You won't be happy everyday, there will be times when you go through painful and difficult trials, but by the grace of God even those moments can contribute to the growing joy and happiness you will find as you live and grow together within his will and loving care.

Happiness is not a destination, it is a way of living.

Happiness, real joy, like peace, is a gift of God to those who live through and for him.