

This is the day that Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. When you hear the words do you think that you are supposed to wake up every morning, jump out of bed and when your feet hit the floor shout, with great enthusiasm, “This is the day that the Lord has made, I will rejoice and be glad in it!” Sure there are lots of days you may feel just like that. But there may be some days if you are like me, that thought never crosses your mind.

Is that the expectation? To wake up each day and rejoice that God has made it? Yes and No. The writer of this psalm was thrilled to see a day that he never expected to see because he had been running for his life. While he was running he took refuge in the Lord. Each day he realized it was God who was his strength and salvation. He knew that the Lord God was with him through the most difficult time of his life. And he was ready to rejoice. Rejoice every day!

His whole outlook on life changed. It changed because he depended on God. And that is the key to understanding our text today and how it applies to our lives thousands of years later.

When we live in the awareness of the presence, when we depend upon God, we can rejoice. And we rejoice, not because everything is going so well in our lives. But we can rejoice because we know that God is with us in every circumstance. God will get us through whatever we are in the midst of, so we rejoice in his presence, in his gift of a new day.

How can we live into the presence of God in our lives? We can experience the life giving presence of God through the practice of mindfulness. Mindfulness is about being aware of God’s presence right now. Not thinking about yesterday, today or tomorrow. Being mindful can be a challenge.

It can be a challenge because our thoughts can take us all over the place. This week in particular has been difficult to be in the moment, to focus my thoughts. You see my daughter Lauren is getting married next weekend. And there are a lot of things that I have been preparing for over the last few months. And next Saturday it is going to happen. A part of me is so excited I can hardly wait and another part of me is so tired of the whole thing I can hardly wait for it to be done. What I am missing is living in the moment. When the psalmist says to rejoice in the day and be glad in it. It brings me back to remembering that all we have is the moment, not to always be looking backwards or forwards. We can stop our craziness and appreciate the life, breath that God gives us now in this moment.

The psalmist is letting us know that when we stop and spend time with God, it changes us. It gives us the confidence that we can put our trust and hope in the Lord and he is truly present with us each moment. Not to be clinging to the past or thinking about the future. God has been with us in the past and will be with us in the future and is with us right now. That is why we can rejoice.

How do we go about being in the moment with God? Mindfulness. Mindfulness is the practice of being fully present in the moment. Mindfulness takes practice. Last week Pastor Jeff spoke about practicing ways that bring us to aliveness, mindfulness is one way we can truly experience God in the moment.

However, That can be hard because we often go around on “auto pilot”. Maybe you have had the experience of driving along a highway only to suddenly realize you have no memory or awareness of the previous 15 minutes. You just zone out and you arrive at your destination. Or have you ever been reading a book or the newspaper and you realize, “I just read that page and I have no idea what it said.”

These auto pilot moments are called “mindlessness” times when we are so lost in our thoughts that we aren’t aware of your present experience. We get in habits that are hard to break. We become mindless because once we think we know something, we stop paying attention to it. Like the drive home from the store or from work.

Mindfulness is a practice. And it takes practice. It takes practice to get those thoughts, ideas, auto pilot responses to change. For instance, I grew up playing tennis. I loved playing tennis. I took lessons as a young girl and continued playing well into adulthood. I will never forget my instructor telling me over and over again. Serve and volley. Serve and volley. He told me to serve the ball hard, hit the return and then run to the net to smash the ball and take the point. This was ingrained in my head.

Fast forward to last winter. I got introduced to the game of pickle ball. Pickle ball is similar to tennis in that it is played on a court, the ball is served, and then there are lots of volleys. There is one big difference though. In pickle ball one is not allowed to rush the net and smash the ball. In fact it is against the rules and if one does rush the net and smash the ball the point always goes to the other team. I can’t tell you how many times I served the ball, ran to the net and smashed the ball and consequently lost the point. I knew what the rule was, I knew what I was supposed to do, but the habit and all the years of practice were hard to break.

Mindfulness takes practice. This practice involves spending time with Jesus each day. This practice takes time. Some of our old habits are hard to break. Be patient in your practice.

I started my mindfulness practice by setting a timer for 5 minutes. In my time alone with God I take a breath, I stop trying to figure out my day, my week, my family, my church and I listen. I listen in silence. Quiet time, no radio, no music, no tv, no phone, just quiet. All I do is sit and breathe. And God always shows up. God is always there, waiting patiently for you and me to put our heart, our soul and our mind and trust in him.

God will fill you. Sometimes you are filled with silence and other times thoughts will come to you.

Mindfulness is about being in the moment. Here is the best part about mindfulness. It is the only intentional, systematic activity that is not about trying to improve yourself or get anywhere else. It is simply a matter of realizing where you already are, in the presence of God.

Here is the most fundamental paradox of all: Mindfulness isn't a goal. Goals are about the future and trying to reach something. Instead it is about paying attention to what is right in front of you, right now. 2 monks were sitting side by side, meditating. The younger one is giving the older one a quizzical look, to which the older one responds, "Nothing happens next, this is it!"

Our faith in Jesus gives us the confidence that God is present with us in every situation of our lives. It is important to note that God doesn't put us in situations that cause great harm. After all God loves us as the most loving parent ever. God does promise that he is present with us, no matter what. And in his presence we can find hope and comfort in both the best and the most difficult times of our life's journey.

God has given us this moment. Now. As we go through our day we can take time to become mindful of God's presence in our life. When things are going well we can rejoice in the moment and when things become difficult we can cling to God in the moment. God who promises us he is present in the moment and will not abandon or forsake us.

We are all busy people. All of us have plenty to do each day, many are over our heads with commitments, stress and situations where we just want to get "through" our day. God has something so wonderful for us. We don't ever have to just get through our day alone. God is with us, supporting us, rejoicing with us, comforting us all day everyday. And when we focus on being mindful, taking some quiet time to spend alone with God, we experience the gift that he has given. We are never alone, he will get us through whatever we are going through. Therefore we can proclaim, "this is the day that the Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it."