

Happiness Is. . .



Theme: Jesus is our source of true happiness. Epiphany 6-C

Object: The book, "Happiness Is A Warm Blanket"

Scripture: He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by impure spirits were cured, and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all. Luke 6:17-19 NIV

Have you ever heard of a man named Charles M. Schultz? He wrote a comic strip called Peanuts which has been appearing in daily newspapers since 1950. Wow! That is before any of you were even born! The main characters in the comic strip are Charlie Brown, Lucy, Linus, Schroeder and a dog named Snoopy.

Charles Schultz has also written a lot of books. One of my favorite books by Schultz is "Happiness Is A Warm Blanket." The book is mostly about a little boy named Linus who carries his cuddly blue blanket with him wherever he goes. Linus carries that blanket to make him feel secure. According to Schultz, "Everyone has things that make them feel secure." You know what? When we feel secure, we are also happy!

Jesus had something to say about being happy. Our Bible lesson today is one of those times. The lesson begins with Jesus surrounded by a huge crowd of people. Have you ever noticed that wherever Jesus went, he drew large crowds of people? Why do you suppose that was? Maybe it was because many of them were sick, crippled, or injured and wanted Jesus to heal them. Perhaps some of them had a troubled mind and they had heard that Jesus was able to cast out demons and evil spirits just by just speaking a word. In other words, many people came to Jesus because they had heard what he could do for them, and that is exactly what happens in today's Bible lesson. The Bible says that people crowded around Jesus and tried to touch him because power was coming from him and healed them all. Do you think that made the people happy? It sure did!

Jesus then turned to his disciples and said: (Read this from the Bible. This is from

the NLT.)

"God blesses you who are poor,
for the Kingdom of God is yours.
God blesses you who are hungry now,
for you will be satisfied.
God blesses you who weep now,
for in due time you will laugh.
Blessed are you when people hate you,
when they exclude you and insult you
and reject your name as evil,
because of the Son of Man.

When that happens, be happy! Yes, leap for joy! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, their ancestors treated the ancient prophets that same way."

Notice that Jesus didn't say, "Happy are they who have a lot of money" or "Happy are they who have plenty to eat and dine in fancy restaurants." He didn't even say, "Happiness is a warm blanket." What he did say was, "When you follow me, happiness will come. Leap for joy! A great reward awaits you in heaven."

Dear Father, help us to remember that we can never find happiness by seeking the things this world has to offer. True happiness can only be ours by following Jesus. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

Activities

BEATITUDE PUZZLES: Give each an envelope with one of the beatitudes written on a slip of paper and then cut into pieces. (Luke 6: 20-23) The child will arrange the pieces of paper in the correct order and read the beatitude to the class.

HAPPY HEART: Give the supplies needed to make a happy heart to each child — a piece of construction paper and a heart to decorate with stickers and glitter, then glue it to the sheet of construction paper. BLESSED means HAPPY or other words from our lesson today may then be written on the paper in colorful markers.

HAPPY HEARTS POSTER: The children can pick at least 15 various sizes and colors of hearts that the teacher will provided to the class. They can be cut out hearts or stickers. The poster will have HAPPY ARE THE PURE IN HEART written in large letters in the center. All the various colorful hearts and stickers will then be placed around the edge of the poster to form a heart border!

HAPPY STICKERS: Give the children happy face stickers to decorate a card and color around the edges. Write "Be Happy! Great is your reward in heaven." Attach a refrigerator magnet the back or punch holes in the card add a ribbon or yarn to use as a hanger.

HAPPY PLATE: Give each child a paper plate to decorate by drawing a happy face on it and attaching happy face stickers around the edge. Tape the decorated happy face to a dowel or a paint stirring stick.

