

Sunday theme – **Joy in the Spirit**

Read Psalm 98

1. Psalm 98, one of many great praise Psalms, this one almost certainly originally written and used as a celebration hymn at festivals.

1a. Do you have memories of singing Psalms in church? What did you find that was pleasing or less pleasing about this?

1b. Would you agree that singing is an important part of worship? What, if anything, do you think singing your worship does for you personally, or does for God?

Read Romans 14: 13-19

2. Stumbling blocks can come in many forms, and few Christians would deliberately place them in a fellow Christian's path. But unintentionally placed is perhaps not uncommon. Things that, for some Christians are acceptable, are for others, not acceptable and may even be seen as a temptation.

2a. Think about asking for help with the running of a raffle, or taking communion wine, or asking someone to 'quickly pop to Morrisons to buy milk for the coffee on Sunday'. How could these become stumbling blocks for some? Are there other things that fit into this category?

2b. Christians can legitimately differ about some things; what is acceptable to one is unacceptable to another. What behaviour is Paul teaching in this passage?

2c. How difficult do you think it might be for someone to explain that what has happened/has been asked is, for them, a problem? How could we ease their difficulty?

3. Verse 17.

3a. What do you understand from 'the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking'?

3b. 'Joy in the Holy Spirit'. Deep joy is provided by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. For you, on a scale of 1 to 10, how much effort is required to always be outwardly joyful?

3c. Can you be inwardly joyful and outwardly less so? If so, is this something we should accept?

4. Give a little time and thought to the fact that - as committed Christians we are already within the Kingdom of God. Are all your friends and family aware of this?

(Bible used = NIV 2011 translation)

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