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Humor and the Bible

by Dr. Tal D. Bonham

A young girl was saved in an exciting revival at her church and was baptized during the closing Sunday morning. That afternoon, she ran through the house singing and dancing.

Her sour grandfather rebuked her with these words, "You ought to be ashamed of yourself! Just joined the church and singing and dancing on the Lord's Day!"

Crushed by her grandfather's attitude, the little girl went out to the barn, climbed up on the corral fence, and observed an old mule standing there with a sad droopy face and bleary eyes with tears coarsing down his cheeks.

As she reached over and patted the mule sympathetically, she said, "Don't cry, ole' mule. I guess you have just got the same kind of religion that Grandpa has!"

The teachings of the Bible are often falsely construed as joy-killing and pleas-

ure-stifling precepts designed to make us sad and somber. But the Bible has much to say about happiness, joy, and a sense of humor.

Many doctors are preaching the truth of Proverbs 17:22: "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine, but a broken spirit drieth the bones."

The Psalmist said, "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, . . ." (Psalm 32:11). Both reverence and joy are mixed when the Psalmist admonishes us to "fear the Lord" but adds, "and rejoice" (Psalm 2:11).

The birth of Jesus was announced as "good tidings of *great joy*" (Luke 2:10). Jesus characterized his disciples in the Beatitudes as "blessed." This speaks of an inner joy, peace, and satisfaction--the root of a true sense of humor.

Jesus admonished his disciples to "be of good cheer" because "I have overcome the

world" (John 16:33). He also said to his followers, "If ye know these things, *happy* are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17). When his Gospel was preached in Samaria, "there was great joy in that city" (Acts 8:8).

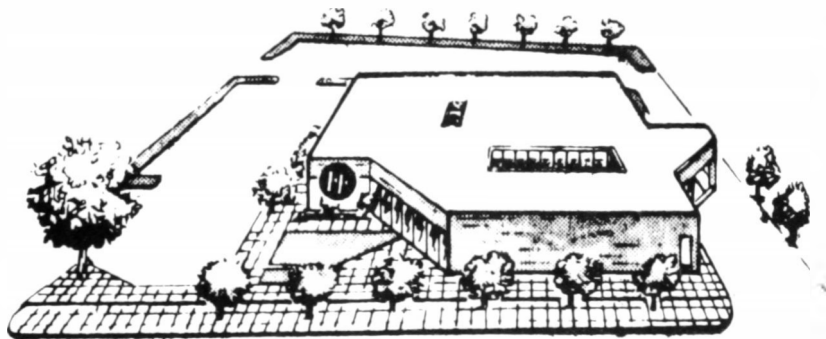
"If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, *happy* are ye" said Peter (I Peter 4:14). James echoed, "Behold, we count them *happy* which endure" (James 5:11).

Jerry Clower said, "God doesn't want his children to walk around unhappy. He wants them to be happy. I am convinced that there is just one place where there is just not any laughter and that is hell. And I've made arrangements to miss hell, so ha, ha, ha, I ain't goin' to have to ever be nowhere some folks ain't laughin'."

"Whoso trusts in the Lord, *happy* is he" (Proverbs 16:20).

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