

Life Group #40

“When the Horse you are riding is Dead, Dismount!”

November 22-29, 2009

Welcome: (15 minutes)

Give each person a piece of paper with one of the “If” questions, and then answer the question they are given. They need to give the reason for their choice:

- If you could talk to anyone in the world, who would you choose?
- If you could choose to live in any period of history, when would you choose?
- If you could have one question answered, what would you ask?
- If money was no object, what would you be doing right now?
- If you could sit down with Jesus on the bus, what would you talk about?
- If you could learn any skill, which would you choose?
- If you could wish for one thing to come true this year, what would it be?

Worship: (15 minutes)

The key application to the message from John 17 is about joy. This worship time could include sharing with each other, meditating on a Scripture, speaking a Psalm about joy, speaking prayers that give thanks to God, songs that give expression to praise, thanksgiving and joy.

Possible Scriptures: Philippians 4:4-6; Psalm 85 – opportunity for restoration e.g. v. 4,6.

Word: (45 minutes)

“When the Horse You are Riding is Dead, Dismount!”

If we’ve lost your joy, it may well be that the horse we’ve been riding, that was supposed to give us joy, is DEAD! Some have suggested some strategies when the horse appears to be dead:

- Buy a stronger whip
- Appoint a committee to study the horse
- Harness together several horses together to increase speed
- Say things like, "This is the way we always have ridden the horse."
- Arrange to visit other churches to see how they ride dead horses.
- Do a cost-analysis study to see if riding dead horses is cheaper.

Consider the following story: *Tucked away in our subconscious is an idyllic vision. We see ourselves on a long trip that spans the continent. We are traveling on a train. Out of the window we drink in the passing scene of cars on nearby highways, of children waving at a crossing, of cattle grazing on a distant hillside, of smoke pouring from a power plant, of row upon row of corn and wheat of flatlands and valleys, of mountains and rolling hillsides, of city skylines and village halls.*

But uppermost in our minds is the final destination. On a certain day at a certain hour we will pull into “the station”. Bands will be playing and flags waving. Once we get there so many wonderful dreams will come true and the pieces of our lives will fit together like completed jigsaw puzzles. How restlessly we pace the aisles, damning the minutes for loitering—waiting, waiting, waiting for “the station”.

“When we reach the station, that will be it!” we cry. “When I am 18...when I get my first house...when I put the last kid through university...when I pay off my mortgage...when I get that promotion...when I reach the age of retirement, I will live happily ever after!”

Sooner or later we must realize that there is no station, no one place to arrive at once and for all. **The true joy of life is the trip.** “The station” is only an illusion that constantly outdistances us.

Reviewing Key Scripture: “I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, that they may have the *full measure of my joy* within them.” John 17:13

Four Truths about Joy:

A. This joy is tied to God’s Word.

John 15:10,11 *If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your JOY may be complete.*

- 1. What are the connections between obedience and joy? How does that work?**
- 2. What is one thing you know God is asking you to do, but you keep putting it off?**
- 3. Choose to read and re-read Philippians for this next month and see what God can do.**

B. This joy is tied to fellowship.

I John 1:3,4 *We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us, And our fellowship is with the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our JOY complete.*

- 1. Do you experience the fellowship described in this verse?**
- 2. Describe your fellowship with the Father? Do you spend time throughout the day praying for people and things you know are important to God?**
- 3. Is there someone in your life that you could introduce to Christ, or mentor, or answer their searching questions in order to bring to both of you great joy?**

C. This joy is tied to personal lifestyle.

Romans 14:17,18 *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and JOY in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men.*

- 1. Are their habits that have become entrenched in your life that robs you of joy?**
- 2. Are their addictions in your life that seem appealing but are empty in the end?**

D. This joy is a work of the Spirit of God. It cannot be faked!

Galatians 5:22,23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, JOY, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*

- 1. What are the dead horses you are riding? Are you ready to dismount? Doing more of the same is not going to get it! Riding the same horse that you rode in on will not change the joy level in you.**

Witness(15 minutes) Consider together how to pray for, build relationships with, and make welcome to the LG those who do not yet know the joy found in Christ Jesus.