



“Come on, Grampy, let’s party”

In this year’s Pentecost sermon on the GCI.ORG website the question was asked: “Are we so indulging and enjoying the life of the Spirit that people think we’ve been drinking?” And two sentences later, “Would people mistake our church services for a party? Would they accuse us of being drunks and partiers like they accused Jesus?”

Both sentences were stirred by what happened on Pentecost in Acts 2 when the Holy Spirit suddenly enabled the apostles to “declare the wonders of God” in several languages, which some people loudly scoffed at, however, accusing the apostles of drinking “too much wine.”

But it looked like they really had been at a party, drinking and celebrating. So was this what the Holy Spirit did to people? And if so, can it happen to me too, then, where I’m “so indulging and enjoying the life of the Spirit that people think I’ve been drinking”?

Well, it’s possible, yes, because Hebrews 6:4 says I can “taste the heavenly gift” when “sharing in the Holy Spirit,” which can fill me “with an inexpressible and glorious joy” (1 Peter 1:8). It made me think of the great celebration at the end of World War 2, when people were beside themselves with joy at the war finally ending, and they were free at last. They were yelling and dancing wildly in the streets, behaving like they were drunk too.

But isn’t that what being free does to people? It’s like winning a lottery worth several millions and in a flash all your financial worries are over. For a few glorious moments you’re “drunk” with joy.

Well, all our worries are over too, since receiving the Holy Spirit. We’ve entered a whole new world of “the glorious freedom of the children of God” (Romans 8:21) as the Holy Spirit “transforms us into the likeness of Christ” (2 Corinthians 3:18). It’s meant to fill us with an “inexpressible and glorious joy.”

And I got a clue what that looks like when our 6 year old granddaughter came to stay with us for a week. She was ecstatically happy to be with us, but what on earth could we do to keep her occupied and happy for a whole week? She had the energy of three nuclear power stations, while I tottered in her wake on worn out batteries. Would she be so bored by Day 2 that she’d be crying for home?

By Day 6, however, she was still happy. She scampered down the front path each morning as happily as she did on Day 1, because to her wherever Grampy was going it would be a good day. And if all Grampy could manage was a trip to the library where he fell into a chair in a semi-coma and read a newspaper, it was still fine with her, because just being with Grampy was enough.

Her trust and contentment in whatever we did together was a joy - and a wonderful illustration for me of “the life of the Spirit.” Like Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:8, “The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”

In other words, we have no idea where the Spirit’s taking us, just like my granddaughter had no idea where I was taking her each morning, but in her mind it was guaranteed to be good. Grampy knew where he was going and that was all that mattered. She felt utterly free, which enabled her to scamper into each day in total trust and contentment.

And according to Jesus we have such a “Grampy” too. He said as much in John 14:16-18, that the Holy Spirit would be our everyday guide and companion. Where the Spirit takes us we do not know, but he knows - and for my granddaughter with me as her guide and companion that was all that mattered. Every day coming up, therefore, would be a good day. And it created in her an inexpressible and glorious joy.

It dawned on me after that week with her that God has put us in that same spot too, that every day coming up is going to be a good day in some form or other because of the Holy Spirit. We have no idea how, or in what way, but as Romans 8:28 promises, “God works for the good of those who love him.”

So, “Come on, Grampy, let’s party,” was my granddaughter’s attitude to each new day with me. Not a bad idea for my new days with the Holy Spirit too, I thought.

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