

**“Satisfaction”**

September 26/29/30

Exodus 14:5-7, 10-14, 21-29

Matthew 2:13-15

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How long are you happy? Do you let yourself experience joy?

When you buy a new purse or a new hunting rifle or finally take that family trip you had been saving up for; How long is it before the newness wears off and the memories fade? We seem to always want more, bigger and better.

When the test results reveal the cancer is in remission, the abnormality will heal on its own or the child is healthy; How long do you celebrate before you start to *worry*? We stop ourselves from trusting too much and wait for the other shoe to drop.



The Israelites were slaves for more than 400 years. They worked very hard and were not treated very well. Especially after Moses and Aaron started working on Pharaoh to release them.

But they were in a strange land.

They were in the wilderness, not near a community or even a road.

They were confused and fear was starting to set in.

Fear is the **opposite** of trust. When we start to worry and fret, joy evaporates. Brene Browne, one of my hero's, says "Joy is the most terrifying emotion to experience". This is because we often do not let ourselves fully experience it. We look at a sleeping child (they always look more tranquil and innocent then) and instead of savoring the moment and thanking God for their existence, we play out these terrible "*what if's*" in our mind. Brene calls this "foreboding joy". It is the act of beating vulnerability to the punch. We hold ourselves back from experiencing the true and total joy, so that when something bad happens we think it won't hurt as much. However that is not true. When a loved one dies, a marriage ends, your financial debt becomes everyone's business it still hurts no matter how well you thought you had braced for it.



Matthew's lesson tells us, *The Savior* of the world is born. He is cute and wearing some pretty good smelling fragrances from the three wise men, but there is no time for a baby shower. Herod has heard of his birth and fears he will lose his throne to the infant, so he orders his soldiers to kill all the male children under 2 years of age. Herod is certainly playing the "what if" game. Joseph is very loyal and even though he is scared for the child, he knows he has to trust God. So off they go under the cover of night, into Egypt.

Fear keeps us from doing a great deal of things. We worry what others will think, how we can possibly manage, and who would ever really want what we have to offer. We worry about the fight, but the fourteenth verse in Exodus, tells us, we don't need to worry about the battle, we just have to worry about our own faith, for God will fight our battles if we let him.

How many times do you get through something you were fretting about and say, "Huh... it all worked out like it should have". I have had conversations with four mothers in the past few

weeks who have lost their children **way** before their prime. They all believe whole heartedly that their child's death is making a difference, because of the impact of their story of faith. **THEY ARE RIGHT!**



Their determination to engage in a cause that will make the death have meaning is feeding their soul and giving them hope. The people that come to them and tell them how much they have been positively impacted by the life of their child or mission of the family is not only keeping the memory alive, but it is changing lives. All of these mothers wish they had celebrated harder with their children when their child achieved a goal, no matter how small. The thing is once something is gone you can't redo it.

The people in the wilderness, just barely got there and they are questioning Moses and God. They are complaining and seem to have quickly forgotten their plight as slaves.

They have lost their faith.

They are fearful.

They don't trust Moses or the Lord and now they really have something to stress about as 600 Egyptians are chasing them.

Even though, God rescues them, they still lack faith, which doesn't work out well for them. They end up wandering lost and confused for 40 years, because their hearts were not ready to enter the Promised Land.

Rob Bell says "When we lose gratitude for our gifts we also lose our sense of peace and joy". As we become able to afford a second car, a bigger home, a better cell phone; we take for granted what a special treat it is to go out to eat. We forget how we felt when we didn't have or when we couldn't do extra things.



While in the wilderness Moses gives three separate instructions on how the Israelites are to take care of the widow, the orphan and the immigrant. The people didn't have away to share at the time, but he was foreshadowing that they would and they should not forget these people when they achieved some success. The practice of gratitude, makes you be **mindful** of all the gifts we have been given. It also saves us from indifference, bitterness and from becoming overburdened with so many things that don't really fill us up, but take up every shelf in our closets. If we can find someone who needs what we have: shoes for work, gas money, tomatoes for canning or advice on how to deal with a tragic loss; *Giving will give us* the joy and the purpose we so desperately need to feel.

So celebrate the spelling tests and mud pies. Cherish the moments of lucidness with loved ones at the nursing home. Use the gifts you have received instead of putting them in the closet for safe keeping. You never know when you won't get to use them or when the opportunity to use them or bless someone with them will be gone.