

NAME

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DATE

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DURATION

25m 15s

2 SPEAKERS

Speaker1

Speaker2

START OF TRANSCRIPT

[00:00:00] Speaker1

The following is a message from Wellsprings Congregation.

[00:00:04] Speaker2

Good morning, wellsprings. We sang this morning of a of a new soul, and I have a little short story for you this morning. About a new soul. One day, a four year old and his little brother, two and a half, were playing in their grandmother's yard for whatever reason, the four year old gave his little brother the sidearm, knocking the little little disabled one onto the concrete sidewalk. The little guy at two and a half had recently started walking and was unsteady. The little guys get it on to the sidewalk, skinning himself pretty good. So during the ensuing ruckus with applications of bactine and Band-Aids and and solace. What to do about the miscreant? Look, would it be natural to punish or smear on some guilt? It was an impulse, but but a cruel one. Well, by the grace of God, the grandmother was studying Brené Brown, her book Daring Greatly. Bernie has by now devoted probably 20 years to exploring, analyzing and revealing the grave harm that shame does. There's got to be better ways to modify our worst impulses. How can we counteract the cruelty of a young child's impulse? So after pondering a bit how to frame the incident, the four year old was asked to ponder to. He was asked a thoughtful question. He was expecting to be berated, not offered to think about a question. His grandmother called him over. Jp, come sit with me. I have a question for you. In a tone of true curiosity, she asked him. Jp, where do you think kindness comes from? Now she had his attention.

[00:02:22] Speaker2

He really did ponder for a four year old to have an epiphany is amazing. After a good bit of thoughtful silence, finally, he looked right up into her eyes and said, geeky from inside of us. From the mouth of Babes, right? Without any prompting, he then got up, asked his brother if he could hug him and apologize Duncan. I am sorry, I hurt you. So where do you think kindness comes from? Some will say kindness is a quality that must be taught. Or at least modeled. And perhaps so. We may have to be taught kindness, but but think about this, what Kindles it? How are we inspired to take kindness? On a deeper level, what is there inside of us born into us, inherent not taught, but found. We recognize it. We felt it. Taking a moment right now. Remember an occasion deeper than happiness, deeper than satisfaction. Deeper than gladness. I'm remembering holding a sleeping infant. The little fag of weight, the warmth. The Snuggle. The trust between us. When I'm feeling this way all to the bottom of my soul, I call it joy. We're not taught joy. We recognize it. Look into the baby's face when it was lit with joy. We name a word for it, but the expression of joy is intrinsic born right into us. And then think about what it provides. What what does it provide deep inside? A fund of well-being and energy for our living spirit.

[00:04:42] Speaker2

In last week's worship service. And this week as well, we sang about when joy comes back to me last week and wait, wait, what? Comes back to me. I realized what really happens when I come back to Joy. I was struggling to define it for the message this morning, and so I actually googled the word. And one reference stood out. It said the Bible uses the word joy in Greek and in Hebrew Hebrew to communicate a positive human condition. A positive human condition, not a learned response at all. But does this positive human condition come and go? Or is it just hidden from our attention? So take a look at your joy. When you feel it, when you are being joyful full of joy. What would how would you describe it? What would you say? I have a reason to ask. I want us to focus just to make a point. Go ahead and name what it feels like when you have that feeling of joy. Speak it right here to your colleagues here, and, well, Bell Hall, or if you're with us remotely, which most of us are placed in a chat or speak it out loud so that you claim it, what it's like to feel your joy. For me, that joy has warmth, like holding the baby like the little baby does, I feel this bubbling energy? And it's calm, but it's strong, it's glowing. I feel like I'm glowing, radiating. You know how we say that a bride is radiant? Well, for me, and I think probably for many of us, we would say joy is like a light.

[00:06:56] Speaker2

And like so many of our song lyrics. We sing the light, what light? That's one of our songs and the light inside of us. All right. After all, when we enter the sacred portion of our worship service, we repeat together, we light our chalice to celebrate the path lit before us, the warmth of kindness that shines from within us and the radiance of wisdom that is shared between us and never goes out. The light that shared between us and never goes out. Joy? But let's look again. I claim that we come back to joy. And I'm saying that the joy is inside of us would never leaves us. But clearly, we're not always present to joy. So how can we become aware again, especially when we need to? How can we fuel our better selves and strengthen our best qualities to be our best? Actually, there's a list of the qualities that reflect the positive human condition in the New Testament, in the letter that Paul wrote to those early Christians living in Galicia. He listed what he called the fruits of the spirit. Love. Joy? Peace. Forbearance. Kindness, goodness. Faithfulness. Gentleness and self-control. It could be said love is what we're made of. And for joy is the fuel, the animation. Peace is our spiritual destination. And we can be inspired to forbearance kindness. Goodness, faithfulness, gentleness. And self-control. If we want to shine with these qualities, if our light is hidden.

[00:09:19] Speaker2

There's a quip attributed to Jesus of Nazareth. In fact, three of the Apostles, Mark, Matthew and John, recorded the quip, Why would you hide a light under a bushel? Let the light shine forth, let illuminate. We declare in our worship service that the divine spark illuminates our lives and the lives of everyone we encounter. Jesus asked, Why would you hide a light under a bushel? Because we do that, don't we? Sometimes we hide our light under fear. Or shame? Or anger? Or despair? So how can we get that proverbial bushel off? We can probably agree we look far better without basket on our heads. But the world always needs and we all need all the light. Each of us can shine. Until now, I've spoken of joy. Now I want to recognize our sorrow. And first, I'm going to make a slight joke. I'm going to ignore this mask. That's part of the sorrow that we're all living with, the aggravation and the troubles and the worry of COVID 19, but sorrow is deeper than sadness. Kinder than anger. More truthful than despair. Sorrow includes regret, grief. And profound loss. Sorrow is the companion to joy, though joy is an awareness. So is sorrow. There are companion human conditions. There's a quote about that from Khalil Gibran, the Lebanese-American author of The Prophet, it was a book published in 1923, written in English and translated then into 49 languages. Gebran makes this point when you are sorrowful, look again at your heart and you shall see that in truth, you are weeping for that, which has been your delight.

[00:11:55] Speaker2

Some of you say joy is greater than sorrow. And others say nay, sorrow is greater. But I say onto you. They are inseparable. Together they come. And when one sits alone with you at your board, remember that the other is asleep in your bed. Some say that sorrow is a gateway actually to healing. And surely within the pain of sorrow and the energy of joy. Arise then, our quality of compassion. His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, who is spiritual leader of the Tibetan people and also a Nobel Peace laureate, has said, please don't think that compassion, love and tolerance only belong to religion. They belong to human life. The spiritual practices of all world religions belong to all human life. Most of us think of chanting as being part of eastern religions, but think of Gregorian chants. From long ago in our civilization. In one of our small groups for spiritual development here at Wellsprings, we learned and practiced chanting. We learned one in medieval Latin called the the gordita. Now that you would think that with four years of Latin study in high school, back in the old days, I would be able to remember the God attachment, but I don't. I use the one in Japanese revering the Lotus Sutra. My favorite chant is the one in Tibetan chanting alongside a recording of the Dalai Lama. I still chant those words in Tibetan as a spiritual practice, in fact, as I was pelting down the highway this morning at the top of my voice, I was chanting in Tibetan.

[00:14:03] Speaker2

I was asking the spirit of compassion to ease the sorrows of our world. Now driving in the car, I use my best voice, so I'm not going to chant right here. I would whisper it, I would whisper it Oh. All right. To Tory. I shall just a whisper, because my big voice is not anything the band could tolerate or that you or that you would be able to to listen to. So the spirit of compassion? Let's get some additional perspective from a former Buddhist monk. He's married now, so he says former I was lucky enough recently to be invited to a 90 minute session with Jay Shetty and his recent book Think Like a Monk. He speaks of compassion as an active empathy, active empathy, not only the willingness to see, feel and ease the pain of others, but also the willingness to take on some of that pain. As Jay Shetty believes and his Universalists. Ideally, there is no us and them in our world. Ideally, when we bear witness to other people's pain, we feel our shared humanity and are motivated to take action. Jay suggests that where we feel our own compassion, what calls to our heart. Is where we could take action work at healing the pain, you know, best? I know that's where my volunteer work comes from. So if you're kind of looking for the right place to be making a difference, Jay suggests finding what calls to your heart.

[00:15:59] Speaker2

And try this. He said, and you might literally try this. It's three steps, he says, right down three moments in your life when you felt lost. Or in need? Maybe you were depressed and could have used support. Maybe you want an education you couldn't afford? Maybe you need a guidance, but didn't have the right teacher. Then step two, match a charity or a cause to each. Then step three, choose whichever one matches to what you love to do and what you're good at. That's your natural strength. And Jay says, give of what you have after all, your life was given to you. Or, as my mom says, and many of you know, my mom, Lois. My mom says pass it forward. If we pass it forward, our compassion. Can leave the world a little bit better. And our compassion can make us aware once again of our joy. I want to share some words from several people who inspire me, because what makes me think that I have the faith that this is true? I see them making a better world. So clearly, I love and respect our ministers. When I first became a member of Wellsprings Congregation, Reverend Ken mapped my first six months spiritual journey with me. Ever since then, I have attended daily touch bases with Father Richard Rohr, a Franciscan. If you look him up, he's described as a globally recognized ecumenical teacher bearing witness to the universal awakening within Christian mysticism and the perennial tradition.

[00:18:04] Speaker2

Wow. But Father Roger uses less elaborate words, he speaks directly to the heart. So why is paying attention to Father Richard an important part of my universalist spiritual practice? Well, here's the thing. My friend and mentor in my prison workshop, Sister Mary, is a sister of Saint Francis, and she says that she and I are both universalists because Catholic was a small C means universal. Here are some of Father Richard's words. Maturity is the ability to joyfully live in an imperfect world. I want to encourage us at Wellsprings to do exactly that joyfully live in an imperfect world. Regarding compassion, Father Richard says famine, poverty, abuse, you can't keep all that blocked out if you let those things teach you, though influence you change you. Those are the events that transform you, transition you without you even knowing it. To become more compassionate. Father Richard also has a plan for dealing with the sorrows of this imperfect world. He says your heart has to be prepared ahead of time. Through Faith. And prayer. And Grace. And Mercy. And love. And forgiveness so you can keep your heart open and hell when hell happens. Yep, he is well versed in the sorrows of our imperfect world. I want to quote another person well versed in the sorrows of our imperfect world. Many of you have known and loved him as a member of Wellsprings. We lost our beloved friend, Dr. Robert Merritt, earlier this year. He was my husband's best friend.

[00:20:23] Speaker2

He was a dear friend and born and of our family. Maria, his wife, and Joan, his sister are dear friends also. Robert lived intentionally full of joy despite the sorrow of multiple sclerosis. You remember you may remember his smile and the photos in those images that we were looking at in our service October 31st. Roberts smile, the glow he shared with us literally illuminated my life and Pete's life as well. I promised Maria I would bring him with me today during this message. Here are his words to share with you. A year or so ago, he wrote. Joy in the world. I was struck by the themes that ran through the quotes about joy. They all pointed to learning to value what is while recognizing how things have changed. Chevron said that when you were joyous, look deep into your heart and you shall find it. Find it is only that which has given you sorrow that is giving you joy. When you are sorrowful, look again in your heart. And you shall see that in truth. You are weeping for which that has been your delight. This got me to thinking about all those things that bring joy into my life, but are not always present to enjoy. I know that sounds somewhat mystical, he said. But I think in some ways that is the essence of joy. I find joy when thinking about my parents, although they have both passed away. I'm joyful when I think about my children, three boys. Who are finally making progress? Truthfully, the joy is in their being, not in whether they meet my expectations.

[00:22:33] Speaker2

My wife is a continuous source of joy mixed with the spices of challenge. This same concept of joy and sorrow. Is what keeps me going. Joy, and all the things I accomplished, accomplished. Sorrow in the recognition that I can no longer do many of those same things. That's what scrapbooks are for to look back and see how far you have come. I hope that my boys is they mature into men, carry this spirit of joy with them. Of course, this only comes with time and whatever challenges they encounter, roadblocks and failures are the best teachers. So find joy among the rough terrain of a life well-lived. Thank you, Robert. So a life well-lived. We miss you, Robert. For all of us, a life well-lived, continuing to learn the value of what is, well, recognizing what has changed. May we be blessed to help each other witness the light that illuminates our lives and the lives of everyone we meet? In conclusion, may we be blessed with faith? And prayer. And Grace. And Mercy. Love. And forgiveness. So we can keep our hearts open. Will you join me in a spirit of prayer? Spirit of life. God of our hearts understanding. Here are prayer. May we keep our hearts open? By grace, may we share an infinite mercy? Let our love and our faith lead us to forgiveness. And with joy. And with sorrow, may we grow. In compassion. Amen.

[00:25:03] Speaker1

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END OF TRANSCRIPT



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