7/17/20 **Devotional**

*“For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven, a time to weep and a time to laugh.” Proverbs 3:4.* “*Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with shouts of joy.” Psalm 126:2*

Here are three propositions which pertain to life. One, life is hard. Two, life is not always fair. Three, life is also enjoyable and can be humorous. I believe all three propositions are true. What about you?

There is a time to laugh. Laughter is a gift from God; it’s a marvelous gift. We may infer that God has a sense of humor since we are made in God’s image. Sydney Harris wrote*: “God cannot be solemn or he would not have blessed man with the incalculable gift of laughter*.” God must have a sense of humor because He made aardvarks, orangutans, and me. I truly believe God has a sense of humor which He imparted to human beings.

Having a sense of humor is critical in life. If you don’t have a sense of humor, you may want to work on it. It is an invaluable resource, an essential quality, which can help get one through many of the trials we face. It means we need to remember not to take ourselvestoo seriously. It means we need to be able to laugh at ourselves. There are times when we take ourselves and the things which happen to us too seriously**.** English author G.K. Chesterton said: *“Angels can fly because they take themselves so lightly.”*

We need a balancing factor in life with all of the bad and sad things that are part of life. Humor is one of the most important qualities for good mental health and a balanced state of mind. I get a little suspicious when I'm around someone who never laughs, who doesn't seem to see humor in anything, especially in himself or herself.

What a joy to not only see something that strikes you as funny and sets you laughing, but to see and hear others laugh around you. What a gift to have a friend with whom you can laugh. Laughter is contagious. It brightens the day. It lifts the mood. Being around such people is a blessing from God.

Being able to see some humor in life’s surprises or unexpected twists and turns is a blessing. There are people who live unhappy, miserable lives because they take everything so seriously. A life without laughter, is empty, barren and joyless.

So how is your sense of humor? What kinds of things strike you as funny? God has created us to be able to appreciate irony, satire, to see humor in the mundane, to see hilarity in the ordinary and be amused in life.

If one can learn to see humor in life's events, one will be able to experience the joy and happiness which is fundamental to the life God has given to us. Laughter generates the equilibrium we need when things begin to reel out of control around us. Laughter is an essential ingredient in one's survival kit.

I like the stories in the book of Genesis where Sara, Abraham’s wife, speaks about laughter. In Genesis chapter 18 mysterious visitors come to visit Abraham and he offers them the customary hospitality. One of them tells Abraham that Sarah will have a son. Sarah overhears the man and laughs at this preposterous idea, given her advanced age. The visitor says to Abraham, “*Why did Sarah laugh, is anything too wonderful for the Lord?”* Sarah quickly says, *“I didn't laugh.”* The visitor says, “*Oh yes you did laugh.”*

In Genesis 21 we celebrate the joy of the birth of a son and Abraham names him Isaac. The name Isaac in Hebrew means – he laughs. Sarah exclaims, “*God has brought laughter for me, everyone who hears will laugh with me. Who would ever had said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet, I have borne him a son in his old age*.” God surprises Abraham and Sarah with the gift of a son in their old age.

We read in the book of Proverbs: “*A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a downcast spirit dries up the bones.”* Laughter is good for the soul.Having a sense of humor helps to keep us healthy - spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically. It’s a powerful antidote to stress, pain and conflict. It lightens your burdens, inspires hope, connects you with others, and keeps you grounded.

A sense of humor contributes to healing, to coping with life’s rapid changes, to reducing oversized egos, to expanding undersized egos, to deflating inflated pride, and putting a smile on a solemn face. It opens up a fresh breeze of humility and spontaneity, self-acceptance, gratitude and appreciation for life.

“May God fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy.”

The Lord be with you,

Rev. Alan W. Deuel