

In Touch  
September 26, 2008  
To: The Saints at Hopewell  
From: Taylor W. Holbrook

Re: Drained by depression, filled with joy

*“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.”* Philippians 4:4

Depression seems epidemic in our culture. Statistics say that 87 million Americans suffer from it. So many people I talk to struggle with that noontime demon that drains us and dangerously debilitates many. Anti-depressant medication is a necessary tool of survival for many and many more are dealing with milder forms of anxiety and discouragement that does not seem to quit. It is a pastoral concern that I do not approach lightly, but this Sunday we will be dealing with the draining power of depression and the fullness of gospel joy.

Paul had reason to be depressed. He was in prison. He had been beaten. His life was in jeopardy, yet in that context he writes the letter to the Philippians in which he uses the word joy or rejoicing thirteen times. He shares a deep seated conviction that joy comes from a centered life and is not defined by circumstance. His hope is to see the Philippians rejoicing in that joy. This Sunday my hope is that joy will be shared.

I have asked Mike Reynolds to come back from the men's retreat with me to share his story. As we have the past two weeks, we are asking ordinary radicals to share testimony about how the gospel has shaped their lives. Mike has given me permission to share that he has struggled with depression and has come to know some of the fullness of the joy that Paul speaks of. His story is real and I hope it will be helpful for others in finding the peace that Paul preaches.

I look forward to hearing Mike's story, and I hope you look forward to being filled with Paul's story from Philippians. Depression may make it hard for you to simply get out of bed, but I hope you do so on Sunday and invite any others whom you know who are dealing with depression. I pray that it will be a day of rejoicing for you, whatever struggles or circumstances you are dealing with.

Yours in Peace,

Taylor

P.S. Two Needs:

1) I just got a call from Jacobus Smit's daughter. He is an older member of our congregation that can get a ride to church but needs a ride home. He lives right by Lake Walton. Is there somebody that can help make sure that we can get him home from church? Hit reply and let me know.

2) Sven and Linnea Nordlund are at Dutchess at Wingate. Their eyesight is bad and they would like somebody to read our newsletter, Hopewell Happenings, to them. Is there someone who would volunteer to do this once a month? Hit reply and let me know.