

## **Leaves Of Hope #19**

Family Devotion written by C.M. Gullerud

Lord keep us in thy Word and faith, that we  
may rejoice in the favor of thy grace. Amen

### **Ecclesiastes 11:9-12:1**

Be happy, young man, while you are young, and let your heart give you joy in the days of your youth. Follow the ways of your heart and whatever your eyes see, but know that for all these things God will bring you to judgment. Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, "I find no pleasure in them" . . .

This text is relevant today for special consideration. One considers the terrorist acts and the threats that have been issued by the discontented and the rebellious. Many of those who burn the flag and raise their voices against war and bloodshed have no compunctions about throwing bricks at police officers. When we consider the future for those who are young and starting out in life, one is tempted to say it is hard to be young. Where does one find security, happiness and causes for rejoicing? Do we have to go to rock festivals, smoke marijuana or ingest cocaine and use crack? Do we have to attend adult entertainment

centers and spend our time in bars and wait for the lucky lottery number to come up in order to find cause for joy?

As Christians we are assured that happiness is not to be found in those things that only bring vexation of spirit, distress and despair. Turning to our text we hear that young people have good reason to rejoice and be glad, namely when they can know and remember their Creator. In remembering our Creator, whether we are old or young, we remember that our God has not only created us, but has redeemed us, and continues to sanctify us day by day through his Word.

Our text is particularly calling upon the young to rejoice in their youth. For here at the outset of life is vigor and strength, an eagerness to lead a profitable life and to be successful in every endeavor. Christian young men and women start out with direction and a purpose which goes forward into adulthood, middle age and old age and from there into eternity. Life is not to be spent only for selfish purposes or private ambition, but also for the common good of our fellow humankind. That is best accomplished by reaching out with the Gospel to all people.

We find the basis for every joy in Jesus when we join the wise men from the east of whom it is said: “When they

**saw the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.” They rejoiced for they were on their way to worship the Christ-child, eager to lay down their gifts and treasures at his feet. We can well conclude that when they reached home, they did not keep their visit and the cause for their joy to themselves. They invited others to share it with them. As a result we hear that men, years later, confessed their faith in the Savior God.**

**We hear of men like Daniel rejoicing in the Lord in the land of Babylon even in the midst of great tribulation. Even from the lion’s den we hear David’s prayer of faith ascending to his Creator God. From the fiery furnace into which they had been cast, we hear the confession of faith from Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego: “If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.” Daniel 3:17-18 These men, Daniel and his three friends, had their future ahead of them. They could very easily have despaired but they kept the faith and were delivered from death to serve the Lord even while being captives in Babylon.**

And so we have good reason to rejoice in the days of our youth as we call to mind the words of Paul to the Romans: “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.” Romans 5:1-2 Let us raise our voices with Paul Gerhardt to these words:

Rejoice, my heart, be glad and sing  
A cheerful trust maintain;  
For God the source of everything  
Thy Portion shall remain.

He is thy Treasure, he thy Joy,  
Thy Life and Light and Lord,  
Thy Counselor when doubts annoy,  
Thy Shield and great Reward.

L.H. 535, 1-2