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*"Christ caring for People
through People"*

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Colossians 2 (selected)

I want you woven into a tapestry of love, in touch with everything there is to know of God. Then you will have minds confident and at rest, focused on Christ, God's great mystery. All the richest treasures of wisdom and knowledge are embedded in that mystery and nowhere else. And we've been shown the mystery! I'm telling you this because I don't want anyone leading you off on some wild-goose chase, after other so-called mysteries, or "the Secret." You received Christ Jesus, the Master; now live him. You're deeply rooted in him. You know your way around the faith. Now do what you've been taught. And let your living spill over into joy and thanksgiving. Entering into this fullness is not something you figure out or achieve. No, you're already in—insiders through what Christ has already gone through for you, destroying the power of sin. If it's an initiation ritual you're after, you've already been through it by submitting to baptism. Going under the water was a burial of your old life; coming up out of it was a resurrection.

"Let your living spill over into joy and thanksgiving."

Lots of events in life make us happy: births, graduations, weddings, achieving something we worked hard for. But there are other circumstances - things like sickness, money problems, trouble with our relationships, or the death of someone we love - that bring deep sadness and fear.

If bad things are happening around us, how can we be joyful?

The joy deep within our hearts doesn't always show up as laughter and happiness. The joy that comes from what Christ has done for us constantly fills our hearts; it doesn't depend on the circumstances of our lives. We can choose to be joyful even when life is difficult the same way we choose to love those who are seemingly unlovable: by an act of our will. We do this by focusing on Christ instead of the situation that's going on in our life. This isn't easy, but it's certainly not impossible. The Bible is full of examples of people who found joy in the midst of the worst situations, and if we look around, we'll see other examples all around us. You have the ability through Christ to choose to fill your heart with joy. Praise and worship Jesus today.

Psalms 107 (selected verses)

"Oh, thank God - he's so good! His love never runs out. All of you set free by God, tell the world!

Tell how he freed you from oppression. Some of you wandered for years in the desert, looking but not finding a good place to live, then, in your desperate condition, you called out to God. He got you out in the nick of time; He put your feet on a wonderful road that took you straight to a good place to live. So thank God for his marvellous love, for his miracle mercy to the children he loves. He poured great draughts of water down parched throats; the starved and hungry got plenty to eat. Then he changed wasteland into fresh pools of water, arid earth into springs of water, Good people see this and are glad; bad people are speechless, stopped in their tracks.

If you are really wise, you'll think this over - it's time you appreciated God's deep love."

Amen.

(Rev.) John McGurrin