

## SERMON FOR DISCUSSION: Happiness

In 2010 our Government began to measure NATIONAL WELL-BEING and this week **the World Happiness Report** states that Switzerland is the happiest place to live and Britain is 21<sup>st</sup>.

The question is: Can we make ourselves happier?

Now some things, like crime levels and safety after dark, we can't do much about (unless we can move house). However, the Experts tell us that **40%** of our happiness IS down to the conscious choices WE make.

So what are they?

Can we put them into practice?

Well, the answer is that faith in Jesus Christ and active membership of a church DOES make a huge difference.

Here are 10 steps you can take "**which consistently tend to make people's lives happier and more fulfilling**"

1. **Be part of something bigger** that gives you purpose and meaning in life. What can be bigger than being a member of the body of Christ. Part of the Church Militant here on earth and the Church Glorious in heaven. A number no one *can* number.
2. **Become comfortable with who you are.** Accept yourself. At the heart of the Christian faith is the fact that God already loves you AS YOU ARE and, therefore, as our security is in what God thinks of our, we are free to accept ourselves as we are. The command is "Love your neighbour AS YOURSELF"
3. **Do things for others.** SERVICE, not selfishness, is at the very heart of the Christian faith. *"I have given you an example. As I have washed your feet, you, also, ought to wash one another's"* No Christian is too big not to serve others.
4. **Keep learning new things.** "Read your Bible, Pray every day" A Christian is called to develop a Christian Mind. Remember last week? "Bible in one Hand; Newspaper in the Other?" *"May the mind of Christ my Saviour live in me from day to day"* wrote Kate Wilkinson famously in her hymn.
5. **Connect with people.** What is a church if not a "fellowship of believers together?" On Sunday we had a 'bring & share' lunch. We join together in the Mothers Union and take an interest in each other. We pray for one another. We do not spend one week to the next never talking to anyone because the life of the church results in many connections.

- 6. Notice the world around you.** We don't just 'notice'. We notice and respond. This is why we serve in the Prison and the Foodbank and the Debt Centre. We notice and the love of Christ compels us to react in service to others.
- 7. Take care of your body.** "Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?" Do you not know that God lives in you? Our bodies are not our own, they are precious to God for he is our Maker and Creator. So respect for God issues in respect for our bodies.
- 8. Have goals to look forward to.** Well this Church, "The Living Church of St Mary's" has three very clear goals and three Task groups to try and implement them. Namely, that we should: Welcome / Nurture / Serve. We are not aimless. We "run with purpose"
- 9. Take a positive approach.** This is very similar to the last point. If we believe that God has called us and has a purpose for us THEN we will be positive. "Thy kingdom come on earth as in heaven" is a VERY POSITIVE prayer.
10. **Find ways to bounce back from difficulties.** St Paul in 2 Corinthians 4 writes:

We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair;  
[9](#)persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed

[16](#)Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. [17](#)For our momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. [18](#)So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

**IT IS CLEAR: Vicars make you happier!!**

OR RATHER, faith in Jesus Christ and active membership of a church DOES make a huge difference to our lives and makes us HAPPIER!

Preached by Martin Tanner in St Mary's St Mary's  
at 10am on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> August 2015