

Bible e-Study /Pennies From Heaven 7 Penny Arcade

Prayer can be Joyful - It's not always a somber business!

16 Be joyful always; 17 pray continually; 18 give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

NUGGET – In San Francisco there is a wharf that is filled with old penny arcade mechanical devices. It's a hands-on museum of sorts. And that reminded me of what we're talking about in prayer today. Prayer is to be a hands-on thing for us. And like a penny arcade, there can be joy in our prayer.

I like the old penny arcade games. There are mechanical things that happen in them,

- ✘ wheels spin
- ✘ dials go 'round,
- ✘ levers move
- ✘ baskets raise and lower
- ✘ marbles roll and crash into things

Those machines are lots of fun. You put a nickel in and pull a handle or push a button and then the device draws you into its world. You are hoping this horse and not that horse wins the race. You want the clown to drop through the trap door. And you watch it all, engrossed by what is taking place before your eyes.

I bring all this up because in some ways, we are like that. We have been brought into a world not of our own making, but of God's making. He has created us and, in Christ, has re-created us according to His righteousness. We are now engrossed by what God's love has done for us in the cross of Christ and we are transformed through what He has done to us in our baptism.

The joy of being redeemed comes in knowing that it is pure gift. The cost has been paid for us and we now get to live a life that we haven't earned. It is truly ours because it has been given to us. We have been made what we are by the work of Christ alone.

Like the arcade games, we are invited to *enjoy* and to participate in what happens in our life. The admission has been bought for us and we step into our new life in Christ to enjoy all that God has planned out for us. *"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."*

God has reached into our lives and placed in us by His grace, the righteousness of Christ. We now get to enjoy the benefit of that free gift and live through all the circumstance of life knowing that God has prepared us for anything. We have cause to be joyful, to be thankful in all circumstances because of what is ours. No levers, marbles or dials are needed for this joy.

APPLICATION –

1. This'll be fun; go find pinball machine and play it. Enjoy it!
2. Take a look at your calendar for the next week; what is coming up in your life that God has planned for you to enjoy. How can you participate so that others can share in that joy?

PRAY – Give thanks to God for the redemption that is yours by the gift of the Holy Spirit and take time to tell Him what such a treasure means to you. The Creator loves to hear from His children!



ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

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*Going Deeper together. We meet in the **Fellowship Hall** during the Education Hour for discussion and prayer with all those who're able to come. If you're not able to make it Sunday, please feel free to e-mail me with your comments or questions so that we can have the benefit of sharing them together.*

GOING DEEPER

Penny Arcade

Prayer can be Joyful - It's not always a somber business

In our nugget verse today, while we're reminded to be hands-on in prayer; to pray at *all* times, we're also exhorted to be possessed of joy and thanks to God in all things and for all things. There is joy to be had in truly *possessing personally* the salvation that Jesus has won for us on the cross. This isn't talking about walking around with a silly grin and being ignorant of what is happening in the world around us. In fact, this joy is the very opposite of that. What does [1Thess 2:17-3:9](#) reveal about that?

Knowing and being aware of what is going on around us can lead us to a deeper joy and thankfulness for what is ours only by the grace of God to us. Prayer need not be limited to somber themes or sober language. In fact scripture often points us toward rejoicing in the Lord or giving thanks to God for His goodness, kindness and all His generous ways. How is this pointed out for you in [Deut 12:4-7](#), [Ps 9:1-2](#), [Ps 118:28-29](#) and [Eph 5:19-20](#)?

By the gift of salvation that is our possession, we can see reason for true joy in spite of whatever earthly circumstances we are in. Nothing in all creation, St Paul says, in Romans 8:39, "**...will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.**" What does [Ps 13:5-6](#) and [Luke 15:7-10](#) add to our understanding of this?

To be joyful in our prayer life we need only remember that in all things Christ Jesus is with us to guide and protect through all that comes our way. We have a hope and a joy that is not given to us piecemeal or doled out in nickels and dimes. The joy that is ours, that gives us the way to "**Be joyful always**" comes to us full and complete in our baptism.

Read [Philippians 4:4-7](#) and [Colossians 1:9-14](#). How can these passages open our eyes to the joy that is ours to share?

Joy and peace to you in Jesus Christ, PR

P.S. Here are some more one-liners about prayer:

Prayer is like breathing: You can do it anywhere there happens to be air

Prayer does not issue forth from us; we issue forth into prayer!

Prayer is like an elephant we ride; it is bigger than we are.
*(The last two are from Peter Kreeft's book *Fundamentals of the Faith*)*