

(Romans 8:35-39, NIV84)

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written:

"For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

June 22

Planned Joy

Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Philippians 4:4

Ten-year-old Kristin wrote to her grandparents: "I am going to be helping in vacation Bible school this year. I am planning to enjoy it."

Some people, even Christians, are constantly planning to be miserable. They insist on looking at tomorrow through dark-colored glasses. If it's a picnic, they're "just sure it's going to rain". If it's a party, they're "just sure the whole thing will be a flop". If it's a new venture for church or family, they're "just sure it'll never work out". In a sense, their whole life is one of planned misery.

God tells us that the life of the Christian should be one of planned joy.

"Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice." We are to rejoice, above all, because the most rapturous moment of our life still lies ahead.

"The Lord is coming soon", the apostle says in the very next verse. And because our Lord is coming, our prevailing mood should be one of gladness.

There will still be thorns and crosses, to be sure; but in the distance shines the crown.

Some will say: "Yes, but that's all too theological. I still have to live in this world. I believe that the Lord is coming soon, but I have a child, critically ill, in the hospital. I need help -now!"

As Christians, we know that all of life is "theological", involving, as it does, our personal relationship with God through Christ. We know that in the life of the believer, every tragedy is but a prelude to another triumph.

Read Paul's great hymn of praise (Romans 8:35-39). Yes, even death, in its Christian perspective, is a cause for deep-down, inner joy. It brings us into the presence of him whom to know "is pleasure for evermore".

Indeed, the redeemed of Christ, when speaking of the ultimate issues of life, have every right to say: I am planning to enjoy it!

(Devotion from: Daily Walk With God - Meditations for Every Day, by Herman W. Gockel)