

## **CHRISTMAS HOMILY. The Rt. Rev. Dr. JBN Zhumbes.**

Text: Job 29:24-25, Psalm 16:11, John 17:13b

"When I smiled at them, they could hardly believe it; their faces lit up, their troubles took wings! I was their leader, establishing the mood and setting the pace by which they lived" (Job 29:24-25 MSG).

"You make known to me the path of life, in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore" (Psalm 16:11 ESV).

"...So that they may have the full measure of my joy within them" (John 17:13b NIV).

### **Topic: JESUS' SMILE SPICES THE PATH OF LIFE**

#### **Subtopics:**

1. Today, Jesus will smile on you-Job 29:24-25
2. Go with Him and You will never be lost-Psalm 16:11a
3. Walking with Him, is Joy to the believer-Ps 16:11b; Jn 17:13

#### **Preamble**

Christ with the largest following and the most celebrated figure in the history of the world, has made Christmas the single largest world event divinely instituted and celebrated right from on set and with a celebration record of over three thousand years. By Luke's record, at birth Christ's attraction was ever swelling-from Angels to shepherds, and from shepherds to the heavenly hosts. In some quarters beyond worship and praise, it provoked jealousy, generated hatred and brewed secret plots. Christmas is the attraction and celebration of both the believing and unbelieving world.

To those who do not understand, Christmas could easily create an unexpected atmosphere-a cloudy rather than a sunny one. It could become darkness rather than light. It can easily be confused for a time of spending hard earned and sometime meagre resources on frivolities. It is often misconstrued for festivities and wild parties. This is characterised by eating, drinking, immoral and indecent behaviour-giving of lives to the devil for unholy, life threatening and life torturing acts. At and for Christmas people rob, kill, steal, cheat, lie, drink and get drunk, fornicate, commit adultery, are violent fight and kill. This they resort to rather than honouring and celebrating Christ the celebrant in frugality, contentment, decency and moral aptitude.

The traditional way is to go on a spending spree, eat, drink and be drunk, drug themselves up and end up in revelry. Where this is not forthcoming, frowned faces replace the smiles that should beam and radiate on faces; and sadness quickly replaces the joy that should flow from the heart of humankind. The reality on ground today however, gives no allowance for the continuity of tradition but a reasoning with the times. The recession and the harsh economic realities are good enough occurrences to draw us closer to God. They are with the right gears to drive us to Christ the source of peace. In them is the force strong enough to send us looking to him who owns all seasons and puts smiles on faces in spite of what the socio-economic realities may be. The peace, joy and the smiles on our faces should not be determined by circumstances we can't control, but by leaving them to the care of He who can and has control over all. Do you need a smile on your face this Christmas season?

#### **1. Today, Jesus will Put a Smile on You-Psalm 16:24-25**

It is Christmas today and someone may have woken up disappointed, upset and sad and not in the mood of celebration. The peace, praise and smiles that typify the season may have evaporated and ran dry from our hearts and lives, stolen by the cares and concerns of this world. They may have been exited from our lives and replaced with gloom. This is always the result when Christmas means material things to you. More than denying you satisfaction, material things are with the capacity to steal your joy and ruin your peace, turn your praise to wail and your smiles to smells. If material fulfilment and satisfaction is your

definition of Christmas, then lack of it may mar it and make you feel you have nothing for which to thank God; and this forgetting the fact that He has kept you alive and healthy. And should you think you have nothing to smile about this Christmas; then here is a word for you from one who having suffered the loss of all his children, all he ever acquired in material possessions and now sat in ashes covered from head to toe in boils. He said, "When I smile at them, they could hardly believe it; their faces lit up, their troubles took wings. I was their leader, establishing the mood and setting the pace by which they lived. Where I led, they followed" (Job 29:24-25 msg). This is Job talking. The man who lost all, is the one who turns up to lighten up all. Must it take the sick or one whose life is mara to turn your sadness to joy? Do you, at this Christmas need to visit the critically ill in the hospital to have them turn your sadness to joy by giving you a smile from their sick bed? For there is great power in smiles. It is the one thing that conquers sadness. And with Jesus is smiles in abundance. The story is told that one Christmas, a departmental store was to sale smiles: and what was the cost? Nothing! But how much does it create? Much! It enriches those who receive it without impoverishing those who give it. It is an act in the flesh, but the memory of it sometime lasts forever. No one is so rich that they can get along without it. None is so poor but is richer for its benefit. It is the source of happiness in the home, translates to good will in business and the countersign of friends. It is rest to the weary, delight to the discouraged, sunshine to the sad and nature's best antidote to trouble. Yet it can not be bought, begged, borrowed or stolen as it is not an earthly good until it is given away. Only Jesus can supply it. And as a Christian, He is your leader. He then and not your circumstances nor material level, should establish your mood and set the pace at Christmas and the whole of life. He is set to lighten you up by giving you a smile whether you are obsessed by so much or depressed by so little. Be ready to accept it; believe him when He smiles on you. He is ready to set the pace this Christmas. You only need to be willing to follow; He is out to detail your celebration, yield to his prompting. When Jesus gives you smiles and you take possession, will you be willing to give someone who may have ran dry of it or is lacking some to give? For this Christmas nobody needs a smile as the one who has none to give out. Will you who have, give out some to those truly dry of it? Hoard not and deny no one smiles. Freely you received, freely you shall give.

## **2. Go with Jesus and You will Never be Lost-Ps 16:11b**

Life is a whole stretch of journey with a beginning and an end. The wise like an Enoch, walk with and in the wisdom of God. Enoch walked with God for three hundred years. The longer you walk with someone the more you know them. How much of God would you suppose Enoch did know having walked with him all those years? He must have known and loved God so much and to such an extent that he never gave up walking with him. Who are you walking with? God or men. Jesus or Satan? One who owns and knows the way to your destiny or one who is groping for his? You are foolish to follow someone who does not know the way to your destiny. For your destiny is strictly in the hands of God. If you mean to walk with God, then there is no dull moment with him. The king David was a wise man. He understood walking with God. He said, "You make known to me the path of life" (Ps 16:11b). God alone knows the path of life and is ever willing to show it to those who walk with him. And Jesus said "I am the way, and the truth, and the life..." (John 14:6). Go with Jesus and you will never be lost. As the way, He knows the way. He does not only know the way, but is willing to show the way and to go the way. No wonder He said, "No one comes to the Father except through me." He is the truth. As the truth, He will not deceive you, He will not mislead you and will not dump you, for He said anyone who comes after me I will in no wise cast away. And as the life, He will give you life and life in abundance and in its richness. He said that He comes to give us life and life in abundance. (John10:10). This Christmas Jesus comes to you, will you go to him and go with him through the rest and the whole of your life's journey. Will you let him show you the way through life and to your destiny? Would you let him be the guard and guide of your life? With him there is no waste, no loss and no regret. This Christmas, make him your friend and you have a guaranteed destiny maker to go with.

## **3. Walking with Him is Joy to the Believer-Ps 16:11b; Jn17:13b**

Wailing with Jesus brings fullness of joy and pleasure evermore. And this comes only with the awareness of why He made you. When you get to the conviction that God made you for himself, you will find fulfilment only in his presence and in doing his will. David the Psalmist said "in your presence there is fullness of joy and at your right hand are pleasures forevermore" (Psalm16:11b). Discovering his purpose for yourself, remaining in his presence and doing his will ushers peace and joy into

your life. Anytime you find yourself away from his presence and acting outside his will, you become like a fish pulled out of its natural habitat- the water for which it specially shaped of God. Out there and without him, everything about your person will begin to change. Your thoughts will begin to change, your words will begin to change, your actions will begin to change, your attitude and habits will begin to change. You were specially made for communion with God. You will find yourself a misfit away from him as the fish is a misfit on the land. Shaped for God, nothing ephemeral will give you peace, joy and fulfillment. Enormous wealth and material possessions will not, affluence and influence will not, position will not, education will not and neither would power and authority do it. Just as the fish which finds itself on land will never be happy until it finds its way back to the sea and in the water, so will you ever be miserable without Christ in you and you in him. Because you were made for fellowship with him, for as long as you keep from his presence, you deny yourself abundance of life, peace, fulfillment and joy everlasting. You may try to throw yourself out of Christ, but he will never move out of you. Remember that He will never cast away any who comes to him. He is ever at the door of every seeking heart and especially hearts that do not know him yet. And because He is always there, just one positive response to his knock and He is right in there and with you. He is so mindful of you that He is as close to you as a single prayer. Just whisper your need of him in your heart and life, and He is right there. When He enters, sadness escapes and joy floods in. When He enters lingering displeasure takes flight, while pleasures evermore swiftly enter. His entrance is fullness of joy replacing emptiness of life. The first Christmas deliberately ushered him in that you may have within and in you fullness of joy. So says John in John 17:13b.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

Jesus is here right now. Can you feel his presence? This Christmas, are you in his presence? Are you dining and wining with him? Are you having the fullness of his pleasure within you? Are you swimming in joy everlasting which He alone is the source?

May I encourage you to:

1. Never mind, today Jesus is set to smile on you.
2. Go with him that you will never be lost.
3. Know that walking with Jesus heads and lands you into pleasure everlasting.
4. Know that when Jesus smiles on you sadness takes flight and joy sets in.
5. Know that wise people let Jesus into their life and walk with him their whole lifetime. Foolish people don't and suffer double lost-loss on earth and loss in heaven.
6. Be wise and enjoy double gain-joy on earth and joy in heaven.

**HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A GREAT NEW YEAR TO COME.**