

**QUIET TIME G/UI/DE
FOR Tuesday 8/12/08
FROM JACK MILLWOOD**

Greeting:

What picks you up when you are down? When you are having a bad day what can put a smile on your face? When my kids were little, preschool age, I drove them to school every day. At first it was obviously just my oldest daughter and myself in the car. Then it was the two girls, then my son joined us. I use to take that time alone with them as a time just to let them know how much I loved them. I used to sing a song to them. Only my children, and then only at preschool age, would sit still while I sang to them. I would sing a song I had learned from my grandfather. I would reach over and hold their hand and sing, *"You are my sunshine, my only sunshine. You make me happy when skies are gray. You'll never know dear how much I love you. Please don't take my sunshine away."* For my son, to keep it manly, we changed the words to *"You are my buddy, my little buddy..."* When my oldest daughter had her son of course she started singing the song to him. I guess they have kept it up, which is pretty neat in itself. Maybe somewhere back there a special memory resonates in her mind. I must admit I have sung it to them as grown kids too. The other day my daughter was telling me about a particularly hard day she had. It was not a good day at work; we have all had those, have we not? On top of that she had a headache. When she picked her son up at the day care he noticed in the car that his momma was not her usual chippy self. He is three, in a month, so he is talking and observant now. He said, *"Mommy what is wrong. You not happy?"* She simply told him she was not feeling good. Then it happened. He blurted out, *"I make you better mommy."* All of a sudden at full volume he blasts into his own personal rendition of *"You are my sunshine..."* My daughter later had him sing it for me and I must tell you he can rattle the roof with it. When he finished she was almost in tears. She said *"Honey that was so sweet."* He interrupted and said *"Momma you are supposed to say "Yeah!"* She then broke out in a huge smile from ear to ear and said *"Yeah!"* while clapping her hands for him. He then looked at her and said. *"See Mommy, I made you better!"* I can tell you that it sure made me better just to hear it. My daughter said he surely had a way of making the clouds roll away from her day. It is amazing what can put a smile on your face. These are tough times for some people. One of our members got some bad news about his job this past week. It means a significant reduction in salary. He went home and was thinking and praying about it just to himself. That night he heard one of kids yell, *"Look at all this money."* He went in to see what was going on. There stood one of his kids with a nickel in one hand and a dime in the other. That child was saying, *"Look at all the money."* He said he was reminded right then that it does not really take a lot to make a person happy. When you are down and struggling what puts a smile back on your face? For the psalmist it was his relationship to the Lord and what God says to him in his word. The "Daleth" section of Psalm 119 lets us in on his thoughts.

Scripture for today:

Psalm 119: 25 "I am laid low in the dust; preserve my life according to your word. 26 I recounted my ways and you answered me; teach me your decrees. 27 Let me understand the teaching of your precepts; then I will meditate on your wonders. 28 My

soul is weary with sorrow; strengthen me according to your word. 29 Keep me from deceitful ways; be gracious to me through your law. 30 I have chosen the way of truth; I have set my heart on your laws. 31 I hold fast to your statutes, O LORD; do not let me be put to shame. 32 I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free.”

Life Application:

It was a tough time for the psalmist. He said, *“I am laid low in the dust;... O LORD; do not let me be put to shame.”* It seems lately like I have been talking to a lot of people who are going through difficult times. I have spoken to several who tell me about a house purchase that has backfired with the state of the housing market. I have spoken to two individuals in the last two days who have lost their jobs. I have heard several talk about how the economy has cut into their earning power. It is heart breaking to hear several people talk about relationships that are struggling and in need of rejuvenation. When you are struggling; what puts a smile back on your face? Sure kids, like those mentioned above, can temporarily lighten our day but how do we really get through the genuine struggles of life? Yesterday I listened to a gentleman describe his present situation. It was almost devastating. He is really in a very difficult set of circumstances. Job, house, wife, and kids, are all mounting up. Yet he sat there and said to me, *“Jack, God fills every void in my lie. I can make it because of him. He loves me so much and I love him so much. I would die for him, I love him so much.”* I watched Psalm 119 fleshed out in his eyes. God was teaching him through his struggles. God was walking with him and instructing him all along the way. Like the psalmist said, *“My soul is weary with sorrow; strengthen me according to your word.”* It is God’s word that gives us strength to face life. His promises are sure and steady. The Psalmist gives us good advice by his own example. He said, *“I recounted my ways and you answered me; teach me your decrees. Let me understand the teaching of your precepts; then I will meditate on your wonders.”* When in the midst of trials we seek God’s face and his instructions we then make a commitment to follow him regardless. The psalmist said, *“I have chosen the way of truth; I have set my heart on your laws. I hold fast to your statutes.”* The truth is that the only way to make it through the difficulties of life is to anchor ourselves onto a rock that will hold us during the storm. God’s word will guide us through the maze of difficulties and perils that the storms lay at our feet. When the clouds are so thick that we cannot see the horizon in which to find our path his word is steady and consistent and will be our guide.

Spiritual exercise:

If you find your self struggling do not let your faith wither under the pressure. Do not let your compass waver. Let God’s word be your beacon and guide. Let your relationship with Jesus be the thing that not only keeps a smile on your face but hope in your heart. God’s promises are sure. They are not controlled by a fickle economy. God is the anchor for your soul. He is the navigator of your pursuits. You will find in him an ever present source of courage and hope. Do not let the struggles drive you from him. Let them drive you to him. You need him and his word now more than ever before. You are not alone on board this ship. Your captain is at the wheel. Take time today to see his face in the midst of the spray from the stormy sea. His eyes are steady and his gaze is upon you. Then like

the psalmist you will be able to say, “*I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free.*”

Thought for the day.

God is the “sunshine” of my soul!