

## **Attitude is Contagious**

Nicholis Christakis, a sociologist  
Recently conducted a study  
From data collected from 5000 people.

In his study he concludes  
That happiness is contagious.

In all seriousness, like the flu  
Happiness has the ability  
To spread from person to person.

If you surround yourself with happy people  
Their positivity will rub off . . .  
You are happier because of them.

The same is true if you're the happy one.  
People feel better just being around you.

Christakis' study shows  
That while 50% of our happiness  
Stems from external and genetic circumstances

The remaining half of personal happiness  
Is through choice.

For the most part  
You get to choose  
Whether you're going to be happy or not.

Am I going to be a grump today  
And make everyone around me miserable?

Or am I going to be happy  
And brighten my day

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And be a positive influence  
For others around me?

It will help you and everyone around you  
If you choose to be a positive person.

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Church should be like that . . .

A place where you feel better by just showing up.

A place where positive energy just oozes from people

A place where stresses and anxieties  
Can be set aside

And you can dwell  
In the midst of affirmative spiritual energy.

The source of which is the presence of Jesus.

It won't happen . . .  
Unless you help to make it happen.

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Your attitude is shaped by your perspective.

Look at Paul's attitude.

He writes a letter filled with positivity.

He's under house arrest  
Awaiting trial and eventual execution.

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And really if anyone is justified  
In having a "woe-is-me" attitude

It'd be the Apostle Paul . . . wouldn't you think?

But instead of spewing negativity  
He's praising the Lord!

I mean do you see the irony in that?

He's the one in prison . . . and yet  
He's the one doing the encouraging.

Paul uses the words *joy* and *rejoicing*  
16 times in four chapters.

The whole of his letter can be summed up in 4:4

***Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always.  
I will say it again: Rejoice!***

So how is it that Paul can maintain a joyful attitude?

It's found in his relationship to Jesus Christ.

Filled with joy  
Because of what God has done in Christ Jesus

Paul writes to the church in Philippi,  
Simply to encourage a discouraged church.

He writes as a pastor to his congregation.

His words are words that any minister

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Would speak to his/her beloved congregation

***Philippians 1:3-6 CEV***

***Every time I think of you, I thank my God. <sup>4</sup> And whenever I mention you in my prayers, it makes me happy. <sup>5</sup> This is because you have taken part with me in spreading the good news from the first day you heard about it. <sup>6</sup> God is the one who began this good work in you, and I am certain that he won't stop before it is complete on the day that Christ Jesus returns.***

I reread these words because they are mine  
To you, brothers and sisters of West Richmond.

I'm optimistic about our life together . . .  
Excited at the Spirit I find here . . .  
Positive about the work you're doing . . .

I'm glad to be a part of this great work!

My hope is that, if we are not already . . .  
We will become enthusiastic  
About our future here at West Richmond.

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I'm sure, like any church  
You've had your share of problems.

You're not alone.

Don't let it get you down.

There are always new horizons

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To those who are remain positive.

Winston Churchill once said: *The pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity;  
But the optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.*

Your perspective will determine your attitude.

I have said this before  
And you will most likely hear me say it again.

A negative Christian is a contradiction in terms.

Knowing Christ Jesus and his love for us  
Knowing the provisions God gives us daily  
How can we not keep from singing?

Yet many of our lives do not exhibit  
The joy of our salvation.

~~

All good and healthy churches  
Have one thing in common . . . enthusiasm.

And enthusiastic churches are inviting churches.

They have a constant stream of visitors on Sunday.

Their positivity rubs off.

Their attitude is contagious.

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And so the question before us today is this:  
How will our attitude be as a church?

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The cool thing is, we get to choose.

Will I go to church complaining  
About everything and everyone . . .  
Dragging everyone down around me?  
Or will I go to church and choose to be positive  
And convey joy and happiness?

If we do the latter  
It will make a huge difference  
In the health of our congregation.

Your joy in Christ will be contagious.

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If you want to be like Paul  
Who can be happy in a prison cell  
Consider these five steps:

1. Be enthusiastic about your church: Enthusiasm is contagious and will draw others to the church.
2. Associate with positive people: If you want to stay positive, stay away from people that drag you and the church down.
3. Smile: smiling makes it all better. Smiling releases endorphins and serotonin, which are known as the feel good hormones. Smile at the wonder and beauty of God's grace. Smile at the rich fellowship in the life of the community.
4. Change your thoughts: Positive thoughts lead to positive attitude, while negative thoughts lead to negative attitude.

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5. Stop complaining: limit your complaints. Whining and griping about anything and everything will not create a positive attitude. When you complain you spread negativity. Be constructive in your criticism.

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I acknowledge that at times  
    There are problems to be solved  
        And they can be quite challenging.  
But like a good, healthy marriage  
    It takes communications, compromise  
        Loyalty and dedication

And above all it takes a fierce kind of love  
    To persevere through the hard times.

Your determined hard work will pay off  
    And you will be better because of it.

~~

Let's begin our partnership in a spirit of positivity.

Let's be open to the leading of God's Holy Spirit.

Let's view our future together  
    As an opportunity to continue the good work  
        Of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We have a mission and a ministry.

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Please we don't be this kind of church:

This preacher was trying to encourage his church.

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*He said, "This church is like a crippled man who needs to get up and walk under the power of Jesus." The congregation replied, "Let it walk preacher, let it walk."*

*Then the preacher, with a bit more enthusiasm said, "This church, like Elijah on Mount Carmel, has got to get up and run." The congregation with a bit more enthusiasm replied, "Let it run preacher, let it run."*

*Then the preacher, with as much enthusiasm as he could muster shouted, "This church has got to mount up on wings like eagles and fly." The congregation could not contain itself any longer but shouted, "Let it fly preacher, let it fly."*

*The preacher then added, "Now if this church is going to fly it's going to take MONEY."*

*The congregation replied with no enthusiasm, "Then let it walk preacher, let it walk."*

Don't be this kind of church!

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Only God knows the future of this church.

Let your enthusiasm and joy be contagious

Not just towards one another

But with those outside of this congregation.

Let them feel they're missing out

By not being involved at West Richmond.

The Apostle Paul from his prison cell in Rome

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Did all he could to inspire his church.

Let us do the same.

***Philippians 2:1-2 CEV So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, <sup>2</sup> complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.***

Be a happy church!

But don't hoard your happiness.

Extend it to others.

Let your joy draw people to Jesus Christ.

For the Spirit of Christ is always positive

Always encouraging, always comforting

Always loving, welcoming, and inviting.

Seek always to be hopeful and enthusiastic.

Spread the joy of being in Christ

To any and every one you meet.

Your enthusiasm will rub off

Your attitude will be contagious

It's your choice!