

# “What Do You Feel?”

Luke. 1:39-45

What do you feel when you hear the Gospel, the word of God, the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ? John the Baptist, the unborn baby inside Elizabeth leaped for joy hearing the words of Mary. He knew that the Christ was in his midst.

What stirs within you when Christ is in your midst? Or do you feel anything at all? In reading the news articles surrounding the shootings at the school in Newtown, CT, it was said that the young man who killed all those people suffered from a disorder that caused him to feel no pain. He was completely numb physically. It is widely speculated that he was emotionally numb also.

I thought about my sermon I preached in October with the Russian scientist who hopes to be able to download human consciousness into a computer and you can live forever as a 3D hologram. The promise is that you live forever with no pain. To physically feel nothing will drive a man insane.

But what about you? When you hear the Word of God; when you hear the promise of the coming of Christ; when you hear the words of the Absolution and all your sin has been forgiven; what do you feel?

It is a terrible thing for the child of God who spiritually feels nothing. You hear the Word of God; you hear the call to repentance; your loved ones plead with you to take a different path; yet, you feel nothing. It is a terrible thing for your heart to be deceived by sin. As John says, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."

Your sin must be recognized or you are spiritually numb. This is why Jesus says, "When your brother sins against you, go and show him his sin, that he may repent, and you will have won your brother back."

It is a terrible thing to say we have no sin, and deceive ourselves, and avoid the truth. But there is good news. God, who is faithful and just, will forgive all your sin and cleanse you from all unrighteousness.

So many make the mistake of thinking that they are most comfortable when they are numb. This is why people get addicted to morphine or prescription pain medication or even alcohol. They want to be comfortably numb. There was a popular song by the band Pink Floyd with that as its title. The music tells the story of a man who, through drugs, alcohol, and emotionally closing everyone out, the refrain repeats "I have become comfortably numb."

Sin makes the children of God uncomfortable. Sin has made you uncomfortable. And our goal is to always find comfort and

contentment. If you say you have no sin, you deceive yourself. As a child of God, when you hear the Word of God, you cannot feel nothing. You will feel remorse for what you have done when you are convicted in your heart by the Law of God. You will feel the pangs of guilt and sorrow for you sin. In the church, we call this contrition – which leads to repentance.

And the repentant child of God hears the sweet words of the Gospel. Martin Luther said that when he first understood the nature of the forgiveness of God for the first time; when he finally understood that the righteousness of Christ had been placed upon him; he said it was as if the gates of heaven had been opened to him. He found true comfort and contentment.

When you hear the Word of God, what do you feel? If you feel nothing, then you are spiritually numb, and it is a terrible thing. It will ultimately lead to shame and disaster. I pity the myriad of souls who feel nothing when they hear the joy of the Gospel.

John the Baptist, the unborn baby inside Elizabeth leaped for joy hearing the words of Mary. He knew that the Christ was in his midst. When you hear the voice of God spoken in His Word, what do you feel?

The body and blood of Christ Himself will soon be in our midst through the miracle of the sacramental union and communion we are blessed to share. What do you feel?

Don't get me wrong, faith is not an emotion. I am not talking about whipping up emotional excitement for the sake of having emotion. But faith and the Word of God bring forth emotion, because the promise of salvation is real. The joy of the Gospel; the hope of the resurrection is not something a child of God can hear and respond with nothing. A child of God cannot be indifferent toward God. Your Creator loved you so much that He sent His Son to be the child of Mary. Your Creator loved you so much that He offered the life of His own Son so that you will live forever in His eternal kingdom.

Anyone who believes this greatest of all Good News cannot live life comfortably numb. So I ask you, "What do you feel?" What do you feel when you hear the children of our church tell the Christmas story on Christmas Eve? What do you feel when we share the light of the Christ candle and wish one another a Merry Christmas? What do you feel as you look into the eyes of your spouse and your children as you share the joy of the Word of God and the light of salvation?

John the Baptist, the unborn baby inside Elizabeth leaped for joy hearing the words of Mary. He knew that the Christ was in his midst. When you know that the Christ is in your midst, what do you feel? Amen.