

Title Shepherd with Joy
Speaker Ivan Beachy
Speaker's Residence Free Union, VA
Date Thursday, April 5th, 2011
Venue United Bethel Mennonite Church, Plain City, OH
Program Beachy Amish Mennonite Ministers' Meeting 2012
Transcriber Cory Anderson (www.beachyam.org)
About this document: *This transcript may be distributed freely. The sermon was transcribed during the live presentation and then later edited for clarity. The material presented is not necessarily endorsed by the above organization(s) or transcriber(s). The content of this transcript is not guaranteed, though every effort was made for accuracy and clarity.*

“I’ll be a friend to Jesus, I’ll just go wherever He sends me.” That’s the call of every undershepherd, the call we have from the Master. The intention of the message this evening is simply to bring encouragement and joy to your hearts in the call that God has placed upon your life. In that call, God gives us many opportunities, and He wants us to use those opportunities. As I begin, I give a confession. When they called, and whether I would take the message, my heart was not filled with joy. I was facing a very heavy workload. Add another one to that. I wondered, how will this be? The Lord has lifted my burden. This evening I’m excited about the fact of God’s provision, if we follow His plan. There are opportunities He gives along the way, as he calls us into the ministry. He gives us opportunities that happen in many ways, but some of you know what it is to go on a week of meetings. I don’t know what it does to my heart. It’s humbling to go and share with other people, and, well, I’ve got so many needs of my own. How can I go share the message? When you go and give yourself to study, God’s spirit comes upon you. What happens? It’s a cleansing of your heart, your own heart. I usually feel like I go home revived. My heart has been revived. That is what happens when we give ourselves to the Word in the call to the ministry, He gives us opportunity, concentration of God’s word to fall upon us, and there it does its cleansing. When you listen to these struggles of another, it strikes home. I bow my head, and say, wow. How am I going to help that person? I see myself like they said. We’re made of the same stuff, walk the same paths, and find the same answers. As we turn them to the Word of God, God turns them to the truth, which heals and cleanses. When another verbalizes his goals, it encourages us the same.

Turn to Ps. 126:5-6. *Reads verses.* Can you see the man, that bag of seed, and he’s going out and spreading that seed, and as he is doing that, he is weeping. Why? Because some of this seed is not going to grow. Maybe it is going to be destroyed, maybe a famine. He goes forth and spreads that seed, sewing it, and as he is going it, he’s weeping. But the promise of God’s Word is, My Word shall not return void, but accomplish that I please. But there are results. He that sows in tears shall reap in tears. There is joy in reaping a harvest. Psalm 35. There’s something about the light of a new day that brings hope, opportunity, brings light, if you’ve had a long night of restlessness, perhaps sleeplessness, because of a burden, or a problem you’re facing, or message preparation. I don’t know what’s happening, maybe I’m getting older, I struggle more and more in getting a message together, and sometimes it just takes me all night, and there is something about the morning that brings hope, Joy comes in the morning. God wants us to give us that joy

in the morning.

I've divided the message into three parts. I want to consider first of all the privilege, then the work, then consider the blessing. Consider the privilege. In 2 Timothy, I want to read what Paul gave to the pastor, particularly, in 2 Timothy 1:6-10. *Reads verses.* In the morning when you go out and look at the holes, I like to take a stick and start to stir around. Is there any life and possibility of a fire being kindled? Underneath there are some ambers, you stir up, put something on it, and after while you have a fire. Here, it says, stir up the ambers, stir up what has been suppressed, or has kind of dwindled because of time. Stir it up and allow it to rekindle into a bright flame.

Think back to how it was when you were first ordained: overwhelmed, obviously. After you got over that and started thinking about the call of God on your life, what should be my goals? And you began to define those goals. Where are you in relation to that? It is true, that we get tired in the work, but I trust we will not get tired of the work. There is a huge difference. Don't get tired of the work of the Lord. Those rewards and those results are not always seen very quickly, but they will come. Paul, here, reminds young Timothy, stir up the gift God has placed in you. *Reads verses.* He's a part of that Gospel to you, placed that in your heart and sharing that good news to others. Look at your record, it's not because of our record of how good we are that God has called us to this ministry. In 1 Timothy 1, Paul says about himself... *reads verses.*

Paul says, in spite of my record, and this is my record, God has called me and entrusted to me the good news, the message that changes men's heart, and has counted me faithful to be one of his laborers. When I was ordained bishop, this filtered back to me. One of my friends from long ago, said, "He, a bishop?" I have a record that I'm not proud of, but in spite of that record, God has touched my heart through His grace and has changed me. Now today, I stand as one of His under-shepherds, called to take the mantle of Christ, and minister to the people in His love. When He calls you to that, He gives you the rope that you need. We have a picture of what a shepherd should look like. He gives us the robe of righteousness, not ours, His. He pours into us His grace, gives us His tools, the Word of God. Not the whole truckload of tools. It's very simple tools. He pours his Spirit into us, His grace, enablement, and says, I'll go with you. We'll walk in His path. Peter says, we walk in His steps. Isn't that amazing? I'm intrigued by the guard at the tomb of the unknown in DC. I have had the privilege of going there many times. Many have been there. The honor guard at the Arlington cemetery has been guarding it since July 2, 1937. They take pride in the fact that for every second since then, there has been a guard on duty, since 1937. It's rain or shine, heat or cold. It takes rigorous training to become a guard. More than 80% that apply are rejected. It's only a handful. Since 1950, since they began to give the badge of honor that they have served at the unknown, there have only been 500 given since 1950. It's the second highest honor that the military gives in the United States. It's pretty stiff requirements. I wouldn't qualify on a number of counts. You have to be between 5'11" and 6'4". Your waist has to be 30". You must be able to perform flawlessly several different marches, and it must be under scrutiny and observation, perfection. Yet, they're honored to do it. They're on 24 hour, off 24 hours, on 24 hours, off 24 hours. There is a contingent of men on that 24 hour period, but when they walk the mat, it's an honor. A guard spends between 6 and 8 hours to get his uniform prepared before he goes out to walk the mat, before he takes his shift.

By the way, how many hours do you spend to get your message ready, that God wants to give to His people? Is it worth eight hours? It's worth more than that. If those men are willing to prepare their suit for eight hours to walk that mat, it is worth taking the time to prepare a message for the people of God, people that are hungry, people that want truth, direction, it's worth it to spend the time, invest the time it takes. Jesus said, many are called, but few are chosen. I'd like to read to you the sentinels' creed for the tomb of the unknown. *Reads creed.* 99 words, they say, this is what we are about. Some of this sounds familiar, as you start off reading what they say, it sounds like a minister of the Gospel, who is called to represent Jesus. What an honor, in spite of our record. Let's move on.

I want to consider the work. 1 Timothy 3:1. *Reads verse.* It's work, brethren, it's a lot of work, but it's a good work. 1 Cor. 9:15-17. *Reads verses.* The sense I get is, if I do the work of ministry willingly, there is a reward. But if I don't do it willingly, it's my responsibility. It becomes an obligation, and it sometimes feels very heavy. There have been times I have gone into the pulpit with a feeling of obligation, I just want to get this behind me. I'm ashamed, but that's been the truth. When you get done, you have a weariness if that has been the case. When you are willing to enter the pulpit with a fire burning in your heart, somehow when you are done, you are not tired as before. God has ways of compensating, overruling our own abilities and giving us what we need. If I do this thing willingly, I have a reward. 1 Peter 5:2. *Reads verse.* Feed your flock willingly.

I've never been a real farmer. I've enjoyed sheep, cattle, some pigs, and things like that. There is something about it, I enjoy standing, watching, and listening when cattle or sheep come to the trough to feed. Or think of it, if you are living where it is dry, the grass is brown and brittle, little of it, and the cattle are starting to fall off, not looking as nice anymore, and you need to do something about that to keep up their shape, to keep them healthy. I remember telling our sons, young, still in school, boys, let's get the machetes and go to Scotland Halfmoon and we're going to cut grass. David Hostetler's had a place that was swampy. We go out there and get grass. We stuffed the pick-up full until it was to the top. It was dry season, warm. We opened the back door, and the cows came running. We got that grass out, and the cows were around there, what a lovely sound! They were chomping away at that grass. It was a delight to my ears, because I knew they were being satisfied. For every pastor, it should be a delight when the flock is sitting there and they are just drinking it in, and you see that they are getting it. There's been times when they didn't get it. Why didn't they get it? My heart wasn't prepared. I hadn't cut the grass. The challenge is, cut the grass. Get it ready, and then feed it to them, and let them enjoy that grass.

It took sacrifice to go over there and cut that grass, but when we were done and watched the cattle enjoy that, we didn't think about sacrifice. It was the joy of seeing them satisfied. There are things that require sacrifice. Some time ago, I was asked to share what experiences were like on the mission field. What were things that may have been something you regret? The thing I regret is that I didn't do better. It's not the sacrifice, but the soul you helped to God, the delight of a man who comes to the Lord after 20 years of people ministering to his heart, then the joy of being able to share the first communion and wash feet with him, a tremendous joy; they that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

Well, what a work. One more passage concerning the work of the ministry. 2 Timothy 4:1-5.

Reads verses. I like that last phrase, do the work of an evangelist and make full proof of your ministry. An evangelist has good news that others need to know. The world needs to know, and it is burning in your heart, and you are willing to share it with others. There are times you need to reprove, but do the work of an evangelist. What about the rewards? I'm borrowing some of these from Howard Bean in the book, "A Good Minister." In one of the last chapters in the book, what are the rewards of a minister? The smile of God's approval. We have that in Matthew 25:1.

Reads verse. The joy of thy Lord is preceded by faithful discharge of responsibility. Faithful discharge of responsibility. If we are going to enjoy the rewards and blessings, it requires faithfulness on our part. We've heard about faithfulness in these meetings. There's the joy of helping others. When a struggling person, the light goes on and the radiance comes on his face, and they now understand, and they come back later, and say, thank you for that counsel. There's joy that comes out there. You know sometimes the work of the minister becomes time consuming. It becomes taxing. No doubt, many people have no idea what all is included in that. You also have the benefit of the joy of seeing a life change. That's been an exciting thing in the ministry. There is another one: the abundance of grace. In 2 Cor., when he talks to them about their giving. 2 Cor. 9:8-?. *Reads verses.* Joy, abundance, when God pours his grace into our hearts, and we are able to serve out that grace, there is thanksgiving that comes. In 2 Cor. 12:9, after Paul had come to God in his prayer, and he requested to the Lord, to take it away, whatever the issue was, and the Lord came, and said, Paul, my grace is sufficient. Have you found God's grace sufficient for you? How does God's grace come? Did you on the night of your ordination, get one huge bundle of grace, and God said, this is it, make it last? No. Somehow it comes one day at a time. Right when we need it. My heart was feeling burdened. Today, the burden lifted. I've been challenged by these messages in this meeting. I told Elsie, I don't even know if I can preach this message. Bill says he's a lousy bishop. You're looking at #2. But God gives grace to change my heart, and wants to pour His grace into my heart. Remember the manna of the Old Testament. You know, God spoke to Moses, tell the people they can go out in the morning, get their bread and food, and six days a week it is going to be there. God's grace is there, every day, as we need it. I love that. Another benefit, or blessing, and it is a joyous part of the shepherding, that is the development of the character of Christ in my heart. Let me say, we want to be more like Christ, everyday, more and more of Him. How is that going to happen? He takes us through difficulties, He takes us through situations, that we don't know what to do, and we turn to God, and look at the Scripture, and see the character of Christ, how He responded, and we develop in our hearts, that same longing.

In conclusion, I want to bring a few verses, a sampling that speaks about joy. Alvin Stoltzfus, in one of our last board meetings, shared a devotional that stripped my heart in a special way. Psalm 16:11. *Reads verse.* He went on to say, you find joy in the presence of God. When we get away from it, we find that heaviness. There are other Scriptures. John 15:10-11. It talks about joy in obedience in doing the will of the father, in doing the will of the Shepherd. Children that are obedient are free and happy and enjoying life. When they have not been obedient, there is guilt that comes. There is joy in following the commands of Christ. Paul says, there is joy in tribulation. 2 Cor. 4. We don't normally find joy in tribulation, but the reason we can find it, is because it brings us full circle back to God. In thy presence is fullness of joy. He allows difficulties to come our way. In that difficulty, we bow our head and seek his face. Thank you, Alvin, for sharing that. Nehemiah said, the joy of the Lord is your strength. He said that to the people of Israel. They read the law and were weeping, when he said those words; the Levites and

priests got busy, and told the people, put away the heaviness, and break out in singing. There was wonderful revival. We must have the joy of the Lord in our hearts. Do we sing because we have joy or joy when we sing? My wife has a way of singing the day away, in spite of her handicap. Thanksgiving time I was asked to share a message with people in Harrisonburg, their Thanksgiving service. As I spoke, I said, in everything give thanks. My wife reminded me, that it says, *for* everything gives thanks. That's one of the secrets in overcoming the discouragement of overcoming a handicap that is going to be for the rest of her life. That just breaks into my heart. In everything give thanks; it prepares us and enables us to be thankful for it. As we are thankful, there is joy. Thankfulness and joy.

Just a few verses. Phil. 4:4. *Reads verse*. Paul, in Acts 20:24, *reads verse*. By God's grace, when I come to the end, and maybe I'm faltering, hardly able to go on, but come to the Good Shepherd, I want to still have the robe of righteousness He gave me, the tools he gave me, and bring it back to Him in joy, and kneel before Him, and say, I am an unworthy servant, and present the flock to Him. It is His flock, we are stewards of that flock, and we are called to lead it with joy. What a privilege. Let's not lose sight of that. I leave you with these words. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling...Amen."