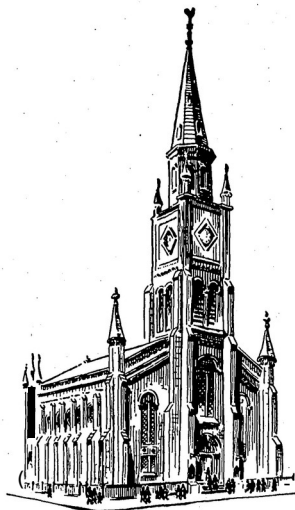


Prayer: Our Heavenly Father, we ask Thee so to bless us all that the message of, ~~joy~~ ^{joyous} Christianity may wing its way into our hearts, casting out the darkness and all the dismal things that have frustrated the life in us, to the end that we may live in fullness and that every day with gratitude we may say, "It's good to be alive." And for this we give Thee thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

It's Good To Be Alive



DR. NORMAN VINCENT PEALE

MARBLE COLLEGIATE CHURCH

FIFTH AVENUE AT 29th STREET • NEW YORK, N.Y.

Especially prepared for
FOUNDATION FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING
:Paw/Ing, 'New York

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*This is a recorded transcription of a
sermon delivered extemporaneously
in the Marble Collegiate Church.*

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gether with others, make possible the world-wide distribu-
tion of Dr. Peale's message of practical Christian living.



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the wise counsel of his great parishioner. "Mr. Carlyle,"
he said, "I want to do some good in this community. I
want to do something good here in the name of the Lord.
What would you think is the most important thing a
minister, could do in this community?"

Carlyle was silent for a while, poking the fire. Then he
said, "What this community needs more than all else is
a man who knows God other than by hearsay. Get to know
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God is the Author of Life. God gave us life. God is
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wise, get smart, get sophisticated: know God. The way to
know God is through Jesus Christ, for He is the way to
God. And when you take Jesus Christ into your life and
He takes hold of you, you will have every day of your life
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friends, is the truth. I guarantee it.

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Great people do not allow the vicissitudes of life to defeat them. They have something within them that rises victoriously above the losses and disappointments. "Incline your ear . . . come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live." Whatever comes, life is good. And the thing that makes a person most aware of its goodness is to know God. Leo Tolstoy, one of the greatest men of letters who ever lived, said, "To know God is to live."

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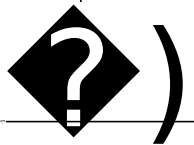
IT'S GOOD TO BE ALIVE

Scripture: Isaiah 55:3; John 10:10

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Back in 1925 I bought a little book which has been a blessing to me through all these years. It is a book of poetry. I have never been much of a devotee of poetry. The kind of poetry that is in this book is rugged man poetry, because the men who wrote the poems were men: John Oxenham, Edwin Markham (whom I had the privilege of knowing personally), Rupert Brooke, Robert W. Service. Service published his poems under the title *The Song of the Yukon*. He lived for years in the Yukon region, and in his poems there are great dizzy valleys between hills rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun. There are enormous snow-clad peaks scraping the sky. There is dazzling white snow. There are dog trains moving across the great white wilderness. There are rivers



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The summer - no sweeter was ever;
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The freshness, the freedom, the farness -
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It is a magnificent expression of a man who found that it is good to be alive.

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when the water at Cincinnati didn't rise as high as Fourth Street, so that people went around in boats. It caused some people trouble, as is always the case. But we live amidst the elements and I feel sorry for some soft people who would wish the elements away. God put them here and here they are to stay.

Then we went to the Columbus airport to take a plane back to New York. And it was about the lowest ceiling I've ever saw. A man asked me, "You don't think they'll take off in this, do you?"

"Oh," I said, "I'm sure they'll take off. The question is how it will be in New York when they have to land. That's the problem. They don't mind taking off, but landing is something else again."

At any rate, we boarded a big jet plane. Nobody was disturbed about the clouds overhead. Why? Because they knew that the capacity for altitude was built into the plane. We took off. A half minute after the plane left the ground it was enveloped in impenetrable soup. And we continued in the soup for three or four minutes. Then came that marvelous drama when the sharp, upthrust nose of the plane emerges from the trailing clouds into a scene of indescribable wonder. The sun, which my wife and I

hadn't seen for three whole days, was still there. It was setting in great splendor, sending long shafts of light, making the clouds look pinkish and tufted like a great carpet. And above in the heavens, clear and blue, were the eternal stars. Most everyone has witnessed this phenomenon. But to me it is always thrilling because I see in it a symbol of man's victory over depression.

It is a great thing to have altitude built into an aircraft, but it is a greater thing to have altitude built into the heart and the mind and the soul of a human being, so that

he is not the victim of cloud and gloom and darkness. And it is this which enables him to say, "It's good to be alive." Incline your ear, and come unto me," says the Lord in the 55th chapter of Isaiah, "hear, and your soul shall live." Now we live in a day and age when many people are trying to find the "good life." And there are certain

sophisticated, cynical people who teach that the good life is to be found in casting religious standards to the winds and just generally kicking over the traces. These teachers are false guides. They lead people only to misery and degradation. Jesus Christ says, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." And He makes good on His promise because people who incline their ear and come to Him develop one of the basic qualities needed for being able all their lives to say, "How good life is!" He builds into them a continuing sensitivity. He builds into them an ageless quality, so that they never grow old in their minds, but have what the child has: a sense of wonder.

Have you grown dull and dopey? Have you ceased to be thrilled as you were when you were fifteen? Make a list of things that thrilled you when you were fifteen. See how many of them still thrill you. That will give you a good indication of how alive you are today.

I have a cousin, a man in his sixties, who is now retired and lives in a suburb of Chicago, where I recently stayed overnight with him. He was a banker for many years, but never let the banking business "get him." When I look at him I marvel, saying to myself, "I know he's past sixty-five, but he certainly doesn't act it." I've seldom seen a man so thrilled in his whole attitude toward life.

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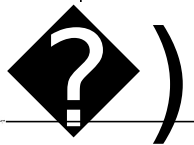
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he replied, "The greatest line I ever wrote is this: 'He at
least believed in soul; he was very sure of God.'"

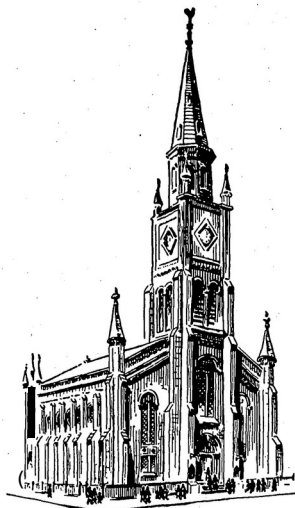
God is the Author of Life. God gave us life. God is
Himself life. And if you know God then the joyous ecstasy
of life will tingle within you. If you want to live not half
alive, not three-quarters alive, but fully alive, then get
wise, get smart, get sophisticated: know God. The way to
know God is through Jesus Christ, for He is the way to
God. And when you take Jesus Christ into your life and
He takes hold of you, you will have every day of your life
the joyous feeling that it's good to be alive! This, my
friends, is the truth. I guarantee it.



n

Prayer: Our Heavenly Father, we ask Thee so to bless us all that the message of, ~~joy~~ ^{joyous} Christianity may wing its way into our hearts, casting out the darkness and all the dismal things that have frustrated the life in us, to the end that we may live in fullness and that every day with gratitude we may say, "It's good to be alive." And for this we give Thee thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

It's Good To Be Alive



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