

Grace Notes

Living in the Present

3.02.10



"This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."
Psalm 118:24

If you've read my story of how I forgave my dad (available on our web site) you are familiar with the name of my dear friend, Dr. David Rosenthal. What follows is something David gave me years ago in response to struggles I was going through at the time:

Tucked away in our subconscious minds is an idyllic vision. We see ourselves on a long trip that almost spans the continent. We're traveling by passenger train and out the windows we drink in the passing scene of cars on nearby highways, of children waving at a crossing, of cattle grazing on a distant hillside, of smoke pouring from a power plant, of row upon row of corn and wheat, of flatlands and valleys, of mountains and rolling hillsides, of city skylines and village halls, of biting winter and blazing summer, and cavorting spring and docile fall.

But uppermost in our minds is the final destination. On a certain day at a certain hour we will pull into the station. There will be bands playing and flags waving. And once we get there so many wonderful dreams will come true. So many wishes will be fulfilled and so many pieces of our lives will be neatly fitted like a complete jigsaw puzzle. How restlessly we pace the aisles, ...waiting, waiting, waiting for the station.

"When we reach the station that will be it!", we cry. Translation: *"When I start driving..., when I graduate..., when I put the last kid through college..., when I payoff my mortgage..., when I retire..., when (fill in the blank) then I will live happily ever after!"* However, sooner or later a sobering realization hits us like a hammer— there is no "station", no one place to arrive at once and for all. The station is only a dream. It constantly out-distances us. And we realize the true joy of life is not the *destination*, but the *trip*.

"Relish the moment" is a good motto, especially when coupled with Psalm 118:24— *"This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."* It isn't the burdens of today that drive men mad. Rather, it is regret over *yesterday*, or fear of *tomorrow*. Regret and fear are twin thieves who would rob us of *today*.

In his play *Our Town*, Thornton Wilder includes the line, *"Few people enjoy life while they're living it."* David Rosenthal reminded me later, *"Faith only works in the present. Why else do you think Satan works so hard to keep you regretting yesterday & fearing tomorrow?"*



Soli Deo Gloria, Nick