

Stories MADE NEW

Fall 2025

Yet I Will Rejoice in the Lord

Volume 6

Cleason Sensenig, Board Member

The word "rejoice" occurs in the KJV approximately 259 times in various ways. Here in the book of Habakkuk we find the prophet choosing to rejoice even in great fear and trembling. He was struggling with some of the most painful questions believers face.

Why does God permit evil among his people? How can God permit the more wicked to overcome those less evil than themselves? Habakkuk cries out to God because of the injustice that pollutes his society. The wicked surround and overwhelm the good so that the justice administered is perverted. In chapter 2, God answers Habakkuk and reveals that He does see the works of the wicked and that judgment will come in due time.

"But the LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him" (Hab 2:20). Then in Chapter 3:3-15 God gives Habakkuk a vision of His judgments looking back across history. Stunned, the prophet slumps with trembling legs and fear gripping him of the trouble that was to come upon the land and his people.



Here Habakkuk is met with reality: even though all the material things and possessions which people take joy in will be gone: the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be on the vine; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: "Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon high places" (vs 18-19).

To rejoice in the Lord when things are going good is one thing. To rejoice in the middle of fear and impending invasion of a great enemy, like they feared Babylon is another.

To rejoice in the Lord is a choice. Even when there is fear and uncertainty on the horizon we can rejoice in the Lord because we know Him and his character. He is on his throne, and he sees when his children are hurting. To rejoice in times of trouble shows we trust our heavenly Father, and we know he will never forsake his own.

Can we rejoice in the Lord with the level of confidence Habakkuk did?

Vision
To bring young women who are struggling into fulfillment and purpose in **Jesus Christ.**

Mission
To help young women work through life-dominating challenges.

To provide loving nurture, discipleship, and care.

To assist in learning the value of self-discipline and intentional living in a structured family-like setting.

To inspire a vision for and an understanding of the joy of serving others.

Rachel graduated in August



Stories Made New has been developed especially for young women who support the 1963 Mennonite Confession of Faith.

We desire to see these young women brought into spiritual freedom and life in Jesus Christ.

Please pray for this ministry to our Anabaptist communities!

Stories Made New operates under the Board of Directors and advisory committee. Names and affiliations are listed on the back page.

The School of Christ

Ernest Witmer, Administrator

Central to Christian ministry is that we are students of Christ ourselves as we minister to others—that we too are still learning Him (not just about Him, or from Him, or of Him) but that we are learning HIM; that we are being superimposed upon to bear His image, to become little Christs: Christians. This fascination, indeed, this fixation with Christ is paramount to what it means to be Christian!

Last time we considered Sequence as the first crucial concept for life-giving ministry. This time let's look at the concept of **FOCUS**. This is the most crucial of the three: Sequence, **Focus**, and Balance. Hebrews 12:2 says we should be *"looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."* He must be the focus of our vision—always! Certainly, there are other concepts and concerns that are a part of our vision too, but they are in the periphery. For ministry to truly be Christian, **CHRIST** will be the center of it all.

The Paul Apostle said he *"refused to know anything among [the Corinthian believers] except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."* Now, as you know, this same apostle went on to write nearly half of the New Testament. Obviously, he wrote about many other things too. He wrote about marriage and families, he wrote about finances and how to manage money, he wrote about government, and he even wrote about how businessmen should conduct themselves in society. So it wasn't that he didn't think anything else mattered. It did (and still does). Yet he said that when it came right down to it by comparison, he really didn't care about anything else, *"save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."*

The early Anabaptist believers too at the time of the reformation felt the same way. They were a people who experienced about as much persecution for their faith as did the first Christians of the New Testament. In their writings, the Anabaptists reference the Outer Word and the Inner Word. The Outer Word referred to the black and white pages of Scripture—the book we call the Bible. The Inner Word was a reference to Jesus Christ whom the Bible says is the **Word** of God. John 1:1 says, *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* It goes on to say in verse 14, *"the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."* Furthermore, the Anabaptists believed the only value of the Outer Word was in its ability to lead them to the Inner Word.

So, the question we need to keep asking ourselves is this: Where am I focused? Am I truly focused upon Christ, or am I focused on some lesser issue, something quite removed from the bull's eye? Because the moment we focus somewhere else, then *"Jesus Christ and Him crucified"* becomes relegated to a mere peripheral part of our vision. For we cannot major on minors without minoring on majors.

When Jesus stood before Pilate, Pilate asked him, *"What is truth?"* This probably seemed to Pilate like an important question, that's why he asked it. But he was really missing the point. He asked the wrong question. We will never get the answers right if the questions are wrong. If Pilate had asked, *"Who is truth?"* he'd have discovered the answer standing right there in front of Him—Jesus, the sum-total of all truth.

Ephesians 4:21 says, *"...the truth is in Jesus."* Also, 1 Corinthians 3:11 says, *"Other foundation can no man lay than what is already laid, which is Jesus Christ."* The inversion of this Scripture reference is 2 Corinthians 11:3, where Paul says he's worried that, just like Eve was deceived by Satan, so the Corinthian believers' minds would be *"corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."*

Here at Stories Made New we engage a whole-of-life approach to helping young women find healing and purpose for living. We treasure and make use of solid **biblical counseling techniques**; we value an introspective understanding of **past human events** in the lives of these young women; we appreciate **the careful use of modern medicine**, and we even make use of **horseback riding** for its therapeutic benefit to the soul and spirit. (As the late President Reagan once said, "The outside of a horse is good for the inside of a man." We also believe it is good for these young women.) But in the center of it all is the absolute imperative that unless we learn Christ, we are not involved in Christian ministry!

T. Austin Sparks in his little booklet, *The School of Christ* says this: **"Problems in the Christian experience are always corrected by a fresh revelation of Jesus Christ."** Our desire is that everything we think we know about God, His word, and His people is subjected to Christ. We yield to His authority in affecting and correcting our hearts, our minds, and our actions—whenever and however He wants!

*Touched by a loving heart, wakened by kindness,
Chords that are broken will vibrate once more.*





Rachel's birthday dinner at the Cracker Barrel



Treasures in earthen vessels – Yvonne Witmer

That's me. I am earthy. I make mistakes, get frustrated, speak before taking time to listen, withdraw when I should reach out, judge when I should be curious.

But within me is treasure. God's Holy Spirit. I am not a failure, even though I make mistakes. I am not stupid even though I say stupid things.

God's design is treasure in earthen vessels. Do you know why? So that any power or good influence I have is obviously from God and not my own. I can't change people, but God can. I can't come up with the perfect words in a sticky situation, but God knows what will speak to that person's heart.

Praise God, He uses "earthen vessels," you and me. (2 Cor. 4:7)

2025 Christmas Open House

EVERYONE WELCOME!

Saturday, December 6th 4:00 — 8:00 p.m.

154 E Farmersville Road
Ephrata, PA 17522

Visit the mansion & ministry

Buy gifts, crafts, pastries, & other delectables made by the ladies

Enjoy coffee, tea, and finger foods



154 E. Farmersville Road
Ephrata, PA 17522

PRAISE REPORTS

- Kim Kleinsasser arrived in August as our newest mentor.
- Two new bedrooms and an extensive bathroom above the garage is now complete.
- Rachel graduated in August, completing a full year with us.
- A wonderful day and a half staff retreat in Sullivan County.
- Phase 1 of remodeling above the garage is done!

PRAYER ITEMS

- Continued Holy Spirit guidance for mentors and counselors in working with the young ladies.
- Sustaining prayers for the young ladies still on our waiting list.
- Phase 2 funding for three more bedrooms on the third floor; changes required for re-zoning; upgrading some old equipment.



Learn more at: www.storiesmadenew.org

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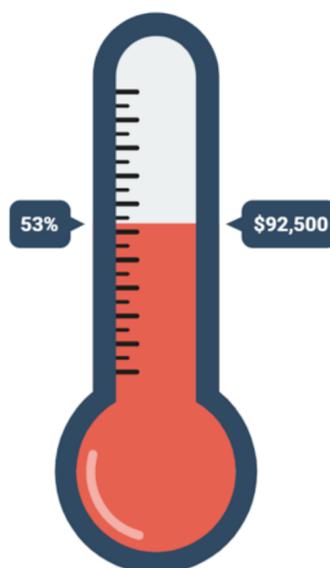
STORIES MADE NEW

154 E. Farmersville Rd, Ephrata, PA 17522

To give, go to: www.storiesmadenew.org/give

Tax-deductible receipts will be sent upon request.

GOAL: \$175,000



Funds still needed to cover
updates and remodeling costs
(see prayer item above).

\$82,500

In-kind donations of labor and
materials also accepted.