

## Joy

“I have told you this

So that my own joy may be in you

And your joy be complete”

Have you ever been in a supermarket when the public address system has burst into life with an incredibly enthusiastic announcement? This to let you know that aisle 3 is free. Or savoury crisps are to be sold at a bargain price. The voice is so happy, so kind, so charismatic, and deeply annoying.

Can you imagine being married to such a voice? Announcing the presence of cornflakes on the breakfast table. Or reporting with bubbling happiness the events of every day. When issues of minor or no significance are given headline status.

It would drive you mad.

This is not joy.

This is insanity.

Those who love each other do not need such excess

Those who love each other find comfort in gentle acceptance

Those who love each other do not need the aspiration of the commercial world

Proclaiming with the smile of a Cheshire Cat

That even the most basic is to be celebrated with exhilaration

The joy of Christ is greater than any such illusion

Do you know of this new phenomena of social media where pictures are posted of private lives? Images and captions proclaiming this is me happily on holiday. This is me dressed up for a night of sheer ecstasy. This is a photo of the wonderful meal I am about to eat. The grandchild who is above average intelligence. The beautiful home we have built in honour of our vanity. The half-truths and plain lies that create a sense of inadequacy.

It would drive you mad.

This is not joy.

This is insanity.

Those who love themselves do not need such excess

Those who love themselves find comfort in gentle acceptance

Those who love themselves do not need the aspiration of the commercial world

Proclaiming with the smile of a Cheshire Cat

That even the most basic is to be celebrated with exhilaration

The joy of Christ is greater than any such illusion

Are you aware that if you are fully satisfied the chances are you do not want more? That the world would sell you an unattainable fantasy. That the beaches they advertise are always free of the crowds of tourists. Who themselves wear clothes that that they hope create shapes based upon fashion, and not nature. That the political future is grittily realistic, and practically unattainable. That unless what you have is out of fashion or not up to another's standard you will probably not replace it. That there is always something better than what you experience, **and that it does not matter. It does not matter.**

This is not joy.

This is insanity.

Those who love life do not need such excess

Those who love life find comfort in gentle acceptance

Those who love life do not need the aspiration of the commercial world

Proclaiming with the smile of a Cheshire Cat

That even the most basic is to be appreciated with exhilaration

The joy of Christ is greater than any such illusion

What I command you

Is to love one another

To love the partner you have and the relationship you live within

To love yourself with the humility to celebrate your reality

To love the world that was created for goodness

"I have told you this

So that my own joy may be in you

And your joy be complete"

We begin at the beginning

We begin from the point we find ourselves in

We begin in truth

Only from there can we begin

But then our joy can be complete.