

Rejoice!

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[0:00] I'll take your Bibles this morning and open them, if you would, to Philippians chapter 4.

! Philippians chapter 4 and find verse 4 because my text is one single verse.! It's okay to do that. One verse. In fact, I'm convinced that you can preach an entire sermon on one word. In fact, I'm going to come pretty close to that this morning.

The text is Philippians chapter 4 and verse 4. And it's a very familiar verse of Scripture. I think you'll agree with me when you see it and when I read it.

And here is what Paul wrote in Philippians 4.4. Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say, rejoice.

[1:09] Right there it is. Rejoice in the Lord always. And again, I will say, rejoice.

Very simple verse of Scripture and I think also very fitting for the season. A season where we ought to be rejoicing. Did you know that in the Bible, the Bible tells us to rejoice 192 times?

Isn't that amazing? You're saying, who counted all those up? Well, I didn't. Somebody else told me that. But I trust them 192 times. The Bible tells us to rejoice.

Now, do you know what the word rejoice means? That's not complicated. It means to express joy. That's really all it means.

To express joy or to be joyful. But the key is to understand that the word means that we're to express something. And what is it we're to express?

[2:12] Joy. Joy. Do you know what joy is? Well, I think we do. But for the believer, we need to be reminded that joy is the fruit of the Spirit.

Galatians chapter 5, verse 22. But the fruit of the Spirit is love. Joy. And then it goes on with the list. And so joy is the fruit of the Spirit.

And so then the implication is. Actually, it's more than an implication. The truth of the matter is that real joy, real joy is something only a born-again believer can express.

And the expression of it is rejoicing. That's how we need to understand the two words. Joy is the fruit of the Spirit. And every born-again believer has that fruit.

All of these things, not just some of these things. You don't have love and you don't have joy and you have this and that and so forth. We all have in us the fruit, singular, and the fruit is joy, among other things.

[3:18] And so it's in all of us. And then rejoicing is just simply the expression of it. The outward, observable, deliberate, premeditated, intentional expression of the joy that is in all of us.

Now, the book of Philippians is one of my favorite books. I would probably say it is my favorite book in the New Testament. And the book of Philippians has been called the joy book of the Bible.

Joy is the theme of this entire letter. Now, we're not going to be looking at the entire letter. Again, we're just going to focus on one verse. But let's be reminded that Paul wrote this letter and his theme is joy.

It's the joy book of the Bible. In fact, someone has also referred to Philippians as the how-to-be-joyful handbook for Christians. And so maybe we ought to read the book of Philippians more often than we do.

Now, that is very interesting, considering that when Paul wrote it, guess what? He was a prisoner.

[4:31] Prisoner. Albeit he was under house arrest, but that was no picnic, because we understand that he was chained to a Roman guard, handcuffed to a Roman guard at the time.

And so he's writing this joy book of the Bible while he is imprisoned. Paul's a prisoner. Now, I could imagine writing a letter like this while enjoying some beautiful part of the world.

You know, on vacation. I'm in the mountains. That's where I would prefer to be. I can imagine writing a letter to you, my flock. A letter like this about joy and rejoicing and wonderful things and praising God while all around me are beautiful things and while I'm experiencing wonderful things in

my life.

I mean, I could. It would seem natural to write some of the things that Paul wrote here in this letter during times of prosperity. During times of happiness.

Circumstances like that. But Paul was a prisoner. And yet, here is Paul saying, rejoice in the Lord always.

[5:44] And in case you didn't hear me the first time, or in case you thought this was just a slip of the pen as I'm writing, again, I'll just tell you, rejoice. Grace. Now, could you do that?

Could you? I mean, given the circumstances, could you feel the way Paul felt and write what Paul wrote while in prison? While a prisoner, while handcuffed to guards, Roman guards.

And then add to that the fact that Paul was not a criminal, was he? In fact, Paul had done nothing criminal, nothing wrong. He'd broken no laws. He was not deserving of this punishment, certainly not deserving of imprisonment.

You know, I got to think about it. If I had been Paul, I'm ashamed to confess that I would not have been rejoicing. I would have been complaining. I know that would never happen with you because you're much more spiritual than I.

But I would not be writing love letters to my church family. I'd be writing you a letter. I'd be writing a letter like, help!

[6:57] You know. Or I would have been writing to every congressman, every lawyer that I could get my name for. And I would be writing to everyone that I thought might be able to help me.

And I would be writing, get me out of here. That kind of thing. And I know that's just me and that's not you. Because, you know, you'd be like Paul, wouldn't you?

Well, maybe you would. But let me add to that. I would also certainly be praying. And I'm sure Paul was praying. And I'd be praying to God. God, this is not fair.

I mean, listen. God, you know I don't deserve this kind of treatment. I mean, all I've been trying to do is obey you and serve you and minister for you.

And God, why is this happening to me? I'm just trying to help us think in the way that's more natural for us when we approach this passage.

[8:05] And you know what our problem is? That is, I guess I could say our problem. Most of us have this problem. And it's a problem that evidently Paul did not have. Because he certainly was more spiritual than any of us, I'm convinced.

And our problem is this. We are circumstance-centered in our approach to living. Go ahead and just admit it. We are.

We have been born that way. We're raised that way. We're used to being that way. We're circumstance-centered in our living. Whereas Paul was totally Christ-centered in the way he lived his life.

Remember what Paul said? He said, To me, to live is Christ. It's Christ. And to die is gain. And so, by and large, our joy, our gratitude, our thankfulness, all of these things, these things are so dependent upon our circumstances.

If we would be honest about it. Someone has said that the average Christian all too often leaves the impression that the Christian life is something to be endured rather than be enjoyed.

[9:15] And that's kind of the way we are. We American Christians. That's just kind of the way we are.

And, as a matter of fact, we rather enjoy talking about how hard things are. Some of us more than others, but we kind of like to express, you know, kind of bend somebody's ear concerning how unhappy things are.

We are. So forth. And we are all to some measure guilty of this. When I was a manager for Walmart years ago, and it seems like another life now, but each morning I would be kind of my habit to walk around the store and not only make notes for my management assistants, but also to walk around and just greet all the people before we open the store.

And I would usually say, good morning. How are you doing? It would just become my natural thing. And I learned that some people, with some people, it's just not best to ask that question because they're going to tell you.

In fact, I had a certain cashier there at the store that really did love to tell me how bad things were. Not bad at the work, necessarily, but just bad in her life.

[10:35] She always had some kind of ache or pain or some problem or, you know, she wasn't feeling well that day. And it seemed like every day I asked her, she wasn't feeling well. And it was difficult to even get away from her.

In fact, I'll be honest, to my shame, I learned to just avoid her altogether. Have you ever known people like that? And if I did see her, I was very cautious not to ask her how things were, you know. I'd say, good morning, good to see you. And then I'd walk on very quickly. And that's just how it is. And yet, you know, there are Christians like that. Christians who walk around like the man with his arm in a bright red sling, you know.

And what he's doing, he's saying, I hope somebody notices that my arm's in the sling. I hope somebody asks me about it because I really do like to tell people about how bad my arm is, you know.

And so please ask me. Except with believers, we don't wear red arm slings like that. But what we do is we wear the look of jaundice on our faces.

[11:44] Like Adrian Rogers used to say, some people look like the advanced agent for the undertaker. Or he would say, I've seen better looking faces on bottles of iodine, you know.

And so we just kind of wear that look, you know. And maybe it is attached to some really hard thing in our life. I'm not discounting that. But we need to learn to have a different countenance.

And that's part of what Paul is saying here. And so we just kind of walk around with that kind of look on our face. And really what we're saying is, ask me about it.

Ask me about it so that I can tell you all about it because I really do like to talk about it. About how bad things are. Well, Paul has something to say to us about all of that here in this verse.

And that's pretty clear, isn't it? You know where we're going. And I want to divide what Paul said in this one single verse. Divided into three parts.

[12:49] And so this really is an expository sermon. Albeit from one single verse of scripture. Number one. Let's notice the.

And this is the first thing we need to see. Let's notice the stress Paul places on rejoicing. I mean, you can't miss this, can you? I mean, it's just very clear to see.

The stressy places on it. And who could deny it? That Paul is stressing the importance of rejoicing. That is, the importance of letting come on the outside what is true on the inside.

That is, the joy that is in us by virtue of the indwelling Holy Spirit. That that joy be expressed in, on our faces. Our countenance.

In our voice. In the things we say. In the way we're living. And all these things. Who could deny that that's what Paul is stressing here? It's the act of rejoicing.

[13:51] But now, did you know that this is a command? That what we have here in this verse, in verse 4, is a command.

It's a command. It's not a suggestion to consider. Not something that Paul is offering to us that might make things go better and be better.

It's not some formula, some step to take. Though there are benefits to rejoicing. But this is coming to us by way of command.

And you might think, now how do you know that? Well, other than it seems pretty clear here from the verse. How do we know that this is actually a command?

That Paul is not just simply giving us instruction or suggestion. Well, we know it through a very simple analysis of the word rejoice. That is, as it was written originally.

[14:52] In the Greek text. And I don't want to bore you with a Greek grammar lesson. But in this case, it is very important.

Very instructive for us that we understand it. See, I'm not talking about just the definition of the word rejoice. I'm talking about the way Paul wrote it. The form of the word.

As he wrote it in the original language. And so let me just give you a little lesson on that. I think you'll be blessed. At the same time, we're not only going to be blessed.

But we're going to be instructed. Help us understand better about what Paul is saying here. Just with the word rejoice. The word rejoice is a verb.

Well, that much is easy to see. It's awfully difficult. In fact, it's impossible to speak or write or communicate anything without verbs.

[15:48] The powerhouse of human language. We can't avoid verbs. And rejoice is a verb. That's clear. And in the Greek language, similar to English as well, though we don't think about it.

We just speak it, you know. But in the Greek language, all verbs have three things at least. They have tense, voice, and mood. If you write notes, just jot that down.

Tense, voice, mood. There's verb tense. There's voice. There's mood. You say, well, so what? Well, in the Greek language, the way you spell the word, that is, you have the word and all kinds of suffixes and prefixes.

The way you spell the word tells you what the tense, voice, and mood is. And the tense, voice, and mood of the verb communicates what the writer is meaning here.

And so that's why I say it's important that we understand this. So let's take this one step at a time. In the first place, rejoice is a present tense verb.

[17:01] It's a present tense. You say, well, so what? What does that mean? Well, in the Greek language, that means that the action of the verb is continuous.

That's exactly what Paul means. That's why it's important that we do some of these word studies. You don't have to know the Greek to do that. Some good commentaries will bring this out.

But it's important in our understanding of what Paul is trying to tell us here. He is saying by putting it in this form, this present tense form. He's saying that this act of rejoicing is to be nonstop.

It's to be a continuous thing. It is to go on and on and on. Keep on rejoicing. In fact, we could translate it that way. It would be a little bit awkward in English.

But he could say, keep on rejoicing. And again, I'm saying to you, keep on, keep on, keep on, keep on rejoicing. It's continuous action.

[18:04] Now, obviously, there are times when we are to be sad. We're to express that kind of emotion, too. I'm not removing that.

There are times to be grieving and to be mourning and to be concerned about things. There are times to do that. Solomon wrote in the Ecclesiastes chapter 3, he said, To everything there is a season.

And he lists a whole bunch of things, if you've ever read that chapter. And a couple of things he said. He said, there's a time to weep, a time to mourn. And so there's a season for everything.

And these seasons come and they go. And then we're to get over it. Get over the weeping, over the mourning. But Paul is saying here, by putting this in the present tense, that we're never, ever to get over rejoicing in the Lord.

Never get over that. Never get tired of that. Don't ever, ever get over the joy of the Lord. You know, sometimes we'll see new believers and they're all excited about Jesus.

[19:15] All excited about their newfound faith. And they find some new word. Some word they didn't know in Scripture. And they're just telling everybody. And they're just kind of boiling over with it. And they're just so excited about it.

And we more mature Christians, we usually say to ourselves anyway, we say, well, they'll get over that one of these days. And thanks to us, they do usually get over it.

You see, the joy of the Lord as the fruit of the Spirit is in every one of us as a believer, whether you're expressing rejoicing or not.

Because the fruit of the Spirit, though it is there, that fruit can be suppressed. It can be held and not expressed.

That's why Paul tells us to rejoice. Don't ever get over it. Be continually rejoicing in the Lord.

[20:12] And that's what we need to learn here. But there's a second thing about this verb. Rather interesting. It is present in its tense. That means continuous action.

That's all you have to know about that. But it is also active in its voice. Even in English, we have active voice of verbs and passive voice.

The Greeks also have a middle voice. That's not important here. It's important to know that this is active. It's an active voice. And what does that mean? Well, you don't have to be a Greek grammatician to know what that means.

It means that this rejoicing is to be an active thing. Active. Outward. Expression.

Intentional. Observable. Even measurable. It's to be an active thing. Have you ever been around someone whose joy in the Lord is a contagious thing?

[21:22] Sadly, there aren't too many like that. Dear friend of mine who's now with Jesus. Was the one man that always comes to my mind when I think of a contagious kind of joy.

His name was Greg Leatherwood. I shared with you about that family and how they all tragically shot to death. Greg was an incredible believer in his expression of the joy of his heart.

And all you'd have to do is just get on the subject of Christ and share some word from the Bible. And he would just be so excited about it.

And you'd just kind of get caught up in that. Greg was a business owner. He owned an auto repair, glass repair shop. And, you know, the only thing missing there to make it a church was a steeple. Because they had church there at his shop every day. People would come by waiting on their car. And Greg would be counseling. Greg would be sharing something from God's word.

[22:35] He'd be witnessing. He would, you know, just an incredible man. Just to be around him. First of all, it usually made me feel a little bit shameful.

That I didn't have the same kind of outlook. Same kind of zeal. Same kind of outward expression of that inner reality. It was contagious.

You see, the joy, again, is the inner reality. The fruit of the Spirit that is indwelling every believer. But rejoicing is the active expression of that joy that comes from God.

And that includes not only the things we say. But it includes our countenance. I tell you, listen.

You have control of your countenance. You do. You say, no, I don't. Yes, you do. You can choose to rejoice and have the look of joy on your face.

[23:48] You can do that. It's an active expression of the inner reality of joy. Now, there's a third thing about this verb, rejoice.

And this is an important part of it. It is present tense, active voice and imperative in its mood.

Imperative. What does that mean? It means, as I've already said, this is a command. It's a command. Paul is saying, rejoice. And again, I say to you by way of command, rejoice.

Express the joy of the Lord in your life. In every way. It's a command. Now, someone might object and say, how do you command an emotion?

How do you command a feeling? And I say, you don't. You can't. You cannot command anyone to feel a certain way. You can't command a person to express a certain emotion just by way of your command.

[24:56] You can't do that. But you said, Brother Don, that this was a command. I thought you said that Paul was giving us a command. He is. It's a command. Well, isn't that kind of like commanding us to feel a certain way?

Commanding us to express a certain emotion? No, it is not. Because joy is not an emotion. Any more than love is an emotion.

It's a fruit of the Spirit. Joy is not a feeling you have. Now, I'm not saying that you don't feel joy or that emotions are not the result of your joy.

I'm not saying that. But I'm saying here that Paul is commanding us not to feel a certain way, not to have a certain kind of emotion. It's not an emotion.

What is it then? Joy is the inner confidence that God is in sovereign control of everything in my life for my good and for His glory no matter what the circumstances.

[26:06] I'll just say that again. Joy is the inner confidence that God is in sovereign control of everything in my life for my good and for His glory no matter what the circumstances.

That's a pretty good definition. And rejoicing is our premeditated, deliberate act to express that reality.

And we choose to do it. And Paul says choose to do it every day and all day. That's it. Now, I want you to notice the second thing about rejoicing that Paul says here.

Not only the stress that he placed on it, but secondly, the source of true rejoicing. And it's right here in the text, isn't it?

What's the source? Paul says genuine rejoicing is always in the Lord. It's in the Lord. Rejoice in the Lord.

[27:13] But what does that mean to rejoice in the Lord? Does it mean that we have to use the right words and maybe be very scriptural, you know, in the sense that we express our joy by quoting scripture or doing something like that?

Well, I mean, that's OK, but that's not what he means here, really. When he says to rejoice in the Lord, he's really talking about two things.

He's talking about relationship. And fellowship. Those two things. Relationship and fellowship.

You see, in the first place, relationship, if you do not have a born again. If you are not a born again child of God through faith in Jesus Christ, then what Paul is writing here is not for you.

I mean, you can't have it. You can't. You can't have this kind of rejoicing. Because you don't have the joy. You must have the right relationship with God through Christ.

[28 : 24] You must be born again. Genuine rejoicing is the expression of true joy. And joy, again, is the fruit of the Spirit, the indwelling Holy Spirit.

And only through regeneration, only through repentance and faith in Christ and a born again experience, a salvation experience in Christ, only then can you express this kind of rejoicing. Rejoice in the Lord. And if you're not in the Lord, then you cannot obey this command. Rejoice in the Lord. And experience all the wonders of this kind of expression.

You can. If you will trust Christ today. But apart from Christ, you can't do this. You can't even know what it's like.

But that does not automatically suggest that every born again believer is naturally going to obey this command in Philippians 4.4.

[29 : 27] Because all of us, at least some of the time, disobey this command. And so, while we might have the right relationship, we may not have the right fellowship.

May not be in fellowship with you. Let me give you some common self-imposed obstacles to genuine rejoicing that Christians can experience.

Number one on the list, and this is obvious, through sin. Unconfessed, unrepentant of sin. When we harbor and cherish sin in our hearts and lives, that is, we do not confess it and repent of it.

And it's not dealt with God's way. Then we cannot know the true joy of the Lord. We cannot express it either.

Because these sins haunt us as believers. The Holy Spirit makes sure of that. You can't get away from it. You can't escape it. It haunts us. It's kind of like grit in our eye.

[30 : 44] You know, how irritating that is. And how it annoys us. And these sins just are always there. And every time we come to the Lord, every time we acknowledge Him, that sin comes right there before us.

And we cannot experience the joy of the Lord with unconfessed, unrepentant of sin. Cannot do it. It is a barrier to our love and fellowship with Christ. Any sin is. Whether it's big or small. Major barrier. Let me give you a second obstacle to joy.

And therefore, expressions of joy through rejoicing. The second obstacle is constantly questioning and doubting God. Constantly questioning and doubting God.

The Bible says in Hebrews 11, 6, without faith it is impossible to please God. So you can't be doubting Him and questioning Him with unbelief, with lack of faith, and expect to please God.

[31 : 50] It just will not work. Without faith it's impossible to please God. But you know, there is a form of doubting that I believe is the biggest thief of joy. And it is doubting God's forgiveness.

Doubting God's forgiveness of confessed and repented of sin. Have you ever done that? Just doubt that God could forgive me for that?

Imagine one of your children breaking something in your house. Something that you treasure. That's happened a few times in our house.

Though it's usually not our kids. It's usually me. But imagine, you know, one of your children breaking something very valuable. And your son or daughter comes to you and says, Please forgive me.

What are you going to do? Well, I hope you would forgive. Right? We don't always forget. But we do forgive. But imagine that child coming back again.

[32 : 51] Oh, Daddy. Or Mommy. Please forgive me. I say, I already forgave you. Forget about it. And then they just keep coming back. You know.

Forgive me. Forgive me. Forgive me. Forgive me. Now, what does that say about the child's faith in what his daddy has said? What does it say?

Well, it's obvious. And so, when we confess our sins to God and we repent of them, he forgives us. And then, when we come again and beg him forgiveness, we don't have to beg forgiveness from that point on.

It's all done with. It shows a lack of faith on our part concerning what God has said and accepting his forgiveness.

And it robs us of our joy in the Lord. A third thing would be an attitude of presumptuousness.

[33 : 55] An attitude of presumptuousness. Do you feel that it is God's responsibility to bless you in the way that we define blessing? That's just God's responsibility to do that.

Now, put in that way, you'd say, well, no. Never. And yet, in our hearts, we do. And in our minds. Do you ever feel like God is, it's his duty to give us everything we need? Hmm? Do you ever presume upon God in that way?

Do you feel that somehow God is obligated to do these things for us? Do you ever feel that way? Now, think about that. Because if you do, then guess what?

Your joy is going to be dependent upon God's performance. Your joy is going to depend on how God meets those needs.

[34 : 59] Answers those prayers in the way you want him to answer them. And so, when you pray and you expect a certain answer or a certain kind of thing from God's hand, and when you don't get it, then you've lost your joy.

God's never obligated to answer all of those things and give you everything you need. And for us to think that way is presumption. And when we do that, we lose our joy when we presume upon God. Let me give you a fourth one. The neglect of spiritual disciplines. I guess I could have started with that one. The neglect of spiritual disciplines.

That is, you know, there are certain basic disciplines that are vital to our spiritual joy, our spiritual health. I can just name them. You can name them too. Prayer, Bible study, having those things combined in our communion with God.

And when we leave those things out of our lives, then guess what? Robs us of our joy. I can name a couple of others. Regular fellowship with God's people in His church.

[36 : 10] We make it such a light thing, such a, well, maybe it's important, maybe it's not. God's Word says, do not forsake the assembly of yourselves, as is the custom of many.

And when we do that, we lose our joy. And I would add another one, service. Service to the Lord through His church. Finding and looking and allowing God to guide you to this thing or that thing that He wants you to do in His church and in His kingdom.

In your obedience to the Great Commission. We have as a part of our strategy more than a dozen things you could plug into. When we don't serve Him, we lose our joy.

All these spiritual disciplines, whether they are deliberate things we do in prayer and Bible study, or they're things we involve ourselves in, the way of service, attendance and such.

You know what these things do, among other things? They remind us of who we are. Constantly reminding us who we are and what we have in Christ.

[37 : 29] And when we lose sight of those things, the things we have in Christ, then it robs us of our joy. I heard about a guy who was dissatisfied with his house, and so he decided to sell it.

And he met with a realtor. And the first thing the realtor did was come by and walk through the house and jot down all the things, this description of the house and every part of it for prospective buyers.

And when the realtor was finished, the man who was selling the house, he said, Well, now read all that back to me so I can make sure you didn't forget anything. And so the realtor read everything that was written down. And then the man said, This house isn't for sale.

All my life I've wanted a house like this one. Because we forget who we are and what we have in Christ when we do not engage ourselves daily in certain spiritual disciplines.

Let me give you one more here. Broken relationships. Relationships between other people in the church, in the family.

[38 : 44] Do you have a Christian friend somewhere or brother or sister in Christ or maybe a family member or just a neighbor with whom you have had conflict?

You've kind of had a falling out, you know, misunderstanding or maybe even a serious disagreement. Maybe things were said that should not have been said or done. Certain things done that should not have been done.

And you know that you were wrong. Wrong maybe in what you said. Wrong in what you did. Or maybe the other party was wrong.

And you have refused to forgive. Refused to take steps toward reconciliation. A host of other scenarios I guess we could list here.

And listen, as long as there are unresolved conflicts with a brother or sister in Christ or anyone else. As long as there are unresolved arguments and broken fellowship.

[39 : 47] Then you will not be able to experience and express the joy of the Lord. These are barriers. Because a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

And a close fellowship, intimate fellowship with Jesus Christ. These things are the source of our joy. Because Jesus is the source of joy.

The Bible says, Jesus said, my joy I give unto you. So, one more this morning, finally.

Not only the stress placed on rejoicing and the source of all true rejoicing. But one more. The seasons for rejoicing. And this is an easy one to answer.

You know, I understand because you're just like me. That it's part of our nature to resist absolutes. We just don't like absolutes. Kind of like this one that's here in our text.

[40 : 53] The absolute. That comes to us in the word always. Paul said, rejoice in the Lord. Always.

Now, that's real hard for us. First of all, because of our resistance to absolutes. But secondly, because there are a lot of things in life that want to rob us of rejoicing.

In fact, there are times when it just doesn't even seem appropriate to have a spirit of rejoicing. And yet, there it is.

Right in black and white. Rejoice in the Lord always. Always. What are the seasons for rejoicing, according to Paul?

All seasons. All seasons. All occasions. Let me give you a few examples from Scripture. We're to rejoice at the birth of Christ.

[42 : 03] And that's something that ought to continue in our lives. Luke 1.14 And you shall have joy and gladness. And many shall rejoice at His birth.

The birth of Christ. Well, certainly we're to rejoice at the birth of Christ. We're about to enter that season, aren't we? Where we remember the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

And there's much joy in that season. Also, we're to rejoice at the works of Christ. According to the Bible, Luke 13.17, all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him.

That is, by Jesus. They rejoiced. We're to rejoice at the works of Christ. We're to rejoice at the presence of Christ in our lives. And He's with us. Innocent with us.

John 16.22 We're to rejoice at the hearing of the gospel.

[43 : 16] Even though the vast majority of us here are born-again believers. We have placed our faith in the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ.

And so why do we need to hear it again? Well, we do hear it again and again. And we rejoice at hearing the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ. The Bible says in Acts 13.48, and when the Gentiles heard this, that is the gospel, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord.

We're to rejoice when we think about our salvation. We're never to get over that. Our salvation in Christ. Acts 8.39, speaking of Philip and the eunuch.

The Bible says, and when they were come up out of the water, after Philip baptized the eunuch, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, took him away. That the eunuch saw him no more. And what did the eunuch do?

He went on his way rejoicing. Why? Because he found Jesus. He was saved.

[44 : 20] That ought to be our continued experience. Anybody got a problem with any of these so far? I doubt it. How about our citizenship in heaven?

According to the scripture, Luke 10.20, Jesus said, rejoice because your names are written in heaven. We rejoice in that. How about rejoicing over the prospect of future reward?

The Bible tells us that. Matthew 5.12, rejoice and be exceedingly glad for great is your reward in heaven. Any problem with any of these?

I doubt, seriously, there's anyone in this building that has a problem rejoicing over these things. But how about a couple other things? What about these occasions? For example, when others have the occasion to rejoice.

That is, when great things happen to other people. Huh?

[45 : 26] The Bible says in Romans 12.15, rejoice with them that do rejoice. And weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another.

Now, I'm frank to confess that it's much easier for me to weep with those who weep than it is for me to rejoice with those who rejoice. Let me give you an example.

Suppose while I'm standing up here preaching this morning, someone comes in the door back there and walks up here and says, Are you Don Coleman? And I say, Yes, I am. And he says, Well, I hate to be the bearer of bad tidings, but there's been a tragic car accident and several members of your family have been killed.

That'd be terrible. And I guarantee you, I would be devastated. And I would be weeping. And you'd be weeping with me when you heard of the details.

And you would try to minister to me because you love me. And I'd be very grateful of that. And you're interested in bearing my sorrows.

[46 : 37] Right? Now, let me give you another scenario. Someone walks in while I'm preaching here and says, Are you Don Coleman? And I say, Yes, I am.

And he says, I have a message to deliver to you. You had a long lost uncle who died. You didn't know him, never met him. But he was a multi, multi, multi, multi millionaire.

And he left you his entire estate. And I've come to deliver this message in a brand new Rolls Royce, which he left to you as well. Now, in comparison to the first illustration.

Because you have to compare the two. All right. How many of us here in this room, how many of you would say, You know, that's wonderful. And Brother Don, I can't think.

Thank you. I can't think of anybody who deserves it more than you, Pastor. I think, you know, I can only go so far with the illustration.

[47 : 43] But I'm saying by comparison. Is it not easier to weep with those who weep than it is to rejoice with those who rejoice?

Let me give you a second thing that's hard, hard for us to rejoice in. And this one is common. Common to our life experience. And you know what it is. It's rejoicing in the midst of problems. Problems of life. The difficulties of life.

Did you know that we're to rejoice even when things don't go well? Even when tragedy strikes? That's what Paul is saying.

Rejoice in the Lord always. And hey. In case you didn't get it. Rejoice. Peter said in 1 Peter 4.13.

[48 : 49] But rejoice in as much as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings. That when his glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy.

Paul, in 1 Corinthians chapter 6 and verse 10. He said, sorrowful, yes. Yet always rejoicing. You see, the two are put side by side.

How about something that James wrote in James 1.2. He said, my brethren, count it all joy when you fall into diverse temptations. All manners of temptations.

Now the word temptation is not talking about temptation to sin or do evil. The word means difficulty, hardship, persecution, trouble. And James is saying rejoice when the problems of life come.

Rejoice. Rejoice. And James goes on to give us the goal of that. And the goal is that you may be perfect. Perfected. And complete.

[49 : 52] Wanting nothing. That's the promise from this kind of rejoice. And it's hard for us to agree with that.

You think about the men and women of faith that you read about in the Bible who endured great, great persecution for their faith and were jailed and martyred.

And add to that just the natural things that happen in life to everyone, believers and unbelievers. You read about these in the Bible and you don't read anything about complaint.

It's just missing from the Bible. No hint of doubt. No evidence of pessimism or any of that. You know, sometimes we have testimonial services and haven't had one.

I haven't been a part of one in a long time. It's just people, you know, pop up and give testimonies. And very typically, you know, you'll have people stand up and tell of answers to prayer.

[51 : 05] And speak about God's blessing, maybe a provision of some financial need or restored health or or renewed relationships.

And we could go on with the list. And that's OK, isn't it? It's wonderful. We ought to give testimony to these things that God has done in our lives. When's the last time you heard someone stand during a testimony service and say, I just came from the doctor and he tells me that I'm going to have to have major surgery.

And I may not survive. And I just want to stand here tonight or today and thank God. Because he knows all about it and he's interested in me.

And in all things, I'm just to give thanks. Or to stand and say, I have a terminal illness. And the doctor's given me a year to live.

And I just want to stand and give testimony to the faithfulness of God. How he's loved me all these years. And very soon I'm going to be with him. Is it hard for us to do things like that?

[52 : 15] Or to stand and say, I just lost my job. Companies downsizing. Lost my job. And yet, because I know God loves me and he's interested in me, I just want to thank him that I lost that job. That just sounds so ridiculous, doesn't it? Because we're circumstance-centered and not Christ-centered as we should be.

This is what Paul is saying. Rejoice in the Lord always. And again, I'm saying, rejoice. The stress he placed upon it.

Keep on, keep on rejoicing. Rejoicing. The source of our rejoicing is in the Lord. Or it's not real. It's not true. It won't last.

It's in the Lord. In right relationship with him. In right fellowship with him. And with his people. And the seasons of rejoicing. It's not just on Thanksgiving Day.

[53 : 21] Though truth be known, we don't rejoice a whole lot then either. Unless the Dallas Cowboys win. The season is always.

No matter what. Thank you.