

## **REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS**

### **Philippians 4:2-9**

Intro: All throughout the book of Philippians Paul has been giving exhortations in his efforts to encourage a joyous life. Drawing from his own experience, Paul speaks of his joy in the Lord. He has shown us how that we can rejoice in situations where many would be surprised to find joy. In loving God's people, in knowing our purpose, in fighting for what's right, in serving others, in the life the Lord himself has made possible for us: (to know him, to be forgiven by him, to have his power working in us and to appreciate in suffering what he suffered for us, and to have the hope of heaven when we die.)

But now in Philippians four as Paul brings his exhortations to a close he appeals to the Philippians one last time to rejoice in the Lord. One final time Paul says, "rejoice in the Lord"; but this time he adds one significant word--"always". How can that be? How is it possible for a Christian to maintain a sense of joy when life presents so many problems to us? I think we can find some answers as we study Paul's final exhortations about rejoicing in the Lord. 4:4-9.

### **FOUR DAILY THINGS THAT ROB US OF JOY**

*There are four problem areas that so easily make us slip out of the joy in the Lord into depression and despair.*

Petty annoyances of life (people problems)

Worry (circumstances beyond our control)

Negative thinking (getting into a critical mentality, focusing on what is bad in the world)

Guilt (a simple awareness of our own failures)

Or if you please: Bad people, bad things, bad thoughts, and bad deeds.

*And yet in spite of these challenges Paul says we can be joyful people!*

Paul tells us that we can a serenity of spirit, a joyful calmness of soul that will enable us to weather whatever storms we face.

*How can we rejoice in the Lord always?*

### **REACT RIGHT!**

*Think how often life presents petty annoyances.*

Do people do things that bug you? Things like that may happen every day. How can we keep the people around us from driving us crazy?

*Let your forbearing spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near.*

*Regardless of our people problems, we need to develop "moderation" or a "forbearing spirit" (NASV).*

Says Marshall, "a fairmindedness, the attitude of a man who is charitable toward men's faults and merciful in his judgment of their failings because he takes their whole situation into his reckoning". Says R.P. Martin, "graciousness". The ability to "roll with the punches".

We must learn to react to life's annoyances with forbearance. It is basically a matter of awareness and a determination not to let other's

dictate our moods by their behavior! And we need to practice it with "all men".

***But what gives us the ability to keep putting up with these things? It's the Lord! A single simple affirmation of what is true: "The Lord is at hand".***

The Lord's coming is always nearby.

The Lord's presence reminds us of his awareness of our problems and his coming to vindicate our cause.

The Lord's presence reminds us of the need to control ourselves lest we sin against him!

## **PRAY RIGHT**

*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

***Worry is one of the greatest challenges to a joyous life.***

The word Paul uses means to be "pulled in different directions"--in a mental tug of war between faith and doubt and we are the rope! Our English word comes from a word that means "to strangle". Everybody knows what a strangle hold worry can have on your life. It will spoil your joy...unless you learn how to pray.

***Prayer is a vital part of a joyous life. God never promised to take away our problems. But he has given us a means to deal with them. v. 4***

This is a Hebraistic see-saw that puts the weigh on the last phrase in contrast with the first. "Do not allow yourself to continue in a state of anxiety about anything" but rather...

In everything by prayer and supplications, let your requests be made known unto God.

**By prayer. Our prayers ought not begin with a rush to complain about our problems...but let them begin with prayers of worship and adoration of God. When we stop to remember his love and greatness, immediately our problems take on a new perspective.**

**Make supplication. Express to God your needs. But doesn't God already know our problems? Indeed he does. We don't pray for inform God but to express faith. We need to remember that prayer is not the business of aligning God's will with ours, but ours with God. It is best to simply ask him to help us with the problem in the way He seems best.**

**With thanksgiving. When we're worried we need to recover our perspective. Do we have things to be thankful for even in the midst of our problems? Can we not remember with gratitude how God has answered our prayers before?!**

**In everything! If a problem is big enough to worry about it is big enough to pray about!**

*When we believe in God's solution we will know a peace from God that is beyond comprehension. And it will guard us ("keep" means guard like a soldier) from future worry and the loss of joy.*

### **THINK RIGHT**

*Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.*

*Think for a moment about the fact that the world offers a great deal to think about that is unworthy of our time and that leads to sadness and perhaps even anger.*

We live in a world of lies, dishonor, distortion, sensuality, gossip, abuse, neglect and mismanagement. When we begin to focus upon what's wrong with the world; what's wrong with others; what's wrong in our lives, negative thinking takes over and we are annoyed, disgusted, and depressed.

*But Paul's solution is simple. It is to reverse all these things. Think right!*

We can see to think about truth, honor, beauty in our world and the people around us, good character, deeds worthy of appreciation. Think on these things. The word "think" conveys the idea of "pondering". In other words, there is ongoing attention to these things. And I don't know of any place to find such things any better than in the word of God. It lifts our spirits to that which is lofty and noble.

*This is what made it possible for Paul to write about his joy from prison! He was practicing what he was preaching! Paul let his mind dwell on things true and honorable and excellent. He thought of the progress of the gospel in Rome, the love of the Philippians, the condescending love of Christ, the privilege of being forgiven, the power of God working in him, the greater appreciation for Christ he gained through suffering, and the home to which he was headed. Pondering these things kept his mind positive and joyous.*

### **LIVE RIGHT**

*One of the greatest enemies of peace in the soul is guilt, unless we have a seared conscience. Our own heart tells us whether we are right with God or not. Whether we are true to the truth that we know.*

*God expects us to live up to the level of knowledge we have accumulated, while we look for new revelation! cf. v. 9*

*Live right and the God of peace will be with you, v. 9. Paul himself is a worthy example.*

**Conclusion:** And so Paul shows us how we can conquer the situations of life that interfere with our joy. He shows us how the Lord makes it possible for us to have peace that passes understanding in a world of chaos and agitation...always.