

Rejoice Always! Philippians 4:4

I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** Paul writes: **Philippians 4:4**: “*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!*”
2. The epistle to the Philippians has been called the “*rejoicing*” book of the New Testament (epistle of “joy”).
 - A. The words “joy” or “rejoice” are found 14 times in this short book.
 - B. ** The letter presents an amazing contrast.
 - (1) Paul writes, perhaps the most “upbeat” epistle in the New Testament.
 - (2) But Paul is writing this book from a Roman prison and he wants the Philippians to have the same joy he was experiencing!
3. **3** Today let’s consider a few things about “*Rejoicing in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!*.”

II. DISCUSSION:

1. **4** Joy vs. happiness:
 - A. Remember: there are some things we need to remember:
 - (1) Joy and happiness are not always the same.
 - (2) *Happiness* is based upon what happens to you.
 - (3) *Happen* comes from the word *hap*: 1) one’s luck or lot, 2) an occurrence, a happening, or an accident (I doubt if Paul was happy being in a Roman prison.).
 - (4) So, *happen* is based upon external circumstances and is our reaction to things around us.
 - B. ** The word “joy” in the New Testament:
 - (1) It comes from the Greek word *chara* which means “joy, delight...” (Vine)
 - (2) It is true we experience “joy” when we’re happy, but Bible joy goes much deeper.
 - (3) Vine tells us “joy” is related to the Greek word *chairō* which means “to rejoice.”
 - (4) So, a joyful person is also a “*rejoicing*” person.
 - (5) ** Another way true Bible joy differentiates itself from simple *happiness* is that Bible joy can come from our internal circumstances; it doesn’t just depend upon external circumstances.
 - (6) This is why an apostle in a Roman prison could talk about his joy:
 - (a) Joy while imprisoned in Rome:

Phil. 1:3-5: “*I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, 5 for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now...*”

Phil. 2:2-4: “*fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*”

Phil. 4:1: “Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.”

- (b) Joy while imprisoned in Philippi with Silas: beaten w/rods, in the inner prison, w/feet fastened in the stocks! Explain Acts 16:22-25

2. **5** Happiness is short lived:

A. We are happy for short moments while joy is a state of lasting blessedness.

- (1) We are *joyous* because of who we are in the Lord.
- (2) Joy can be enduring and provide us with peace and contentment regardless of how awful and chaotic our external circumstances might be.

B. Jesus addressed this in the Beatitudes (**Matt. 5:3-12**):

- (1) Note Jesus uses the word “*blessed*” nine times.
- (2) ****** Blessedness does not depend on external circumstances; hence, it can produce this inner joy even a man in a Roman prison can experience.
- (3) This blessedness and its accompanying joy are what Paul describes in Philippians:

Phil. 4:6-7: “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

- (4) Note this grand inner peace comes only to one truly walking with God and communicating with Him in prayer:

I Jn. 1:5-9: “This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

I Pet. 3:12: “For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

- (5) ****** I don’t want to suggest that if you feel down and joyless you are a bad person.

(a) Paul had such experiences:

2 Cor. 1:8: “For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life.”

- (b) **BUT** Paul’s despair lifted and his peace of mind was restored when he focused on God’s blessings:

2 Cor. 1:9-10: “Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, 10 who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us,”

I Pet. 1:8-9: “Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith — the salvation of your souls.”

2 Tim. 4:6-8: "...the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing."

C. Children's Bible class song: "I've got the joy, joy, joy down in my heart. Where? Down in my heart."

(1) ** That's because joy runs deep and brings peace of mind and inner satisfaction.

(2) If a person doesn't have a smile on their face is no indication they're lacking joy.

Jas. 1:2: "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,"

Acts 5:41: "So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name."

1 Pet. 4:13-14: "but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. 14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you."

(3) An attitude or spirit that is always complaining, always negative, always seeing the wrong side of things and people, is usually severely lacking in joy.

(4) By contrast one with a joyful heart has counted their blessings and is thankful.

Phil. 4:6-7: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

(5) ** The joyful heart knows he is forgiven, walking with the Lord and heaven bound. A joyful heart is calmly confident; despair lifts and joy is restored when we focus on:

☛ **Joint-heir with Christ:**

Rom. 8:16-17: "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together."

☛ **Cannot be separated from God's love:**

Rom. 8:35-39: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written:

'For Your sake we are killed all day long;
We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.'

37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

☛ **God's grace is sufficient in all situations, no matter how difficult:**

2 Cor. 12:9-10: "And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong."; Eph. 3:20

☛ **Trials and tribulations of life are but a “light affliction”:**

2 Cor. 4:16-17: *“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,”*

3. **6** Blessing of joyful people:

A. Joyful people are a real blessing! ****Which best describes you?**

- (1) They have a special way of helping us remember what we’ve been missing.
- (2) Even in the darkest moments, they find the sunshine of Christ.
- (3) They have a special way of encouraging and motivating us when all seems lost.
- (4) They are always doing things we know we ought to be doing.
- (5) Their prayers are filled with thankfulness to the Lord.
- (6) They are so happy to be a part of the congregation.
- (7) They love everything about worship; they love the singing; they love the preaching; they love the prayers; they love other people (both the saved and the lost!).

C. Paul was this type of person:

- (1) Paul uses the word “joy” about 22 times in his epistles.
- (2) Paul prays for others in his epistles ~42.

D. Those lacking joy are uncomfortable meeting with the saints.

- (1) The sermon never seems to suit them; too long, too short, too many scriptures, not enough scriptures, etc.
- (2) The singing is tedious (too slow, too fast, off key, not the right songs, etc.).
- (3) The prayers are always too long and boring; or too short w/out meat.
- (4) People are not friendly enough; people are too friendly, too chatty, not chatty enough.

E. The joyful disciple is the exact opposite:

- (1) Despite their aches and pains he/she is thankful for the opportunity to be able to attend services and worship; thankful for being able to encourage others through songs, hymns and spiritual songs.
- (2) Despite problems in their life they are so thankful to give a hearty amen for the prayers offered, so thankful to be able to share this precious fellowship with God and their fellow saints.
- (3) They are not watching the clock and agonizing “will this service ever end?!”
- (4) The song leader might have been a bit off key and the singing may have been slow at times, but they were just thankful to be singing to the Lord.
- (5) The preacher may have stumbled with his words at time; but they were just thankful for the opportunity to partake of the bread of life.

4. **7** Reasons for joy:

A. Not everyone feels joy 100% of the time; that’s impossible.

(1) ** I admit I don't; many righteous Bible characters had their moments of despair too:

☛ Paul:

2 Cor. 1:8: "...burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life."

☛ Elijah: when being hunted by Jezebel:

1 Kgs. 19:4: "But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, 'It is enough! Now, Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!'"

☛ David: betrayed by Absalom?

Psa. 55:4-7: "My heart is severely pained within me, And the terrors of death have fallen upon me. 5 Fearfulness and trembling have come upon me, And horror has overwhelmed me. 6 So I said, 'Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. 7 Indeed, I would wander far off, And remain in the wilderness.'"

☛ Solomon:

Eccl. 2:20-21: "Therefore I turned my heart and despaired of all the labor in which I had toiled under the sun. 21 For there is a man whose labor is with wisdom, knowledge, and skill; yet he must leave his heritage to a man who has not labored for it. This also is vanity and a great evil."

☛ Jesus: in the Garden of Gethsemane:

Matt. 26:38-39: "Then He said to them, 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.' 39 He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, 'O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.'"

(2) ** Satan has many tools at his disposal to bring despair and dejection into our lives.

(3) So, having such feelings is not a sin; such feelings don't mean you are a bad person.

(4) When we have these feelings, Satan wants us to beat up on ourselves; feel bad about ourselves; give up on ourselves; give up on God!

B. 8 So, what do we do when all the joy has been sucked out of your life?

C. First, I don't claim to have all the answers, but I offer the following suggestions:

(1) ** Remember: True Bible joy is a **choice** we make; it does not depend on our external circumstances (i.e., what makes us happy; e.g., Paul in a Roman prison); we are what we think (Prov. 23:7).

(2) ** Think good thoughts! That's why Paul said:

Phil. 4:8: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think [meditate] on these things." (KJV)

(3) Thus, we need to replace negative thoughts with positive thoughts:

☛ ** **You are a Christian!**

(a) That's huge. God took you when you were at your very worst!

(b) He took you warts and all! While you were yet a sinner! Rom. 5:8

☛ ****Christ died for you!**

1 Pet. 1:18-19: "...you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ,"; Jn. 3:16

☛ ****God has freely solved your greatest problem! Rom. 6:23; 8:1**

Heb. 2:14-18: "Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. 17 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted."

Heb. 4:15-16: "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."; 1 Cor. 10:13

☛ ****God has adopted you! God has selected you as one of His children! God has granted you an inheritance!**

Rom. 8:15-17: "For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.' 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ,"

1 Pet. 1:3-4: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,"

☛ ****God has given you the grandest privilege ever granted anyone!**

To glorifying Him in time and eternity!

1 Cor. 6:20: "For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."; **Rev. 5:13-14:** "And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying:

'Blessing and honor and glory and power
Be to Him who sits on the throne,
And to the Lamb, forever and ever!'

14 Then the four living creatures said, 'Amen!' And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever."

☛ ****Participation in the greatest work the world has ever known!**

(a) A work far greater than any undertaken by men. Saving the souls of men!
Matt. 16:26

- (b) The Lord allows us to participate in greatest work of all: sharing the gospel with others! **1 Cor. 3:9:** “For we are God's fellow workers...”

☛ ****All of God's power is available for your problem(s)!**

Eph. 3:20: “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,”

Eph. 1:18-23: “...the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. 22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”; cf. Heb. 11:3

☛ ****You are heaven bound!**

Phil. 3:20-21: “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”

- (a) Heaven is our home and our destination (Heb. 11:13-16).

- (b) Jesus' home, one day, becomes our home:

Jn. 14:1-4: “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And where I go you know, and the way you know.”

- (c) How blessed and how thankful we should be for that.
- (d) It won't be a weekend tour; it won't be a quick walk through.
- (e) The destination, our journey, ends not at the cemetery, but in the home of God; and there we will be forever!
- (f) There we will be with no other place to go; there we will be with all the righteous of all time (**2 Pet. 3:13:** “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” KJV)
- (g) Heaven isn't owed to us. We don't deserve it. We don't earn it. It's God's promise and gift.
- (h) No matter what happens today. No matter how bleak things are here. No matter how tough things are, someday all of this will be behind us and we will be with the Lord F-O-R-E-V-E-R! Jas. 4:14
- (i) All the bad and discouraging things that happened in this life will simply not matter then. They won't even be a faint memory. Once we are there, all will be fine.

D. **** Words cannot adequately describe what all this truly means.**

- (1) I've barely touched the hem of the garment.
- (2) God brings more joy to bear in our lives than words can describe.
- (3) ** Our joy is limited only by our willingness to study and meditate on His Word and on His blessings and promises.
- (4) If we do that and communicate with Him in prayer; we can restore joy in our lives.

I. CONCLUSION: 10

1. Are you joyful?
2. Do you agree with Paul? **Phil. 4:4:** *"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!"*
3. ** Are you confident in the Lord? **Phil. 4:6-7:** *"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*
4. ** We need to rejoice and be filled with joy!
 - A. We are the most blessed people!
 - B. We have an enormous job to be busy doing!
 - C. We have a destination that is truly out of this world!
5. Invitation

Adapted from an article (Jump Start # 2053) by Roger Shouse.