

Rejoice in the Lord

Philippians 4:4

Online Sermon: http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567

“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say Rejoice”

Who does not want to be happy and feel joy well up within one’s soul? If one had a time machine and could relive any event in your life what would you choose to experience again? Would it not be the joyful moments in your life such as when you took your first step, learned to ride a bike, met a lifetime friend, your first kiss, your marriage ceremony or the birth of your children? While these occasions are all sources of great joy, they pale in comparison to the moment that you bowed and invited Jesus into your heart for it was at that moment that for the first time living waters flowed in your soul and you felt inexpressible and glorious joy! Since we don’t have a time machine and therefore cannot live constantly in these moments then how can one obey the command to rejoice or feel joy in the Lord always when we live in a fallen world where bad things often happen to each and everyone one of us? Today’s sermon is going to talk about the benefits and the source of God-given joy that is so strong that it remains glorious even in the most turbulent storms of life!

Benefits of Living a Joyful Life

The first benefit of living a joy-filled life is that it is contagious. We have all met a modern-day Eeyore. You know the kind of person whose very pores seem to exhume sadness and depression. They are the kind of people that are filled with so much skepticism that they can make any joyous occasion seem irrelevant or worst yet like a dirge! In his book *Didn’t see it Coming* Carey Nieuwhof warns Christians of the danger of skepticism and how negativity can ruin a person’s witness for Jesus. Are we not promised that if we love and believe in Christ as our Savior that we will be filled with “inexpressible and glorious joy” (1 Peter 1:8-9)? Surely just thinking about the administration of God’s grace (Ephesians 3:2) in sending His Son Jesus to atone for your sins (John 3:16) and offer humanity reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:20) and adoption into His family (Ephesians 1:13-14) fills you with unspeakable joy! Let me tell you a story of a person I met that exhumed this kind of joy.



When I met John (not real name) I noticed something very profound about his character. He was gentle, loving and above all one of the best encouragers that I have ever met in my lifetime. His joy for the Lord was breathtaking and he was always ready to pick someone up who was down by pointing them to the joy that they could have in the Lord if only they would count their blessings. While he rarely ever spoke in public or took on an official office in the church, he taught us more about the joy of the Lord than any sermon that I ever preached!

From John I learned how important our joy in the Lord is when it comes to building each other up in the faith and encouraging one another to be like Jesus!

The second benefit of joy is for medicinal purposes. Ever wonder why a hospital has chaplains and allows pastors to visit the sick when in any other government sponsored place religion has been banned? While the healing value of prayer is hotly disputed in the medical



community,¹ most readily agree that hope in a higher power can reduce anxiety and depression and as a result speed up the healing process. Joy or happiness has been linked to reducing stress, boosting our immune system, protecting our hearts and reducing pain which in turn often leads to a greater life expectancy.² As Christians we believe that joy in the Lord not only provides these benefits but when coupled with prayer often leads to miraculous healing! There are documented miracles that while the doctors cannot explain the

healing the Bible does! Time and time again He who knit us in our mother's womb (Psalms 139) has proven He cures the deformed, the lame, the blind, the deaf; ample proof that Jesus can command any disease to leave a person's body!

The third benefit of joy is that it reduces offenses between people. "People who are very happy, especially those who are very happy in the Lord, are not apt either to give offence or to take offence."³ They are so focused on heavenly goals and crowns that "little troubles" that commonly arise amongst us fallen creatures can be forborne. When things get "heated" between two Christians joy in the Lord is the key to reconciling hurt feelings as can be seen in verses 2 and 3 of today's passage.

¹ Taken from the following website: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2802370/>

² Tasken from the following website: <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/happiness-and-health>

³ C. H. Spurgeon, "[Joy, a Duty.](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 41 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1895), 133.

I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

The division between these two ladies was so sharp that Apostle Paul heard of it in faraway Rome!⁴ Since their disagreement was very personal in nature⁵ and could cause disunity in the church,⁶ Paul's remedy was to remind



these ladies that their joy in the Lord should compel them to be “of the same mind” so that they might be reconciled and promote harmony in the church.¹⁸⁷ After you die do you want to be remembered as the one who fought hard with John or Sue Doe or would you rather be known for being kind, gentle, mature and one who focused more on God than the concerns of this world?⁸ Those who are filled with joy in the Lord are less likely to be offended

because they have learned from God how to be gentle, compassionate⁹ and forebear in love with others for keeps no records of wrongs (1 Corinthians 13:5) and covers a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8)!

The last benefit of joy in the Lord that I want to explore is its ability to help one persevere trials and tribulations. James 1:2-4 says the following:

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

⁴ Roger Ellsworth, [Opening up Philippians](#), Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2004), 81.

⁵ Daniel M. Gurtner, [“Philippians.”](#) in *The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: Acts–Philemon*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Craig A. Bubeck, First Edition. (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2004), 585.

⁶ Ben Witherington III, [Paul’s Letter to the Philippians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Company, 2011), 238.

⁷ G. Walter Hansen, [The Letter to the Philippians](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 282.

⁸ Roger Ellsworth, [Opening up Philippians](#), Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2004), 81.

⁹ Daniel M. Gurtner, [“Philippians.”](#) in *The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: Acts–Philemon*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Craig A. Bubeck, First Edition. (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2004), 585.



To consider trials and tribulations pure joy is not something that comes naturally. It is easy to feel joy and rejoice in the Lord when He makes one lie down in green pastures and leads one beside still waters that refresh one's soul (Psalms 23:1-3) but how can one to feel joy in the midst of sickness, joblessness, enemies, marital problems and the financial difficulties of life? How was Charles Spurgeon able to make the following statement about joy?

When the day darkens into evening, and the evening into midnight, and the midnight into a sevenfold horror of great darkness, rejoice in the Lord; and when that darkness does not clear, but becomes more dense and Egyptian, when night succeedeth night, and neither sun nor moon nor stars appear, still rejoice in the Lord always.¹⁰

Spurgeon said he could make such a statement because his source of joy was not found in the green pastures or still waters but in the Lord, who was and always would be his shepherd!¹¹ When God is our refuge and portion in the land of the living (Psalms 16:5, 142:5) then temporary setbacks of life cannot drown out the joy of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord (Philippians 3:8) and one day spending an eternity in His presence (Romans 8:18)!

The Source of our Joy

Continuous joy is attainable for those who put their trust in the Lord. In the 19th century people used what was called a Quassia Cup to help cure fever and other ailments.¹² As soon as one poured water into this cup it became bitter. Spurgeon states that for some Christians they always seem to live with one of these cups in their hands.¹³ Joy is not found in being anxious or pessimistic about our future but in every situation by prayer, petition, and thanksgiving, presenting and trusting God (Philippians 4:6-7) will always do good to those who love Him (Romans 8:28). As Christians we are not to lean upon our own understanding but to trust the known God with an unknown future (Proverbs 3:5). When we stumble and fall like

¹⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, "[Joy, a Duty.](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 41 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1895), 138.

¹¹ C. H. Spurgeon, "[Joy, a Duty.](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 41 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1895), 138-139.

¹² Taken from the following website:

https://centerforinquiry.org/blog/unique_quassia_cup_made_its_own_medicine/

¹³ C. H. Spurgeon, "[Joy, a Duty.](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 41 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1895), 139.



Peter, we can be assured that our Rock will pick us up and place our feet on a firm foundation. It is not easy to be content in all circumstances (Philippians 4:11) but if one trusts fully in the Lord then heavenly rewards will be a greater source of joy than earthly ones. In his letter to Rome Apostle Paul summed up joy in the Lord best with the following petition: “may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).¹⁴

To finish off this sermon I would like to suggest that we frequently count our blessings so that our joy in the Lord might overflow into all circumstances of our lives. It is very easy to



let life’s circumstances get a person down, especially when one is going through trials and tribulations. Let’s take the time to remember that we as Christians are a forgiven, cleansed, masterpiece of God’s grace. He who loves us with an undying love (Psalms 136:1-3) promises to never forsake (Hebrews 13:5) but has a glorious future planned for each and everyone of us. Before Jesus left this earth, He said that He was going to prepare a place for each of us and some day will return and take us home to be with Him (John 14:1-4) ...

how I look forward to that day! So, let us rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice! I want to finish with the following quote from Charles Spurgeon:

We are to “delight in the Lord Jesus, incarnate in your flesh, dead for your sins, risen for your justification, gone into the glory claiming victory for you, sitting at the right hand of God interceding for you, reigning over all worlds on your behalf, and soon to come to take you up into his glory that you may be with him forever.”¹⁵

¹⁴ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ro 15:13.

¹⁵ C. H. Spurgeon, “Joy, a Duty,” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 41 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1895), 137.