

# Rejoice In The Lord

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We're going to be back in Ephesians, Ephesians 3.

I think I meant Philippians just started chapter three in Philippians, chapter three of Philippians, verse 1:3, chapter three, verse 1:3. Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you is safe. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation. For we are the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Let's just ask God's blessing, Father. We just give this time to you. We're just asking you to reveal the true nature of who you are and enable us to worship you, but also of the danger of the religion of this world. In Jesus name, amen. So Paul, in coming towards the close of the book of Philippians, is concluding it's not actually the last of this message, but in heading that way, he says, finally, finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.

He is speaking about a joy that is found in Christ Jesus. You and I live in a culture that may not feel the exact same way as he did.

Some of us would think that would be about the last place you would find joy, that there are plenty other things that they feel have sensual or physical satisfaction that is not related to Jesus Christ at all. And they may even go so far as thinking that the church would be the last place to find any joy. They feel There is a temporal fulfillment in physical things. They enjoy, it seems, for a season, sexual pleasures. They use

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things like alcohol and drugs to stimulate their feelings.

They feel like they are having a good time in their friendships and activities and the things that they are pressing in on. But here Paul says to rejoice in Christ Jesus. He is saying that there is something found in Jesus that is not found in all the worldly pleasure that the world has to offer. I come to the point of thinking that there is actually no eternal pleasure in what the world has to offer, that there is actually no joy. It is like those same sacrifices which they must repeat daily, day after day, which can never take away sin.

If they brought true satisfaction, you would be able to stop doing them, but because they have to continue. I think it's more like an individual taking a hike. And you put on a backpack and you hike and you feel like it's normal. And then you take off the backpack and for a moment you feel light and weightless. You feel as if you could fly.

But soon reality comes and strikes you again. Those things that make us feel or give the appearance of joy rapidly disappear and we're forced to seek them again and again for that release, for just a moment of the weight which we continually have to bear. And. And so individuals are left appearing as if they're seeking joy, but are actually just seeking relief from the drudgery and heavy weights that their circumstances have to offer. These individuals seek these things day after day, but do not rejoice in Christ Jesus.

Some of us may think it might be a strange thing to rejoice in Christ Jesus, but there are several reasons. While rejoicing in Christ Jesus is not only the rational thing to do, but the thing that brings real satisfaction. It is a sacrifice which he offered once and for all. For sinners. It is something that he never has to repeat, is a one time thing that we can hold onto and that lasts a certain life, our whole life and into to heaven.

The first reason why we rejoice in Christ Jesus is because Jesus loves sinners.

For me, I grew up in a loving family. I had parents that loved me, brothers that maybe had an appearance despite all the physical abuse that I may have suffered from my lippy mouth or whichever. I think that they might have loved me, right? But I was on

the ship of going down to Honduras and I got to meet Stacy and we were in the mess hall about to go out to work and she said to me, I love you all. The other love that I ever had experienced up to that moment was minuscule compared to Stacy demonstrating vocally a love that she had to me.

It was a willingness to engage her life with mine to go on together. I felt as if I could fly. I was so excited I could run and jump. She told me that she loved me. Jesus Christ loves sinners.

He loves sinners, individuals who are broken and destitute, hurting and unlovable. He demonstrates his love for them, for God so loved the world. It says that Jesus demonstrated His love for us in this way. He loves us. There is a reason to rejoice in Jesus Christ because He loves you and I.

He cares for you. He is an individual fighting on your behalf, engaged in your battles and wants to spend time with you. There is an absolute reason to rejoice in Christ Jesus. It is better than any carnal thing that you may take up that may alleviate the pain you carry temporarily. Jesus demonstrated his love for us in this way while we were still sinners.

Christ died for us. He gave us a picture of the love that he had for us. You And I, in our carnal love, at times tend to demonstrate that, but it pales in comparison. If you've ever been an unworthy recipient of love, there's reason to marvel at why a person would demonstrate care for an unworthy individual like yourself. And we marvel.

It's a source of rejoicing. How could they look past my faults to show me a kind of love? Surely, physically, we rejoice when another human being will show us that love. How much more so when Christ willingly demonstrated his love for us by laying down his life on the cross for us. That burden that he was willing to pick up was the burden of the cross.

How much and how far a person will be willing to go for us is the measure of the love that they have for us. The more a person demonstrates their love, the more their love should be rejoiced in and valued and cared for. How many people, in the face of

friends and family demonstrating tremendous quantities of love, have scorned that love to walk in a different way? How shameful it is to do that. Here we see that Christ laid down willing to take up that cross and endure the suffering of our sins upon his shoulder because of his willingness to be a propitiation for for the wrath of God.

There is a reason to rejoice in Jesus, rejoice in the Lord. A reason we rejoice in the Lord is because of that when we're called into his service, he gives us a responsibility. We went to West Virginia last week and Jeshurun was sworn in as a police officer. And he was given a badge, a badge that gave him authority. And then the other day he sent me a picture.

It was his hat. He had a hat. And he was rejoicing. That though just a couple of days before was driving with no registration too fast on his motorcycle in and out of traffic. He had no registration on his pickup.

It had been registered 10 years ago. Zach got pulled over in it and they were going to tow it. Just a couple of days ago he was a law breaker, but now he had a badge and a hat and he had authority and he was rejoicing that I now have a position in this city as an officer. How much more so you and I that when we come into Christ's kingdom because of that work which he did for us, he led captivity captive and gave gifts to men. He gives us a position and authority in his kingdom that we don't deserve is a reason to rejoice in Christ Jesus.

We rejoice in Christ Jesus because we were homeless and broken and without a family. And he has adopted us into his family. We were, as it were, the children of a Hittite and an Amorite by birth, cast out as a child. No one wanted bloody and despised someone just to lay out and throw down and let them die of natural causes. But he came by and said to us in our blood, live, live.

And he chose us by adoption, not because of any cuteness or anything that we had in our own self, but because of his great love. He adopted us and brought us into a family, you and I, who were outcasts and orphans, with no one to care for us. He brought us into his family and as a part of his he gave us certain rights.

He gave us a home to live in, a family to share with, and an inheritance guaranteed for our person, all because of a work which Jesus did for us. He gave us a promise that one day we would enter into the joy of the Lord. We would come and get to endure the benefit and the blessing of being in relationship with him for eternity. There are many reasons to rejoice in Christ Jesus. And it's my opinion that if you cannot find one of them to rejoice in that you are a hard hearted person.

You have a skin on your heart that is thin, thick and unfeeling. We see people whose families have doted on them and loved on them and they do nothing but cheat and steal and rob and hurt those people who care for them. And we look at those people and say how ungrateful, how rotten that people could care for someone so much. And yet the recompense or how they treat back is so undeserving. If we cannot find a reason to rejoice in Christ Jesus, it's because you have never truly seen the work of Jesus Christ.

And there is a danger here.

It is possibly that it is because of these things. Chapter three, verse two. It says, beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation. These are the individuals who go into weak willed women's household and take captive of them. They travel land and sea to make one proselyte and then after having been one, make them twice the son of hell as they were before.

These are individuals who glorify a physical righteousness over a spiritual one. It says that they are dogs. These are the individuals who are outside of the gates of that holy city who are cast out. They are like the individuals who appear righteous, but when they make their way into the wedding feast, are cast out into eternal darkness because they did not have on wedding clothes. These are evil workers, individuals who, for their own sake and their own glory, partake in religious activities for their own benefit.

They are the mutilation. Paul says, in one place, I wish they would go so far as to cut their own self off. They are individuals who say, like they said in the days of Paul, that

an individual must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses in order to be saved. These are individuals who preach a gospel that is dependent on a work of the flesh. I was in West Virginia and I noticed some people out sharing with their community.

And I couldn't. I was just standing there and finally I was like, you know, I'm just going to go over and listen. And so I stood by the door they were preaching at, and I just listened. And finally I asked some questions. And one of the questions, I asked the lady, I was like, what is the good news?

What is the good news? And she began to tell me about the works and this and that. I couldn't believe it. No, the good news is not something you can do to get to heaven. The good news is that someone did something so you could get to heaven.

I couldn't understand how. How she could miss the blatant idea that Jesus Christ died on the cross because we could do nothing. How could she miss that? And she was trying to spread a gospel that was based on physical things. Physical things.

It says in verse three, we are the circumcision. We are the circumstances, not the removal of flesh from the body, not of the removal of a part of their body, but the answer of a good conscience from the Lord. Paul says that circumcision is not one outwardly, but one inwardly. It's that curse that you and I inherited from our forefathers that was brought down from Adam that teaches us that pleasure is sin against God. That curse which drives us away from the things of Christ that has been cut off of the believer.

It used to be that we, out of fear of death, lived a certain life because of. We were afraid of what God might do to us, that we lived a religious good lifestyle. But the Lord has cut off that thing, cut off that old religious work, and now has given us a new heart. A new heart which he puts his law in our minds and write it in the tablet of our heart, where now the fear is not based on what he would do to us in punishment, but fear of what we might miss if we don't walk with Jesus. The fear is that I might not be able to experience the fullness of what he has to offer me, that joy is found with him.

It says, for we are the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit. It has to be understood that in Jesus' interaction with the Samaritan woman that he said that he is looking for worshipers, worshipers who worship God in the Spirit. We are tempted to accept a form of doctrine which is dependent upon physical things. Body posture, different kinds of raiment, special hats, all sorts of different things. This is saying that true worship is one that happens spiritually and is not dependent upon any type of physical activity.

It's not dependent upon how you say a name or which version you use or other, any other physical adornment. It is based on only the worship in our spirit of God. It says, rejoice in Christ Jesus. Those who are the circumcision, who have been circumcised spiritually and therefore are allowed into that holy place. Just as before, you had to be circumcised physically to be allowed into the temple to worship.

Now those who can worship God are those who circumcise spiritually. They are those who rejoice in Christ Jesus whose joy is an understanding of the work which he accomplished on the cross for us and the last thing, and have no confidence in the flesh. We live in a society that is absolutely mind boggling, dependent upon the goodness of their own flesh. You and I are not exempt from that. It's amazing when Americans go other places, they feel that they have certain rights that actually don't exist in other countries.

The first time an American goes to a Honduran checkpoint and they have their M16s, but also they want some cash and they tend to get a little affronted by this. What, you're going to actually get a bribe from me? I'm an American. How can you do this? We feel we have certain rights, but that extends far beyond just being an American.

We feel that because of the goodness of our own nature, we have something to boast about before God. We feel that our own goodness gives us the right to approach God's throne. This says those who are the circumcision, they worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in their flesh. We're going to close with this, but I just want to encourage us to look, if you want to be the kind of person who enters into the throne room of God as a clean individual, it has to be one who worships

God in the spirit, not dependent upon physical trifles to give you that ability. It has to be one that rejoices in the work of Jesus Christ.

And it has to be one that is not dependent upon your own physical goodness, but only upon the work of God to allow us to be there. I would say that this should give us a joy and a desire to rejoice in one that lasts forever. Let's pray. Oh Father. Lord, we've rejoiced in a lot of things, but they were temporary, shallow things which did not last.

Alleviated our sufferings for a moment. All the while, you have something beautiful to offer us. Lord, I pray you would lift up that work of Christ in our heart that we would be able to see it as it is and would enable us, Lord, to worship God in the way intended. In Jesus name, Amen.