



water from rock

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen - May 23, 2024

The Lord be with you.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how are you feeling today? Perhaps you're feeling a seven or an eight headed towards 10 or are you are feeling pretty low? I mean, like my sweet departed mother would say, feeling lower than a snake's belly. Well, whoever you are the one that 10 scale today, I wanna share with you something that always helps me whether I'm feeling really good or really low.

It is a spiritual practice, a spiritual discipline that the Bible commands us to always, that's the word to always practice the spiritual practice I have in mind is to daily make the choice to rejoice. We find it in the Little New Testament Book of Philippians. Philippians chapter four verse four where the Apostle Paul inspired by the Holy Spirit commands rejoice in the Lord. Always again, I will say rejoice.

These are the words of one Christian who is suffering persecution for Christ, that is Paul to other Christians who are suffering persecution for Christ. That is the Philippians. And Paul says to them rejoice in the Lord. Always again, I will say rejoice, the Apostle Paul writes these words as he is under house arrest in Rome facing trial before a Roman judge who is going to decide whether Paul lives or dies.

And Paul is writing to Christians who Paul says in Philippians one verse 29 he says that they are suffering for Christ. I'm not sure where they are feeling on the 1 to 10 scale as I read Paul's letter, but Paul says rejoice in the Lord, always again, I will say rejoice note that this is a command. It is not a suggestion but a command to make the choice to rejoice.

I think it's interesting that joy is actually the theme of this little book of Philippians as the word joy or rejoice is used 16 times in these four short chapters along with the use of the word suffering again and again, is a repeated call for joy and rejoicing. Well, back in chapter two, verse 18, Paul speaks of his life being poured out and he says, he says, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. And in the same way, you also must be glad and rejoice with me. Paul makes the choice to rejoice and he asks the Philippians to make the choice to rejoice always with him. And then in chapter three of Philippians verse one, Paul says, finally, my brothers and sisters rejoice in the Lord and Paul can't let it drop as he picks it up again here in Philippians chapter four verse four, rejoice in the Lord.

Always again, I will say rejoice note that this is a choice that we make a choice to rejoice in the Lord and, and, and that's the key that is essential here, it is a choice to rejoice in the Lord. We do not, we do not rejoice in some of the things we see going on in our world today. And there might



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be some things happening in your life right now that you can't very well rejoice in that we can rejoice in the Lord always because the Lord is always faithful. The Lord is always full of love and grace and mercy.

The Lord is always there for us, always with us. So we can always rejoice in the Lord that he is making everything work together for our good and that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ, Jesus. And that we are joint heirs with Christ with an eternal incorruptible inheritance. That doesn't mean that we're never sad. I mean Jesus wept.

He knew sorrow, he knew pain. But in the midst of it, all we are focused on Christ and all that we have in Christ and we can never lose our joy because we can never lose Christ. As we know that Christ oversees every detail of our lives. We know that ultimately everything is going to be wonderful.

And the secret here is Christ, not our circumstances and we make the choice to rejoice in the Lord. Always, it is one of the things that I love about David in the Bible and the other psalmist in that whatever their circumstances, whatever they were feeling, I mean, wherever they were on the 1 to 10 scale, they make the intentional choice to rejoice in the Lord. Always in spite of their circumstances to rejoice in the Lord. It's, it's not, it's not a feeling but it's a decision. It's a choice that we make.

It is something that we have the power to do or not to do. And, and, and we find that as we do it, we, we find that we are blessed and we become a blessing to others. And I wonder if as a Philippian Christians, as I, I wonder if, as they read these words of Paul, I, I wonder if they are remembering the first time Paul came to the city of Philippi preaching Christ, Paul is arrested, he's beaten.

And in acts chapter 16, it says of Paul and his coworker Silas, it says, quote, they were put in the innermost cell of the prison and their feet was, were fastened in stocks. And about midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God and the prisoners were listening to them.

And I often think that well, whether I am in prison in the hospital in a financial quagmire, I whatever I want to make the choice to rejoice in the Lord always for, he is good and loving and he always cares for you and me. So with the psalmist, I I close out today, make a joyful noise unto the Lord. All you lands serve the Lord with gladness. Come before his presence with singing.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler. Thank you for listening. Until next time.