



water from rock

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – October 13, 2020

The lord be with you.

Hey, have you watched the evening news recently? Wow. Someone has said that the evening news is where they begin with, good evening, and then they tell you all the reasons why it isn't... Well, it does seem like we've had a lot of not so good news recently I mean with the COVID and lock-downs and churches closed and unemployment and knock down drag out political fighting.

Let's take a break from all of that.

And I have a great versus scripture again today, Philippians chapter 4 verse 4, "Rejoice in the Lord, always. Again, I will say rejoice." Now, here in this verse, the Apostle Paul is picking up on something that he actually started back in chapter 3, verse 1, "Finally my brothers and sisters rejoice in the Lord." But you know like most preachers when Paul says finally, well, he's not really gotten to finally yet, so that he picks that thought up again here in chapter four, when he says "Rejoice in the Lord always, again, I will say rejoice." Now, this word rejoice is the keynote of Paul's letter to the Philippians, as again and again, Paul talks about rejoicing and joy. I mean, this is really significant, when you think about where Paul is, as he writes this letter. Paul is in prison, and he's been in prison for well over two years facing possible execution for crimes of which he has been falsely charged. I would think that Paul had maybe some good reason to be upset, but Paul says, Rejoice in the Lord always.

Now, I wonder if the Philippians Christians, as I read Paul's command, Rejoice in the Lord always. Well, I wonder if they remember Paul and Silas in the Philippian jail when they were singing praises to God at midnight. Now, not that this is not just a suggestion from Paul. Well, you know, it would be nice if you would do this, it would be nice if you would rejoice, but this is a command. Rejoice in the Lord, always. And then Paul repeats it for emphasis. Again, I will say rejoice. It is a command that we rejoice in the Lord always. But note what it is that we rejoice about. Paul says, Rejoice in the Lord. And that's the key, that we rejoice in the Lord.

Now, you know there are many reasons why we might rejoice, hey right now, I am rejoicing that it's finally cooler weather in Arizona. Paul says, Rejoice in the Lord. Rejoice at the new life that you have in Jesus, rejoice at the forgiveness of sin, rejoice at a home in heaven, rejoice that God works all things together for your good, rejoice that you are blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus. then just a few verses down from this, in Philippians 4: , Paul says, I can do all things to Christ who strengthens me. Hey, that's reason to rejoice in Christ, that with Jesus, you are ready for anything life throws at you. So even in times of trouble, I don't have to be swept along by my feelings, I can make the decision, I can choose to rejoice always in the Lord.



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Now, this does not mean that we're never sad, I mean that would be to misunderstand Paul's words, we should never deny Grief or sadness. I think the book of Psalms can be of great help to us in this, that we don't have to put on happy faces, we don't have to pretend. One of my very favorite verses in all the Bible is John 11:35, where it says, "Jesus wept." It is the shortest verse in the English Bible. But the shortest verse in the Greek New Testament is 1 Thessalonians 5:16, "rejoice always." Isn't that something? That rejoicing and weeping can go together as we rejoice in the Lord. Jesus could weep and yet have full joy. Just a few hours before Jesus went to the cross, he said to his disciples in the upper room, in John 15:11, "I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete." So God intends for you to have the same joy that Jesus had. Rejoice in the Lord, always, again, I will say Rejoice.

Rejoicing in the Lord has to do with obedience. It doesn't have to do with temperament, it doesn't have to do with circumstances, it is obedience that I really do have a Christian responsibility, I have a Christian duty to rejoice in the Lord always. It's something that we really need to be doing in these difficult days. Nehemiah chapter 8, verse 10 says, The joy of the Lord is your strength. We need Christians today who are joyful. Christians who are rejoicing in the Lord. The first thing my wife, Rita and I do in the morning, before our feet hit the floor, we join hands. And we repeat Psalm 118:24, "This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it." So if you watch the news tonight, there's probably gonna be some bad news, but lets you in me, let's make the decision to rejoice in the Lord, to rejoice in all that we have in Jesus. We need it. Our poor world needs it to. Let us rejoice. Joyful, joyful, we adore thee God of glory, Lord of love, hearts unfold like flowers before thee opening to the sun above, melt the clouds of sin and sadness, drive the dark of doubt away, giver of immortal gladness fill us with the light of day.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler. Thanks for listening until next time.



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