

REJOICE EVERMORE (1 Thessalonians 5:16)

Sermon to the Saints at Westboro Baptist Church on Sunday, August 27, 2017.

The church in Thessalonica was enduring huge persecution because of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul, among many admonitions, highlights to them to rejoice evermore. And, in case you didn't understand the Holy Spirit at the mouth of Paul in his epistle to the church at Thessalonica, He repeats the admonition to the church at Philippi: ***Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. (Philippians 4:4)***

The dictionary defines "rejoice" as a verb meaning to "be very happy about something." The Bible—from cover to cover—exhorts believers to rejoice evermore! Searching out "rejoice" in the Bible, including the synonyms of joy, mirth, gladness, and others you are soon overwhelmed with the scope and the vastness of it all. Open the Bible anywhere and it quickly is presented: the elect of God—those redeemed from among Adam's race by the mercy and choosing of God—are supernaturally endued with the joy of the Lord, among all other necessary graces for the glory of God and their happiness. In fact, when denouncing in the strongest curses possible the rebellion of the Jews (a very small nation whom the Lord chose to commit "**the oracles of God**"--Romans 3:2) in **Deuteronomy 28, at verse 47**, our Lord identifies a source of their great evil, to wit: "**Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things!**" Dear friends, we are today inundated with a generation of unthankful, angry, discontent and morbidly sad humans: because they do not serve the Lord their God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart for the abundance of all things! We should therefore be thankful (**Colossians 3:15**), happy (**1 Peter 3:14 and 4:14**), content with such things as we have (**Hebrews 13:5**), and rejoicing in the Lord always (**Philippians 4:4; 1 Thessalonians 5:17**)! More than that, we are comely to our Lord Jesus Christ when we rejoice (**Psalms 33:1**). It is an indispensable part of our daily walk and worship of God. This commandment--to rejoice evermore--is very serious. I give you a fraction of a tithe of the verses which declare that rejoicing prevails in the life of his sheep, his elect, his called-out ones (there are literally hundreds with "rejoice," "joy," "glad," and "mirth"):

Exodus 18:9: And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel, whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians.

Leviticus 23:40: And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days.

Deuteronomy 16:11: And thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are among you, in the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to place his name there.

Deuteronomy 27:7: And thou shalt offer peace offerings, and shalt eat there, and rejoice before the LORD thy God.

Psalm 2:11: Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

Psalm 9:2: I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High.

Psalm 66:6: He turned the sea into dry land: they went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice in him.

Psalm 68:3: But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.

Psalm 98:4: Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.

Song of Solomon 1:4: Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee.

Isaiah 65:18: But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

Joel 2:23: Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.

Zephaniah 3:17: The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.

Luke 1:47: And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

Philippians 3:1: Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.

Revelation 19:7: Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

So, as I often do, I encourage you to search out “rejoice” in its various forms, and the synonyms of rejoice, in a Bible search engine: and watch it respond with hundreds of verses, all of which are instructive and delightful. Each one a separate sermon or area of study and source of great joy and contentment. But I move on...

Psalm 33:1: Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright. This rejoicing then is reserved for the “upright.” Thomas Watson says: “Praise is not comely for any but the godly. A profane man stuck with God’s praise is like a dunghill stuck with flowers. Praise in the mouth of a sinner is like an oracle in the mouth of a fool: how uncomely is it for him to praise God, whose whole life is a dishonouring of God? It is as indecent for a wicked man to praise God, who goes on in sinful practices, as it is for an usurer to talk of living by faith, or for the devil to quote Scripture. The godly are only fit to be choristers in God’s praise; it is called, “the garment of praise.” #Isa 61:3. This garment sits handsome only on a saint’s back.” In his Hints to Village Preachers section of the Treasury of David at this verse, Charles Spurgeon suggests this as an outline for a sermon: “Ver. 1. (last clause). Praise comely. What? Vocal, meditative, habitual praise. Why? It is comely as wings to an angel, we mount with it; as flowers to a tree, it is our fruit; as a robe to a priest, it is our office; as long hair to a woman, it is our beauty; as a crown to a king, it is our highest honour. When? Evermore, but chiefly amid blasphemy, persecution, sickness, poverty, death. Whom? Not from the ungodly, hypocritical, or thoughtless. To be without praise is to miss our comeliest adornment.” Brother Spurgeon has strong Bible support for his positions including relating to the “When” hint above. Check his work!

This is praise that is not carnal, but in a spiritual way, with joy in the Holy Ghost. ***Romans 14:17: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.***

This is spiritual rejoicing from a view of pardon by the blood of Christ, of justification by his righteousness, and atonement by his sacrifice.

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having

made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. Colossians 1:12-20.

Romans 4:25: Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

You're not to rejoice in yourselves...

1 Corinthians 4:7: For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

Job said, ***"If I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much; ... I should have denied the God that is above."*** (Job 31:25, 28) Should we deny God that is above?

Nor as the wicked man rejoices in his wickedness...

Psalms 52:7: Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness. Also, see Proverbs 2:14-15 where Wisdom sternly warns of evil men ***"[w]ho rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked; Whose ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths."***

Not as the hypocrite and formalist in his profession of religion, and the reputation he gains by it...

Job 8:13-14: So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish: Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web.

In every society, including Topeka, Kansas, if you want to get anywhere in society even today, you must have some sort of a profession of religion because it will help you advance in that society. I'm familiar with the legal profession in Topeka for the past 35-40 years. If you want to advance as a lawyer in this City you better make some show of religion. Not real religion, mind you. Not **James 1:27** religion: ***"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."*** O, no! Not that. No, I'm talking about the First Methodist Church, or the First Presbyterian Church, or lately maybe the First Baptist Church; but mainly if you can genuflect fast enough at the feet of some raping priest or raping priest enabler, that monstrous-master-at-soul-stealing machine (**Revelation 18:13**) called the Roman Catholics, you will be in like Flynn.

And not as the Pharisee and legalist in his morality, civility, and obedience to the rituals of the law; for such rejoice in their boastings, and all such rejoicing is evil. (**Romans 1:30, Romans 2:17, Romans 2:23, and Romans 3:27**). Jeremiah knew, **7:4: “Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these.”**

But our rejoicing is in the Lord Jesus Christ (**Philippians 3:3: “For we...rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh”**), including but not limited to:

- (1) **In the greatness and glory of His person.** Psalm 145:3 **“Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.”** That doesn’t mean we don’t search it out; it means we cannot reach the end of our search though we daily, diligently search. As in, **Romans 11:33: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”**
- (2) **In His fitness.** See for example **Hebrews 2:10: “For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”** Psalm 40:7-8: **“Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.”**
- (3) **In His fullness.** **Colossians 1:19: “For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.”** **Colossians 2:9 “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”** Gill says: “[H]e fills all the powers and faculties of their souls, their hearts with joy, their minds with knowledge, their consciences with peace, their wills with spiritual desires, submission and resignation, and their affections with love to himself and people: in short, he fills them with all grace and goodness, and the fruits of righteousness; and so makes them meet for usefulness here, and for happiness hereafter; the fulness of the earth in #Ps 24:1 is by the Jews interpreted of the souls of the righteous, and of the congregation of Israel.”
- (4) **In His blood.** **Revelation 12:11-12: “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them.”**
- (5) **In His righteousness.** **Psalm 89:16: “In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.”** **Isaiah 61:10: “I will greatly**

rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.”

- (6) **In his holiness.** Ps 97:12: “Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.”
- (7) **In his sacrifice.** Psalm 20:3-5: “Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice; Selah. Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel. We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners: the LORD fulfil all thy petitions.” This is “[C]hrist’s sacrifice of himself, putting away sin, and perfecting for ever them that are sanctified, is of a sweet smelling savour to God; for hereby his justice is satisfied, his law is magnified and made honourable, the sins of his people are atoned for, their persons are accepted, and their sacrifices of prayer and praise come up also with acceptance to him through the virtue of this sacrifice; and so these petitions have their accomplishment.” – John Gill’s exposition of Psalm 20:3.
- (8) **In His judgments.** Psalm 48:11: Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments.
- (9) **In his role as Mediator/Intercessor:** 1 Timothy 2:5: “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” Hebrews 9:15: “And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.” Hebrews 7:25: “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

We rejoice that our names are written in heaven. Luke 10:20: “Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.”

We rejoice that we are redeemed by the blood of Christ. Psalm 71:23: “My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed.” Hebrews 13:20-21: “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the

sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” 1Pe 1:18-19 “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” Also see the last half of Revelation Chapter 5.

We rejoice that we are called by His grace. 2 Timothy 1:9.

We rejoice that we shall be glorified together with him. Romans 8:17.

We rejoice not only in prosperity, but in adversity, since all things work together for good to them that are called according to his purpose (**Romans 8:28**), and afflictions serve for the exercise of grace (**Hebrews 12:11**); and especially, since to suffer reproach and persecution for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel, is a great honor, and the Spirit of God, and of glory, rests on such, and great will be their reward in heaven.

Matthew 5:10-12: “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”

Luke 6:22-23: “Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man’s sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.”

1 Peter 4:12-19: “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.”

We rejoice that there is always reason, and ever a firm ground and foundation for rejoicing with believers, let their circumstances or their frames be what they will; since God, our covenant God, is unchangeable, and his love to his sheep is from everlasting to everlasting invariably the same. **Malachi 3:6: “For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.” Psalm 103:17: “But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children’s children.” Jeremiah 31:3: “The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”** Our Lord Jesus Christ, is coexistent with God the Father, and he says, at **John 17:24: “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” Psalm 36:10: “O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart.”**

We rejoice in the covenant of grace, which is ordered in all things, and sure, is firm and immovable; and Jesus, the Mediator of it, is the same today, yesterday, and forever. **2 Samuel 23:5: “Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire...” Hebrews 13:8 “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.” Hebrews 1:12: “And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.”**

What kind of ungrateful, unthankful beasts would we be if we do not daily, hour by hour and minute by minute rejoice greatly in the Lord? ***“Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins. So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee. Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee. But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works.”*** Psalm 73:21-28.

“Rejoice in the Lord alway: And again I say, rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4) I love you. Amen.