

SERMON: A STRANGE COMMAND

Philippians 4:4

Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.

Introduction

Paul is writing a “thank-you” letter from a prison cell. Paul had a special relationship with the church at Philippi. This was the only congregation that Paul allowed to make donations to his ministry. He is gentle-spirited, reflective, and downright fatherly in this writing, except for verse four. The syntax of verse four is odd. The words and the syntax do not match. Or do they? Paul uses what Greek scholars sometimes call the “military mood.” He used the language of a commanding officer or a drill sergeant and tells them to rejoice. Normally, it would be harsh language. If he were writing today in English, he would write, “You better rejoice, and I mean it! I’m not playing with you!”

This strange command of Paul is applicable at all times, but especially during this holiday season. I like to call it Thanksmas - the period from Thanksgiving to New Year’s Day. (Reverend Victor Pentz, the former pastor of the Peachtree Presbyterian Church first used this term.) This season in which we should be the most joyful can be a time of great sorrow and sadness for many. For many it will be the first holiday season without the physical presence of a loved-one. For others it is a time when major medical issues are addressed to comply with the insurance company’s stipulations and the procedure or surgery is performed before the year ends. There are others who are socially awkward and do not make friends easily; this could be a time of painful loneliness for them. Still there are others who use this season as a time of self-evaluation and it appears no progress has been made since this same time last year. Their financial position has not changed or maybe even gotten worse. Some are sad because another year has passed and they still have not found Mister or Miss Right. Even listening to the daily news can be a downer. Christ did not mean for us to experience gloom and doom constantly. He wants us to have life in an abundant way, despite the tricks of the devil. This is why He had Paul to pen these words. The devil knows he cannot take away our salvation, so he will try to take our joy and make us miserable as we journey on our way to heaven. Don’t let him do that! So let’s look at some Biblical ways to assure that we will rejoice always.

EXPOSITION

1. Think About The Person Of Our Lord.

(Just Think About Who Jesus Is.)

2. Think About The Promises of Our Lord.

(Some Theologians Say There Are Close To Nine Thousand in the Bible.)
(Most Have Already Been Fulfilled.)

3. Think About the Provisions Of Our Lord.

(He Provides Our Needs According To His Riches In Glory.)
(He Will Put The Right People In Your Life.)
(Please Recognize Them.)

4. Think About The Power Of Our Lord.

(All Power And Authority Are In His Hands.)

(*Dunamis And Exousia.*)

5. Experience the Presence of Our Lord.

(Experience Him Through Prayer, Praise, And Meditation Of The Word.)

Closing Thoughts

Paul did not say, "Rejoice in your health." One's health can fail. Paul did not say, "Rejoice in your wealth." You may not have wealth and even if you do, you could lose it. Rather, Paul said, "Rejoice in the Lord always." Many things in life can cause us to become downcast, disappointed, and discouraged. When this happens, just look in the mirror and become your own drill sergeant and say, "You better rejoice and I mean it." Obey that command and I guarantee you will instantly feel better and your day will be brighter. Give God Glory! Give God All The Glory!

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