



Rejoice in the Lord!

As we turn a chapter in our study of Philippians, we are greeted with simple yet powerful words of encouragement. It's also a good time to remember that verses and chapter markers were added to the Bible long after it was first written, and sometimes these can break up a single thought. So for context, let's back up a few verses:

Therefore I have sent him [Epaphroditus] all the more eagerly so that when you see him again you may rejoice and I may be less concerned about you. Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard; because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me. Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you. [Phil 2:29 – 3:1](#)

Following a call to warmly welcome his co-worker in the gospel, Epaphroditus, Paul exhorted the church to increase their service because their lack in doing so nearly killed their brother in Christ. But as we've seen in our study, the Philippians were an overall healthy body of believers, and this letter contains very little correction or condemnation. So Paul immediately switches back to encouragement with the reminder, "***finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.***"

Since we are nowhere near the end of this letter, it's worth noting that the word ***finally*** (Greek: [loipos](#)) can be translated many different ways, such as "moreover", "now" or "what remains". Paul's main point here is that the readers and hearers of this letter must ***rejoice in the Lord*** now and always.

It's probably pretty obvious that rejoice means to be joyful, glad, and happy. It's a verb – a physical action – and like all other actions requires intention. Rejoicing doesn't happen automatically, nor is it a fixed object that we can grasp onto. We must intentionally and purposely ***rejoice in the Lord.***

I always find it interesting how the Lord gives us opportunities to rejoice in the midst of chaos and trial. We might think it's pretty easy to rejoice when things are great and going exactly as we planned. But is it really? Do we really lean on God when things are perfect? We might be glad and happy, but it doesn't mean that we are truly relying on God for that happiness and joy; it's far more circumstantial. And if we're honest with ourselves, we're probably not rejoicing as much as we think are, and certainly not as much as we should be.

However, when things are rough and not going to our plan, when the future is uncertain and scary, we have to cling tightly to our God and Savior because there is nothing else. And in these



situations, we are called to **rejoice in the Lord**. Why? Because He is not circumstantial or fleeting. Intentionally rejoicing when we could be griping and complaining builds, grows, and tests our faith. It gives glory to God. And it helps us learn to trust the One who rightfully possesses our body and soul. Rejoicing in the Lord when there is no earthly reason to do so allows us to surrender our wills to Him Who sits on the throne, and then we find rest, peace, and joy.

An important takeaway is that rejoicing is not to be considered optional. It is a biblical requirement for believers. Paul's words here are not a suggestion, they are a command, and he wrote the same thing to the church in Thessalonica: **"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."** ([1 Thes 5:16-18](#)). This command is also written in most of his epistles and even repeated again in [Philippians 4:4](#), **"rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!"**

So no matter what life circumstance we happen to be in today, one that naturally brings us happiness or one that is stressful, uncertain, or even painful, we must **rejoice in the Lord**.

Focus on those last three words... **"in the Lord."** In Whom are we finding this joy? The Lord! We won't find that kind of lasting and meaningful joy in anyone or anything else.

Let's close with the Apostle Peter's words of encouragement in the opening of his first epistle:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls. ([1 Peter 1:1-9](#))

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