

Rejoice

#0120

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—April 4, 1975

Philippians the fourth chapter and the fourth verse. And don't forget that the man that wrote this down was writing from a dungeon. He was a prisoner of Rome, but his heart overflowed with joy. Remember also that he was writing to the Philippians. When Paul brought the Gospel to the city of Philippi, he soon found himself in a dungeon *there*. But at midnight with his feet in the stocks and his back bleeding, Paul joined with his co-laborer, Silas, in a lovely duet. The angels of God heard those strains, and God used them to shake that prison, convert the jailer, and turn defeat into victory. Oh, friend, Paul knew what he was writing about when he wrote this verse for which our study begins tonight. Will you read it with me?

"Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice"
Philippians 4:4.

What's the first word in this verse? Rejoice. What's the last word in this verse? Rejoice. Many of our hymns begin on the key note, and they close on the key note. That's the way this verse does.

In this lovely little devotional book, *Sons and Daughters of God*, page 200, I read:

"Rejoicing is the very keynote of the word of God for all who receive Him. As many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, and the sons of God sing for joy. 'Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.'" *Sons and Daughters of God*, page 200.

Now turn over a few pages to 1 Thessalonians, the 5th chapter, and the 16th verse. One of the very short verses of the Bible, but oh, how much is packed here into two words. What's the opening word again? Rejoice. And the next and last? Evermore. What does that mean? Well, it means all the time and never stop.

"Rejoice evermore" 1 Thessalonians 5:16.

This medicine shouldn't be hard to take, should it? No. It's not bitter; it's sweet. What a privilege we have to rejoice in the Lord.

But notice it is rejoicing in God. If our rejoicing is dependent on circumstances, we're like the weather vane that turns now one way and now another, just according to which way the wind is. But if our rejoicing is in God, we're like the compass that always points north. It doesn't make any difference which way the wind is blowing; the compass points north. And so, in the Christian's heart, there is joy in God, joy in the Lord.

Let's turn to Romans 12:12.

“Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer” Romans 12:12.

Here again, Paul is speaking of rejoicing. What does he say is our privilege to rejoice in here? To rejoice in hope. That's what the Christian has that the world doesn't have. The sky may be dark today, but we have hope for we know that the sun is shining behind the clouds. There may be bereavement today, but we have the blessed hope of the resurrection. We may have pain today; weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.

The rejoicing we're studying about tonight is not just some fun at a picnic. It's deep, settled peace and assurance that carries us through every trial.

Turn back to Romans 5:

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice...” Romans 5:1–2.

Paul's right back on his subject again, his favorite subject—rejoicing. He's talking about people who have peace with God. They *rejoice* in the hope of the glory of God. The 20th Century translation renders this:

“Let us triumph in our hope of attaining God's glorious ideal” Romans 5:2 (*Twentieth Century Translation*).

Our joy is not only in what we see but in what we know we're going to see. Not only in what we possess by faith now but what we know we shall possess more and more here in this world and in the life to come. We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. We triumph in our hope of attaining God's glorious ideal.

It's interesting the way the *Revised Standard Version* puts this verse:

“We rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God”
Romans 5:2 (*Revised Standard Version*).

The glory of God you know is His character, and His character is love (1 John 4:8). Our hope of attaining God's glorious ideal, our hope of sharing through the eternal ages the glory of His character. Oh, what a wonderful hope that is, my friend! If we keep looking at that hope, then we too shall rejoice. We shall have what Paul did in the Philippians dungeon and in the Roman dungeon. We shall have that hope and that joy that comes through hope. God wants us to have it, friend.

God has done many things to teach us the truths on which this hope is based. He has spoken to us through His Word, through the beautiful things of nature, and through the experiences of life.

Let's turn to Jeremiah 15. Notice the joy that comes through feeding on the Word of God.

Last summer, we were riding through a Midwestern state, and I noticed a sign at a roadside eating place: Happiness is a full tummy. And I thought, "Isn't that a picture?" You know there are millions of people that find their chief delight in just that, don't they? God has intended that we shall find joy in eating good food at the right time, the right amount, the right way. But now watch as we listen to Jeremiah:

"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart..." Jeremiah 15:16.

Ah, friend, there's something that brings more rejoicing than any food we can put in the stomach. It's what we can put in the heart, in the soul from God's holy book. Have you found the joy that comes from eating the Word of God?

There's many a person in this world, if he would open this Book and look at it, he'd put it down and say, "I don't see much in it." We need the same good Spirit that inspired the Book to rightly interpret it to our hearts. So as we study these words that have been given us by inspiration, let us pray that God will speak to our hearts through this Book, for this is indeed a letter from Him—a love letter to each of us as His children here in this world.

When we think of it this way—as a personal communication from the Creator of the universe, He loves us enough that He gave His life for us on the cross—I say, when we think of it this way, more and more the reading of this Book, the eating of these Words can indeed bring us joy and rejoicing, joy and rejoicing.

Now let me ask you a question: How many of you have had the experience somewhere in your past life of tasting some food and finding that you didn't like it, but because you saw other people liking it you kept trying it, and finally you come to enjoy that food? I said that to say this: so it can be with this Book. If so far, you have not found the joy that is in this Book, don't get discouraged—it's there. Millions of others have found it just as Jeremiah found it. Keep reading. Keep studying. Open the windows of the soul heavenward. Ask God to make it real and personal to you. And, friend, you too can find the joy and rejoicing that the Word of God brings.

Now let's turn over to Psalm 92, and I want to notice another source of joy. By the way, did you notice the inscription at the beginning of this Psalm? What day is it especially written for? The Sabbath.

"It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto Thy name, O most High: To show forth Thy loving kindness in the morning, and Thy faithfulness every night, Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound. For Thou, LORD, hast made me glad through Thy work: I will triumph in the works of Thy hands. O LORD, how great are Thy works! and Thy thoughts are very deep" Psalm 92:1–5.

David found joy in the works of God's hands. Who can look upon these great mountains, these lofty trees, or the little violets springing from the green carpet beneath the oaks; who can look upon these wonders of God creation without finding joy awakened in his heart? What do you say?

I've been thinking of it especially this springtime season. The winter is past, even if the thermometer doesn't know it tonight; the time of the singing of birds has come; the trees are budding and blooming, and all nature has put on its festive garment. And God desires that all these beauties shall awaken joy in our hearts. He desires that we shall rejoice with the universe as we contemplate the things that our Friend has made to make us happy.

Everything of beauty in earth, in air, and sea is to make us happy, friend. For remember, God gave you not only the singing birds. He gave you an ear to *hear* that song and a mind to interpret it as pleasure. He gave you not merely the beautiful flowers, with their delicate and varied hues and their fragrance; He gave you an eye that would see those colors and a nose that would smell the fragrance. And He gave you a brain that would interpret those sensations as pleasurable. The *receptor* is just as much a miracle of God's creation as that which *causes* the effect. All fit together to show us that our Lord loves us and that He wants us to be happy.

So rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice. Rejoice evermore. Rejoice as you study God's word and hear the message from Heaven. Rejoice as you look around you at the opening buds, the green trees, the carpet of grass, the glory of the sunrise, the beauty of the moon and stars at night, and ten thousand other objects telling us that God is love.

This is one of the reasons that God has invited us to spend as much time in the outdoors as possible. This is one of the reasons He suggested that it would be well for families, particularly with children, to make their home in the country. This is one of the reasons why He has told us to establish sanitariums in the country, so the sick and weary ones can come in contact with the beautiful things of nature, and have their minds carried from sickness to life through the message of God's creative works.

Let's turn now to Psalm 34. Besides the message of love coming through the written Word—the Bible, and the book of nature, with all these created things—God has a message for you and me in the daily experiences of life, in the sunshine and shadow, literally and symbolic, that make up the varied patterns of experience. Here David is testifying what he has learned as he has watched God help him with his problems, as he has seen the Lord answer his prayers, and solve these problems. I read:

“I will bless the LORD at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His name together. I sought the LORD, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. They looked unto Him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed. This

poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles” Psalm 34:1–6.

David is singing; he’s playing his harp, accompanying himself as he sings this beautiful song of praise. It’s a song of his experience; he’s been in trouble; he sought the Lord, and God has heard him and saved him.

Ah, friend, are there troubles that God has saved you and me out of? Are there experiences that He’s led us through? As we remember the wonderful things that He has done, we join with David in saying in the eighth verse:

“O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusts in Him” Psalm 34:8.

How wonderful God is to hear and answer prayer.

Now, God wants us to not only have this joy *inside* but let it flow out. In fact, that’s the way to multiply it. There’re some things, you know, if you’ll turn loose of them you’ll never see them again. But joy and rejoicing are not like that. The more we express our joy in the Lord, the more we share it with others, the more it multiplies.

Turn over to Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament.

“Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name” Malachi 3:16.

Notice, God is so interested in our witness, so interested in the expressions of our love for Him, and our appreciation of His goodness, that He tells the angels to “Write those testimonies down in the book of My remembrance. I don’t want to ever forget that.”

Do any of you have any keepsakes? Maybe some little birthday card that you got a year ago, or 40 years ago; maybe some letter of appreciation or love, or friendship that you wouldn’t part with. This is a little example of how God appreciates your response to His goodness. As He pours the joy into your heart, He wants you to pour it out to others. He wants you to share it with others.

In the book *Ministry of Healing*, I read:

“No tongue can express, no finite mind can conceive, the blessing that results from appreciating the goodness and love of God. Even on earth we may have joy as a well-spring, never failing, because fed by the streams that flow from the throne of God. ‘Then let us educate our hearts and lips to speak the praise of God for His matchless love’”
Ministry of Healing, page 253.

Isn't that an interesting verb used there? "[Let's] *educate* our hearts and lips to speak His praise for His matchless love." We're to train ourselves in expressing the joy that God has put into our hearts.

And my dear friends, we are all acquainted with the fact that the way muscle grows is by what? Feeding it and then what? Exercising. Without food the muscle would waste away. But no matter how much we feed the body, without exercise the muscles will not develop. And so it is with this joy and rejoicing in our hearts; if we will read the Word of God, behold God's love revealed in nature, watch His providences in our daily lives, and *then* as soon as we begin to see something in the Bible, something in nature, something in our own experience that makes us thankful, it causes us to rejoice. Ever so slightly, *express* that to somebody—at the meal table, in the bedroom, between classes in school, here in the house of God, as we have the opportunity. Every week, every day, we have precious opportunities to express the joy and rejoicing that God puts in our hearts.

Do you know what I find? I find the more we do it, the more there is to do about it. The more we notice God's providences, the more there are to notice. Some flowers, you know, the more you pick them, the more they bloom. Violets are like that. These experiences that I'm talking about tonight are like that, friend. The more you and I *tell* the joy that God has put in our hearts, the more joy there is to tell. Praise God for His wonderful love.

Oh, think of what Christ paid to make all this possible. He left Heaven with its joy and glory and came to this world sinfully filled with darkness and curse. And here on earth, He showed us how to live the happy life. Though surrounded with clouds of sin and darkness, by faith He kept His soul at home with His Father in the upper world.

Think of that last night surrounding the table with His disciples there. He led them in singing a beautiful hymn of praise; although He knew He was about to go into the shadows of Gethsemane and Calvary. That spirit of praise, that spirit of love that He showed in this life, He longs to share with you and me. And if we will do this, our experience will grow.

Let's see what this does for us, even physically. Here is some medicine that didn't come out of the pharmacy. Proverbs 17:22:

"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit dries the bones" Proverbs 17:22.

This merry heart here is not talking about some jovial, joking, foolish disposition. The Revised Standard Version puts it, "A cheerful heart is a good medicine." That's the point—cheerful rather than gloomy; rejoicing rather than weeping. Now there are times to weep. God says we should rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those that weep. Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus, but He soon turned the weeping into what? Rejoicing. And so, God is inviting us not to be hilarious, but to have a calm, cheerful, happy experience based on the promises of God. And notice that this does good like a what? Medicine. It'll do the heart good,

the stomach good, the liver good, the brain, the muscles, every part of the body. A cheerful heart is a good medicine.

Notice Nehemiah 8:10, the children of Judah had returned from their captivity and were seeking to build up Jerusalem. Nehemiah had gathered them together, and they were reading the book of the law. They wept as they realized how short they had come. But God moved upon Nehemiah to seek to comfort them. So in the last two lines of this 10th verse, he said:

“... neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength” Nehemiah 8:10.

There’s a time to weep, friends. If we’ve broken God’s heart by breaking His law, we need to confess our sins. But when the prodigal son came home and wept on his father’s shoulder, the father said, “Let’s have a feast next month provided you’re a good boy for 30 days.” Didn’t he? What! He didn’t? When did they have the banquet? Right away, immediately. How happy the father was.

Yes, there’s a time to weep—our confession, our repentance. I repeat, if we’ve broken God’s heart by breaking His law, we should confess our sins. There’s nothing funny about sin, friends. But notice, as soon as we have given ourselves to Jesus and asked Him to forgive our sins, we’re to trust His forgiving grace and rejoice in the Lord. By faith, we’re to see His smile of acceptance, and know that it is for us. We’re not to feel that we must be on probation and prove our selves. Right now, now, now, now we are accepted in the beloved, and the joy of the Lord is our strength.

In the book, *Medical Ministry*, we have a wonderful chapter here entitled, “The Sanitarium Family.” I read:

“I am bidden to say to the sanitarium family, Let your social meetings, and all your religious exercises, be characterized by a deep earnestness and a joy that expresses the love of God in the soul... Each member of the sanitarium family should confess Christ openly and with gladness, expressing the joy and comfort and hope that are written in the soul... The joy we experience in this love will be a blessing to others... Cultivate cheerfulness ...We all have very much to be thankful for; let us open our lips in praise and thanksgiving to God. He has made it possible for us to secure for ourselves a very happy life even in this world of sin” *Medical Ministry*, pages 213–214.

I’m so thankful, friends, for the potential that lies in a practical acceptance of the Gospel of Jesus, what do you say? So tonight, let us praise Him with all our hearts.

[Elder Frazee sings, "Praise Him, Praise Him, Jesus Our Blessed Redeemer."]

[Testimony service]

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