

THE CHRISTIAN'S JOY
Or
REJOICING IN THE LORD
Phil.3:1,3; 4:4

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The world with its false concepts holds that Christians have no enjoyment, no real pleasure; that there is no real joy in being a Christian
2. There are professed believers who all but teach this; for:
 - a. They use not the language of joy themselves.
 - b. They even discourage it in others.
 - c. They murmur and complain about every little thing.
 - d. They have the long face, the sour look and the grumpy disposition.
 - e. They seem to always see the worst in everything, seldom the good.
 - f. They have the “woe is me”, or the “why me Lord?” attitude.
 - g. The “why do I have to do this?” “who do I have to do that?” disposition.
3. But that Christians may and should have joy and experience great rejoicing is a matter of divine record; for various Bible texts teach:
 - a. The fact that the faithful, sincere, committed believer may and should rejoice.
 - b. And exhibit the nature of the joy peculiar to the believer.
 - c. And render it binding upon the believer to always seek it and to cherish the feeling.
 - d. The importance of the duty by its frequent admonitions.
 - e. That even though there are obstacles in its path, it is the sought and realized by true believers.
 - f. That our power of rejoicing in the Lord is a fair test of our moral and spiritual condition, i.e., whether or not we are in the faith; whether or not Christ is in us.
4. That Christians can in fact have joy and can rejoice in the Lord is not only taught but is attested by the apostle Paul himself who is the author of our tests, urging believers to “rejoice in the Lord,” Phil.1:4; 4:10-13; 2:16-18; 3:3; Col.1:24.
 - a. What better mere human example could we have than he?

5. By joy we mean “exhilaration of spirits; gaiety; gladness”; it means “to rejoice or be glad”; “to feel or express joy or gladness”.
6. In view of this, we invite you to study with us the topic: The Christian’s Joy, or Rejoicing In The Lord

II. DISCUSSION

A. FIRST NOTE THE GROUNDS OF THE CHRISTIAN’S JOY OR OF REJOICING IN THE LORD ACCORDING TO PHIL.3:1-14.

1. He who would rejoice in the Lord must beware of religious error or false doctrines and erroneous religious practices, vv.1-3.
2. He must renounce all confidence in the flesh and trust only in Jesus Christ for his initial salvation for past sins, vv.4-9.
3. Having realized his initial goal of present salvation in Christ, he must then joyfully and zealously press toward his ultimate goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, i.e., eternal salvation or resurrection unto life, vv.10-14. Cf. Eph.4:1-3; 2Pet.1:5-11.

B. THE NATURE AND METHOD OF THE CHRISTIAN’S JOY IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

1. It is to make him the being, the object of our joy, Phil.1:1,3; 4:4. But why?
 - a. Because of what he is himself, both God and man, Jno.1:1-3,14; Phil.2:5-8; Heb.2:11-18.
 - b. Because of what he is to us, and what he had done for us, and is doing for us, our Savior and the means of all our spiritual blessings, Mt.1:21; Lk.19:10; Eph.1:4; Ac.4:10-12; Heb.4:14-16.
2. It is to be a constant, consistent, abiding, rejoicing in the

Lord.

- a. The Christian is urged to “rejoice in the Lord always,” Phil.4:4.
- b. “Always” is emphatic – always, constant, at all times, in all situations in which he finds himself in service in the Lord and to the Lord.

- c. Herein lies the difficulty; therein also lies the blessedness of rejoicing in the Lord.
 - d. It is easy to rejoice in moments of excitement, but to rejoice always, even in times of want as in times of abundance, or in times of trials, persecution, suffering, and being reviled and reproached for the name of Christ, or for righteousness sake, of which Jesus, as well as both Paul and Peter spoke, is difficult indeed, Mt.5:10-12; Heb.10:32-36; 1Pet.4:12-19; Cf. Phil.4:10-13.
 - e. Thus joy in the Lord is not a capricious sentiment, but a steady, uniform and continued heart-felt emotion.
 - f. It is something that can be realized in Christ in spite of hardships, trials, reproaches and sufferings for righteousness' sake.
 - g. In fact, when the Christian faces all these things, what is it that holds up his head that he sinks not into despair? How is it that he stands either not shaken, or, if shaken, yet not cast down? Is it not by his faith which enables him to rejoice in the Lord, even to take "joyfully the spoiling" of his goods? Cf. Heb.10:32-36,39; 1Jno.5:4,5.
3. It is not in the Christian's own achievements; still less is it in himself or in his own experiences. Cf. Jer.10:23; Prov.16:9; Mt.5:16; Jno.15:1-8; Rom.12:3; 1Cor.4:7; 2Cor.4:7,7; Gal.6:3.
- a. A glance at ourselves, our failures and shortcomings no doubt fills us with shame and sadness, not joy of self-righteousness. Cf. Rom.6:17-21; 1Tim.1:12-15.
4. The Christian's joy is of a spiritual nature because:
- a. It is one of the fruits of the Spirit, along with love and peace, Gal.5:22.
 - b. It is something Jesus prayed for, Jno.17:13.
 - c. "The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost," Rom.14:17.
5. Joy in the Lord:
- a. Leads to gentleness and forbearance toward others, Phil.4:5a; Cf. Eph.3:1-3; Phil.2:1-4.

- b. Dispels anxious care or anxiety over worldly things, Phil.4:6a; Cf. Mt.6:28-34; 1Tim.6:6-10,17-19.
 - c. Will express itself in prayer and supplication with habitual thanksgiving, Phil.4:6b; Cf. 1Th.5:16-18 – which brings the peace of God that passeth all understanding, Phil.4:7a.
6. Rejoicing in the Lord finds one thinking on the proper things and doing the things learned from the apostles of Christ, which cause the peace of God abide with that one, vv.8,9.
 7. Kills the taste for worldly, sinful pleasures, 1Jno.2:15-17.
 - a. The world rejoices in the creature, but the Christian rejoices in the Creator of all things, including the creature!

C. VARIOUS OCCASIONS FOR THE CHRISTIAN'S REJOICING.

1. When even one sinner repents, Lk.15:1-10; Cf. Ac.8:5-8; 15:3; 1Th.1:8-10; 2:19,20.
2. When a prodigal, wayward child of God comes to his senses and returns to the fold of God, Lk.15:11-24; 2Cor.7:8-16.
3. When the true gospel is preached even by men who are not sincere in their motives, Phil.2:12-18.
4. When others have occasion to rejoice, Rom.12:15; 1Cor.12:26.
5. In hope of the glory of God, Rom.5:12; Cf. Rom.8:16-18,24,25; 12:12; Heb.3:6; 1Pet.1:3-5.
6. In the trying or testing of our faith, Jas.1:2-4; 1Pet.4:12-14; 1Pet.1:6-9; Cf. Gen.22:1,2.
7. When persecuted for righteousness' sake, Mt.5:10-12; Ac.5:41,42; 1Pet.4:13,14.
8. That our names are written in heaven, Lk.10:20.
9. When we find God's children being steadfast in faith and walking in truth, Col.2:5,6; 2Jno.4; 3Jno.3.
10. Never in iniquity, but always in the truth, 1Cor.13:6.
11. When brethren can and will support preachers in preaching the truth, not only at the local church but in distant places, Phil.4:10-18; 2Cor.11:7-9; 2Th.3:7-9 (Cf. 2Cor.11:7-9 with 12:12,13)

12. In the knowledge that in the day of Christ we have not run in vain, neither labored in vain, Phil.2:12-18; Cf. 2Tim.4:6-8.
13. When one hears, believes and obeys the gospel of Christ, Ac.16:30-34; 2:41,42,46,47; 8:35-39.

III. CONCLUSION

1. We are taught to and urged to rejoice in the Lord always.
2. We have revealed unto us certain grounds for rejoicing in the Lord, which are three-fold according to Phil.3:1-14.
3. We have studied the nature and method of the Christian's joy based primarily on Phil.4:4-9, with related passages of significance.
4. Paul himself is a prime example of one who practiced what he preached and always rejoiced in the Lord, and calls upon us to be "followers" of him even as he was a follower of Christ, 1Cor.11:1; Phil.4:9.
5. We have cited various occasions for the Christian's rejoicing.
6. Brethren, Christians should be the happiest, most joyful and rejoicing, persons in the city, the state and the nation. If not, why not?
7. If we are not, something is wrong with our faith!