

Reasons to Rejoice

By Jeff Arnette

There are those in the church today who have lost sight of their joy. Indeed, several things in this world tend to rob us of our happiness. In Philippians 4:1-9, the apostle Paul speaks to us on the subject of joy. He is qualified to talk about the issue of pleasure, for in spite of his hardships and persecutions, he found the secret of real Christian Joy. In fact, he was in prison when he wrote the words of our text, but even that could not rob him of his joy. The secret is in the words, "In the Lord."

Often, the reason we have not found joy is that we have looked for it in all the wrong places. We look for it in education, in wealth, in power, and even in philosophy. However, real joy is always found in the Lord. John 15:11 relates to us the words of Jesus when he said, "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full" (ESV Study Bible, pg. 2055). It is only in Jesus that we find real joy, true purpose, and true meaning to our lives.

I want to encourage you to rejoice in the Lord, to lay hold of that joy that can be ours. I will give you four reasons to rejoice. Let's look at each of these.

First, Paul tells us in verse 3 that we should rejoice because our names are written in heaven. This is such a great thing that Jesus used this same thought to encourage his disciples in Luke 10:20. When we obey the gospel and become Christians, God adds us to the church, and our names are written in heaven. This should give us joy and comfort.

Second, Paul says in verse 5 that we should rejoice because the Lord is near. This should cause us to rejoice to know that the Lord is near to his people. We find joy in knowing that Jesus is coming back someday to right all the wrongs done to his people and to reward us for our faithful service.

Third, Paul says in verse 6 that we should rejoice because of the privilege of prayer. Indeed, our father in heaven is anxious for us to talk with him. As Christians, we are commanded to pray instead of worry about what life brings us. As Tom Miller once said, "Prayer lifts life's loads and gives us joy." Casting our cares upon God helps to lift that load, and it reminds us that God does care.

Lastly, Paul says in verse 9 that we should rejoice because of our opportunities to serve. Inactivity hinders our joy. Even modern psychology tells us that the first thing we should do for emotional problems is to get busy. We should consider it a great joy to be able to serve the Lord in any area that he needs us. This helps us to feel important, needed, and most often gives us great joy. When we serve others, we are truly serving Jesus.

The Christian life begins and ends with joy, and it follows that the Christian life should be a life filled with joy. I hope I have convinced you to lay hold of the blessing God has given you. Don't sit by any longer and wonder why your joy is not full. Do these things, and your joy will be full.

- Jeff Arnette preaches for the Central Haywood church of Christ, Clyde, NC. He may be contacted through the congregation's website: <https://centralhaywoodcoc.com/>