

Rejoicing in the Lord

by A.W. Pink

Rejoicing in the Lord is an act of faith that requires the Holy Spirit's enablement, and it's not about being happy all the time, but about looking above to the Lord and rejoicing in Him despite our struggles and sorrows.

Scripture: Matthew 5:25, Matthew 24:42, Luke 18:3, Ephesians 6:11, Hebrews 3:13, James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:8, 1 John 3:8, Revelation 12:9

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Christian Vigilance"

Description

The preacher emphasizes the importance of being alert and watchful, drawing from the Greek word 'gregoreuo' which means to be vigilant and ready to respond to external influences, especially temptations and attacks of evil. The sermon highlights the need for Christians to remain spiritually awake and alert, as opposed to being indifferent and listless. The devil, described as the adversary, is constantly prowling like a roaring lion, seeking to devour believers, and the sermon stresses the urgency of resisting his divisive and destructive schemes. Practical applications include being vigilant in prayer, guarding against apathy, and making friends quickly with one's adversary to avoid being ensnared.

Transcript

"Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice" (Phil. 4:4). How many there are today who make an entirely wrong use of this Divine exhortation. Let any servant of God faithfully trace out the inward experiences of a Christian, let him describe the painful discoveries of "the plague of his own heart" (1 Kings 8:38), and his daily conflict with his corruptions and the corresponding effect this produces in the dampening of his spirits. Let him point out how well-suited to his case is the humiliating lament of Romans 7:24, and the light-hearted and empty-headed religionists of the day will promptly (we do not say "quote," but) hurl at his head these words--"rejoice in the Lord always." Those who thus misuse our text suppose that its happy strains condemn all gloominess in a Christian, and that it goes to show that one who is groaning is living far below his privileges.

There is a large percentage of people in Christendom today who imagine the interests of Christ and His Cause on earth require that the somber side of things should be steadily kept out of sight--that only the joyousness of Christianity should be exhibited. They think that it is the pressing duty of saints to attract the unregenerate and not repel them by their heaviness. But that is a most mischievous misconception, a serious error, for it would be but a one-sided and therefore a false representation of vital godliness. It is an essential part of piety to make conscience of sin and to grieve over it. Christ never rebuked the penitent

but declared, "Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh; Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep" (Luke 6:21, 25). Surely we are not to hide that aspect of piety which God specially delights in: "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word" (Isa. 66:2).

It is true that those of a naturally bright temperament and happy disposition may find it easy to present an attractive face to the world, but will it be to themselves or to Christ that they will draw the ungodly? Let that question be seriously pondered by those who insist that a smiling countenance is highly desirable. "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice." What does the repetition of this exhortation argue? Does it denote that the Christian is always happy? No indeed; the very reverse. Is it not because the saint is so often cast down, because he finds so much both in himself and what is going on around to sadden him, that he is directed to look above to and rejoice in the Lord?

Study carefully the picture of the "Blessed" man which Christ has drawn for us in Matthew 5:1-11, and it will be seen that each feature in that portrait depicts the Christian as sorrowful so long as he is upon earth. Is he "poor in spirit"? then assuredly will he feel pain from a pressing sense of want. Does he "mourn"? then it would be downright hypocrisy to pretend he is joyful. Is he "meek"? but such a spiritual grace is only evidenced by his submitting to the test of grievous afflictions. Does he "hunger and thirst after righteousness"? then he can be no stranger to an experience of feeling weak and unworthy. "Merciful": such a disposition cannot remain unmoved amid abounding misery in the world. "Pure in heart" necessarily entails grief over impurity. "Peacemakers" cannot but be saddened as they behold millions of their fellows striving against their Maker.

On the other hand, there are not a few among the Lord's people whose tendency is to go to an opposite extreme, being afraid to rejoice in the Lord lest they be guilty of presumption. They who are most painfully conscious of the sea of iniquity surging within, feel it would be hypocrisy to joy in God and sing His praises. But let it be carefully borne in mind that the same human instrument who cried, "O wretched man that I am," penned this very exhortation. However low the true believer may sink in his feelings, however cold and barren his heart, there is still abundant cause for him to heed this injunction. He is not bidden to rejoice in his own experiences or attainments, but "in the Lord." It is a call to the exercise of faith, of hope, of love.

Though poor in this world's goods, though grieving the loss of loved ones, though suffering pain of body, though harassed by sin and Satan, though hated and persecuted by worldlings, whatever be the case and lot of the Christian, it is both his privilege and duty to rejoice in the Lord. He has given us abundant cause so to do: His favour, love, faithfulness, longsuffering, granting us access to the Throne of Grace, the privilege of communion with Himself (in our sorrows and trials!), the promise of an eternity of bliss in His presence--all call for gladness and praise. This exhortation to rejoice in the Lord does not mean we are bidden to cast all sorrow out of our hearts, nor are we acting contrary to its terms when we grieve over sin. Godly sorrow and holy joy are coinciding and not conflicting emotions: there is no enjoying the sweetness of the Lamb apart from the "bitter herbs" (Exo. 12:8).

To rejoice in the Lord is an act of faith, and therefore it lies not within the power of the creature to put it forth whenever he is so inclined. Do not despair, then, fellow-saint, because you are not able to reach this sphere of joy as and when you please. We are entirely dependent upon the Holy Spirit, here as everywhere--none but He can draw us to Christ and enable us to rejoice in Him. Very far are we from being competent to master ourselves and overcome all the oppositions of sin. We are not the lords of our

joy. We can no more make ourselves rejoice in God than we can make ourselves well when suffering from a dangerous and painful disease. Like all other exhortations, this one must be turned into earnest prayer for Divine enablement. Finally, note the very next words are, "Let your moderation (not hilarity) be known unto all men!"

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/aw-pink/rejoicing-in-the-lord/>

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