

Kings Norton Baptist Church

Sunday 27th August 2023 10 am

Rejoice in the Lord

Welcome to all.

Opening Scripture Psalm 35:18,28 and prayer

Hymn MP 367 Jesus is Lord, creations voice proclaims it

Scripture Psalm 34 (page 561)

Prayer of praise and thanksgiving.

Children's talk Rom 5:8 the demonstration of love.

Chorus MP 311 I will rejoice

MP 577 Rejoice in the Lord always

Notices Members meeting, Sept. plan on board (Chris, Tim)
Breaking of bread and fellowship lunch next week.

Prayer and share time

Reading 1 Peter 1:1-9 (page 1217)

Philippians 4:4-9 (page 1181)

Hymn He touched me (Video)

Sermon Have Joy in Jesus

Hymn MP 573 Rejoice the redeemer has come

Closing Prayer

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8

311 I will rejoice, I will rejoice

312 I will rejoice in you and be glad

572 Rejoice, Rejoice, Christ is in you

575 Rejoice the Lord is king

576 Rejoice the Lord is risen

Prayer and Exordium

As we continue working through Paul's letter to the church in Philippi in Macedonia we come to our passage at 4:4 which starts with the word '**Rejoice**'.

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

He not only says it again in fact he has said it 5 times before.

Some think of this letter as the letter of rejoicing. Was it a church that rejoiced?

I think not. x2 Why otherwise why would he say it 8 times in this short letter.

Are we a church known by our rejoicing? Not just here - but at home!

What is there to rejoice about Paul?

1. "What rejoice that two sisters can't get on?" Euodia and Syntyche, two prominent women who had had a very public fall out. (4:1)
2. "How can we rejoice when there are ungodly people among us whose minds are on earthly things and oppose the cross of Christ" (3:19)
3. "How can we rejoice when there's so much selfishness in the church" (2:3,21)
4. "How can we rejoice when the church is in a flat spin because we've heard that Paul is in prison which has left the church in a 'tiz'."

Yet knowing all this, Paul says that they should **Rejoice**.

Paul you're being insensitive. People are hurting how can you be so callous.

Rejoice, what with all I am going through, you must be joking!

With all my problems how can I or anyone '**rejoice**'? Yet the word of God says we are to '**rejoice**'. Paul writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is saying this is exactly what they should do – and that is what we should do.

The world says "no, don't be cruel". How easy it is to go along with that.

But doesn't our Lord and maker know what is best?

Rejoice in the Lord is not a suggestion, it's a command, and to do so **always** x2

Yes in my moods and depressions. Yes when I don't feel like it. Here's a challenge to our lives saturated in feelings and emotions.

Yes **rejoice**, but not in myself, not in the problem, not in the circumstances - but **in the Lord**. – **4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!** Paul we get the point, you have emphasised it, Maybe I, maybe you, need to hear it!

Is my mind on the Lord? Are my sights on the Lord? Is my heart filled with the Lord? Or is it on my circumstances? Do circumstances fill my mind and heart?

Here is the challenge this morning for us as the Lord's people.

The world knows nothing of a God who is good, it knows nothing of a God who is in control of all things. For them all things are random and it lives in fear. There is no reason why a Christian should think like that. Why do so many Christians not think biblically, but think the way the world thinks?

Paul is trying to confront this worldly view, a sentimental Christianity, he is trying to draw a Christian's eyes away from circumstances – and towards the Lord. Towards the Lord who is good, towards the Lord who is in control, towards the Lord who is present with his people - and therefore we can say - as the Lord's people have said throughout the ages: **though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then will I be confident.** Ps 27:3 see also Ps 3:6. **I will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,** Ps 46:2 **I will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day,** Ps 91:5

Why? because *He is Lord.* (song) No sparrow hops on the ground without His say so. He is the one who makes **all things work out for the good** of His people. Do you believe that? If you do - then you can **rejoice, whatever** is going on, x2.

That is not true for many of those around, and perhaps a number here this morning. How do you answer when people say to you "how is it going"?

If it has been a trouble free day then "it's going well". If it hasn't, as is usually the case then it is "not too bad", "could be better"... Why do people say that? Because they are looking at their circumstances.

Those in the world, all they consider is their circumstances, and like a gauge that goes up and down, their life is tied to their circumstances.

Not for a Christian. I am not saying we should always answer "wonderful" Nor be blinded to the very real troubles and hurts. But we can say "the Lord is good". Whatever my circumstances are "the Lord is in control, the Lord is good, the Lord will bring deliverance in his own time, and in his own way and .. most importantly, He is with me.

We read earlier **I will extol the LORD at all times; his praise will always be on my lips. My soul will boast in the Lord Let the afflicted hear, and rejoice** Ps 34:1,2

Not so the worldly man or woman who only talk of their ailments, their troubles, their woes, ... adding a good dollop of grumbling and complaining.

If that is you then realise that is a life of sin. It is time to repent of it. Turn to the one who provides so much good to you day by day. Start to thank him for it. And if you are having trouble then realise he gives it so that you would come to your senses and declare Him Lord - and entrust your life to Him.

2a

✚ **You can trust Him. You can trust him with everything – give it all to him, Honour Him and live that victorious joyful life of faith. He is calling you.**

Come to me, look to me - and be saved, for I am God, and there is no other." Isa 45:22

Don't look to yourself. Look to the Lord that he will have mercy on you. Look to the cross on which the prince of Glory died, Look at the beatings, look at the nails, look at his suffering on behalf of the sinner. You can look - if you are willing. You need no degree to look. You may be the biggest fool, and yet you can look. You don't need money to look. Anyone can look, a child can look.

Jesus is able not only to save you through His death on the cross – he is able to keep you through this life – and when the time comes take you safely to heaven

Do you know that? If you do then **5 your gentleness will be evident to all.** Why **gentleness?** It signifies a good disposition, a settled heart, one patient in suffering. Only someone strong in Him, can be truly gentle. It's a sign that you lean on Him. You can, and the reason? **The Lord is near,** the Lord is at hand.

Those four words '**The Lord is near**' echo through the pages of scripture from beginning to end. It is the "**I am with you**" of the OT. God is present with his people from **Abraham** onwards to whom he says: **I am your shield and very great reward** Gen 15:1. To **Isaac** - **Do not be afraid, for I am with you;** Ge 26:24. To **Jacob** - **I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go.** Ge 28:15.

■ **Ever walked through a crowd with someone and then suddenly turned to find that person gone?**

Sin against the Lord and you will suddenly find Him gone.

At the time of the golden calf idol in the desert, at the time the spies gave a bad report, Nu 14:42, at the time of **Achan's** sin Jos 7:12, the Lord says **I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way."** Ex 33:3.

To which Moses said: "**If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.**" Ex 33:15. That is: "If you don't go with us I don't want to go" !!

What happened? They repent and strip off their ornaments. **Moses** pleads for them, the Lord: "**My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.**" Ex 33:14

To **Joshua** - **I am with you as I was with Moses.** Jos 3:7

To the **nation** of God's people He said: **So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.** Isa 41:10,11, 43:5 Jer 30:11.

2b

If we are in a tight spot do not worry as the Lord said to **Jeremiah** - Jer 1:8 **Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,"**

Do you feel yourself in the thick of a battle? The Lord said to **Jeremiah** **They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you,"** Jer 1:19 and again Jer 15:20

Jeremiah in the pit - Lamentations 3:57, **"you came near and said 'do not fear'"**

When the exiles returned and were told to build the temple – but instead they gave up and went home to feather their nests we have the shortest of sermons, do you like short sermons? **"I am with you," declares the LORD.** Hag 1:13 (More, I'm sure was said, but that's the main point. **"I am with you"**)

David could say as he walked through that **valley of the shadow of death** **"you are with me"**. x2 This world is that valley that we too are walking through.

Jesus said to His **disciples - surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."** Mt 28:20

When **Paul** was up to his neck in troubles at Corinth the Lord came to him and said: **I am with you, and no-one is going to attack and harm you,** " Ac 18:10

✚ How reassuring, how reassuring. That changes everything. That is the mark, that is the distinction of God's people. The Lord is with us, in us.

That's why **Paul & Silas** in the jail in Philippi could sing joyfully to the Lord.

In the darkest dungeon with the rats were the size of cats, with a back that burned from the whipping that had beaten them half to death, with metal shackles around wrists and ankles that cut into the skin. They sang. x2

What greater example is there that the Lord is present with His people. If they had a **night vision camera** they would have seen three people, just like the fifth man in the fiery furnace. The truth is the Lord is always with his people and when we go through real difficulties his presence is felt, literally. That is something to rejoice in. Such has been the mark of God's suffering people.

■ **Richard Wormbrand - Read his books, read of his account, watch the documentary of his life and you would be humbled. A tangible presence.**

✚ **All the people of God through the ages have known that.**

Paul says **Rejoice in the Lord always** - and he was writing from his prison cell.

■ I've been to the dentist several times recently. Each time it starts with injections into the gum. "a scratch" is how they describe it, "you might feel a scratch" and when it comes you grasp the chair arms and rivet yourself to the seat. The deep root canal work takes a long time, 1½ in

the seat. I now see how short that 15 sec injection is by comparison. Now I am very glad it has all happened.

It all depends how you see things. Paul said: **For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.** 2Co 4:17

Peter speaking to the persecuted and suffering churches scattered across the world says: v6 **"In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.**

What is it that **in this you greatly rejoice?**

It is being sure of a place in heaven **the salvation of your souls."**

It is as if the Lord is using this short time on earth to show off, if I can say that.

The Lord says: "see how my child, my son or daughter has stood firm, so how they trust me in everything, see how strong I can make them be".

Why have these troubles come? **These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, —may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.** 1 Peter 1:7

So how should you and I now be?

6 **Do not be anxious about anything.** Don't be anxious, don't be vexed. Bring it to the Lord. yes anything – and everything. **but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.**

Like Hezekiah when he was seriously up against it. He lay out the problem before the Lord and looked to Him, he trusted Him to sort it. My heavenly father, who is none other than the Lord of Glory – He will take care of it.

What is it you are going through? Do you lie in bed musing over problems? Notice how they get worse. The devil is right there, and he is more than happy to let you know just how bad it could get. Allow him to do that and you will find great disquiet in your heart. He will bring fear as he parades all those worse case scenarios through your mind.

Instead **Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.** Ps 55:22. There's a promise, a command and a promise. So Peter says **cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.** 1Pe 5:7

What do you do with your problems? take them to Him - and leave them there.

Discipline your mind not to dwell on them, this will require self-control. Listen to the sermon last week! Work at it, direct your thoughts onto the Lord. Look to Him at all times.

We are not blind to the very real trouble and live in some sort of fantasy world removed from reality, as many do today, drugs or no drugs.

What Paul is trying to do here is to lift the eyes of the Lord's people. Don't look at circumstances, don't think in a worldly way - but to look to the Lord. Fix your eyes on Him, fill yourselves with Him.

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Heb 12:2 and *no-one* had more trouble than Him!

Discipline your mind to look to Jesus. Look to Him alone. Be single minded.

■ Walking across a wire suspension bridge. As others walked ahead across the deep gully I took a sharp intake of breath, phew, this was a challenge, I really didn't like it. I learned something very quickly. Don't look down, don't look sideways, don't look over the edge. Only look ahead. I fixed my eyes on a post at the other end and stuck with it – It required oodles of concentration, I have never looked so hard in my life.

Remove the distractions, remove the obstacles so you fix your eyes on the Lord

■ It's hard to be a cameraman filming in a room full of mirrors, it is really hard to keep yourself out of the picture – but that is what you must do!

In our Christian life let us remove, get rid of, the big barrier is self, don't think about yourself, don't look at self, you are in the way, get out of the way so you can see the Lord clearly. Focus on the Lord and His promises to you. This is a big reason why we don't **rejoice**, this is the big reason why we don't have full, satisfied, confident hearts, - because there's just too much of me in the way!

■ The woman's world cup and the tears, our players silent and morose.

How struck down they were by the result, sad for themselves, sad for the loss of a win for the team and country. Not very sportsman like. Was it not a good game? Was it only negative? Could they not be a little glad for the Spanish?

How do you cope with disappointment. How do you cope when suddenly things take a reverse? Look for the Lord in everything, what is there I can commend him for?

Yes “8 **Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.**

Many times I have ended a tough day, “Lord thank you for being with me, thank you for seeing me through, thank you that I am yours,....thank you that I am saved from the really big trouble to come, praise you Lord I am saved!

4a

Yes the battle is in the mind and what goes on in there. A Christian can say “I have life with God”, who or what can change that? I am saved from my sins and will have no fear of the judgment to come. Hallelujah x2

■ Classical music three or four movements in a symphony or concerto. Some started to clap after the second movement. Not is it not over yet

The present always looms large, but it is not over yet, it's not over until it's over. Don't be caught up in the here and now, and how everything affects me.

The lord has won the victory, and you will share in this - in due time. The Bible is full of waiting on the Lord and the great end we can hope in and rejoice in: “**Sing to the LORD, you saints of his; praise his holy name. For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favour lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.**” Ps 30:4-5 see also Ps 31 /34 ...

✚ This is what the Lord tells us to do

And what power there is in the example of others. 9 **Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice.** Who had a life as hard as Paul? And the Lord saw him through every trouble.

“4 **Rejoice in the Lord always.** Yes

✚ A rejoicing heart soon makes for a praising tongue (Charles Spurgeon).

And what does it say at the beginning of the next paragraph?

10 **I rejoice greatly in the Lord.**

MH - It is our duty and privilege to rejoice in God, and to rejoice in him always; at all times, in all conditions; even when we suffer for him, or are afflicted by him. We must not think the worse of him or of his ways for the hardships we meet with in his service. There is enough in God to furnish us with every matter of joy in the worst circumstances on earth. Joy in God is a duty of great consequence in the Christian life; and we as Christians need to be again and again called to it. If we miss the feast, it's our own fault.

In every passage always look for the commands and the promises:

Can you count the commands?: **Rejoice**, - be gentle. - **Do not be anxious**, - present your requests to God, - think about whatever is true, - What you have seen in the Apostle, put into practice.

Now can you see the promises: **The Lord is near**, - the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, **will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**” Ph 4:4-7 **And the God of peace will be with you.**” 4:8-9 **END**

✚ Yes we have the peace of God - in the God of peace. Thank you Lord x2

4b