

2 Jan 2011

Part 1 of Rejoice

Rejoice in the Lord always

Today we begin a new study on the word *rejoice*. Perhaps setting the scene for the new year.

There are 192 occurrences of the word rejoice, 47 of rejoiced, 1 of rejoicest, 18 of rejoiceth and 28 of rejoicing, in the Holy Scriptures.

According to the Oxford dictionary the word *rejoice* means to “feel or show great joy or delight.” Similarly in the Scriptures, *rejoicing* means to have exceeding joy, see Mt 2:10 *When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.* And also Mt 5:12

In this teaching we will cover 3 points which include:

1. Believers are to rejoice.
2. We are to rejoice in the Lord.
3. We are to rejoice in the goodness of the Lord.

Let us add a little more detail to these points.

1. Believers are to rejoice.

1Thes 5:16 *Rejoice evermore.*

This verse in 1st Thessalonians is clear, we are to rejoice. As rejoicing is to show forth great joy or delight and the fruit of the Spirit includes joy, then it is reasonable to suggest that a person born of the Spirit of God, a person who is a new creature in Christ, a Christian, will be someone who rejoices.

Gal.5: 22 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith.*

So not only do the Scriptures teach us to rejoice, but it should be a natural occurrence for a believer.

It doesn't matter if we are of a quiet nature, or shy, or whatever we are, because it is not something we produce. Our ability to rejoice is given to us by God, it is a gift he bestows upon a person when they get saved, just as causes them to become a new creature in Christ (2Cor.5: 17).

A non believer can still feel joy or they can rejoice. But a non believer cannot rejoice in the things that believers rejoice. Before we consider the things we are to rejoice in, let ask ourselves. If, as a Christian, we feel great joy, a sense of rejoicing?

Have you ever witnessed another person receiving Christ as their Saviour? Have you ever been there at that very moment they got on their knees and call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and asked Him to save them? Immediately after, did you see the person was joyful, happy, sad or no change at all?

If my memory serves me correctly, the person often exhibits joy, and sometimes exceeding joy. Why?

Do you remember why you felt joy at the moment of knowing you were saved?

What about the realization that you are not going to hell for an eternity? Not only that but your sins were washed clean and so you will go to heaven when you die?

What about the realization that you will be made into a new creature?

There is so much to be joyful for, not all of it will be apparent at the moment we are saved, but that is another reason we should receive teaching from the Scriptures. Such that as we grow as a Christian we grow in understanding of what God has done in Christ and so does our joy and hence our desire to rejoice.

Let us now consider a little more detail on the reasons for our rejoicing.

2. We are to rejoice in the Lord.

Php 3:1 *Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed [is] not grievous, but for you [it is] safe.*

See also Php 3:3, 4:4, 10

It will be no surprise that our first reason Christians rejoice is because of the Lord. For all that He has done on the cross. Phil.4: 10 Paul indicates that he rejoiced in the Lord greatly.

The birth of our Saviour is recorded as being a time of great joy (Lk2: 10) as is the case when the disciples worshipped the Lord - Lk.24: 52.

Is your greatest joy the Lord?

I remember listening to a taped message by Dr P Ruckman and although the message topic is a bit hazy the learning from it remains with me. If a believer goes to a rugby game and screams their lungs out and or cricket game or any other activity where they get more joy than worshipping the Lord then they need to consider their relationship with God. In other words, whatever pushes your buttons and does more than worshipping Christ is an indicator where our heart is. Israel sinned made idols and worshipped them as if they were their gods and rejoiced in the work of their own hands and not in the Lord. See Act.7: 41, Ecc.3: 21-22.

You watch the heathen today, what do they rejoice in?

They rejoice in the things they make with their own hands - the sky tower and casino in Auckland the museum in Wellington.

A neighbour spends his days building a yacht which he and his wife will most probably live in once completed. He was made redundant from his job and that's what he spends his time doing, building a boat. Hence once it is complete he will rejoice in what he has made, a boat. My Dad built a family run-about and he rejoiced in the work of his hands. Quite an achievement according to the world. But not according to the Scriptures.

We are to rejoice in the Lord Jesus but how can we do that with our whole heart and soul and mind if we find most joy in going to a rugby game or watching athletics or anything else?

Do you find yourself sitting with a moment to spare and simply rejoicing in the Lord?

When you think of Him, speak His name in your heart, does it put a smile on your face?
Let us all consider what brings joy to our heart, what we rejoice in, this new year, that 2011 would be a year of great rejoicing in the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. We rejoice in the goodness of the Lord.

Ex 18:9 And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel, whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians.

The Lord constantly showed His goodness to Israel and individuals like Jethro rejoiced in that goodness. However, the majority of the people were not thankful and did not rejoice in the Lord's blessings. We know this because there was a commandment in the Torah for them to rejoice in every good thing which the Lord had given them, see Deut.26: 11, 12: 7, 16: 15.

When the Lord blesses you and your house, do you rejoice in His goodness?

In what ways does the Lord bless us?

Giving us:

This wonderful country to live in.

Jobs and money to put a roof over our heads and food on our tables.

Family and friends.

All that the Lord our God has made.

His Holy Scriptures and most of all we see the goodness of the Lord in his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And the list goes on!

Now think back to point 1, where we suggested that a non-believer is able to rejoice and then in point 2 we suggested that they often rejoice in the things they make with their own hands. But only a Christian will have an inner joy and be able to rejoice at the goodness of the Lord. Because the heathen believe not that God exists, and do not therefore believe that He made the heavens and the earth or that He provides them with anything. But as we know according to the Scripture, a fool hath said in his heart, There is no God (Ps.14: 1).

As believers we are to rejoice in the goodness of the Lord!

Having said what we have said, let us say it again. Today we have begun a study of the word rejoice and have covered 3 points, which include.

1. Believers are to rejoice.
2. We are to rejoice in the Lord.
3. We are to rejoice in the goodness of the Lord. Amen

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