TITLE: Rejoicing In the Lord

TEXT: Ps. 32:11; 1 Thess. 5:16-18; Phil. 4:4;
Habakkuk 1:5-11 & 3:17-19; Lame 3:19-23;

2 Co. 4:7-9; 1 Pet. 4:12-13

INTRODUCTION: This morning I want to talk about what it means to rejoice in the Lord.

 David declares in:

Psal 32:11 (NIV) Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!

 The righteous are called to rejoice in the Lord.

 Notice that it doesn’t say: Rejoice in the Lord and be glad you perfect… That would let most of us off the hook.

 It says: rejoice in the Lord and be glad you righteous.

 The word righteous doesn’t speak of perfection, in speaks of right standing..

 The word Righteous here comes from the Hebrew word—

**06662 tsaddiyq {tsad-deek'}**

**1) just, lawful, righteous**

**1d) righteous (as justified and vindicated by God)**

 If we are a Christian, if we have accepted Jesus Christ to be the Lord and savior of our life, then we are among the righteous that Scripture is speaking about here.

 Through Jesus we have been made upright before God, through Jesus we have been placed in right relationship and standing with God.

 Through our relationship with Christ, God has declared us, not perfect, but righteous…

 When we apply the blood of Christ to our life, by accepting Jesus as our Lord, we are justified and vindicated by God at that very moment.

 That is what salvation is all about.

 Being vindicated of our sin so we can stand justly before God.

 Because we are vindicated by God and declared righteous by Him we are to rejoice and be glad..

 The Apostle Paul tells us in…

**1The 5:16 (NKJV) Rejoice always,**

**17 pray without ceasing,**

**18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.**

Phil 4:4 (NIV) Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

Just what does it mean to rejoice?

**5463 chairo {khah'-ee-ro}**

**1) to rejoice, be glad**

**2) to be glad exceedingly**

 If we were to parse out this verb, {khah'-ee-ro}, rejoice, as Paul uses it here, we would find that the tense is present, the voice is active and the mood is imperative.

 First the tense is present! It means the action is to be done now. At this particular time.

 The voice is active…

 The active voice represents the subject as

the doer or performer of the action.

 Paul was addressing the Church, the believer, when he said to rejoice in the Lord always.

 We are the subject that is to perform the action of rejoicing.

Mood - Imperative

The imperative mood corresponds to the English imperative, and expresses a command to the hearer to perform a certain action by the order and authority of the one commanding.

 We as Christians are the hearers and God is the one commanding. So when Scripture says here that we are to rejoice in the Lord always is not at all an "invitation," but an absolute command requiring full obedience on the part of all hearers.

 This is not a suggestion of God to us but it is a command of God to us!

We are to rejoice in the Lord **always!**

**3842 pantote {pan'-tot-eh}**

1. **at all times, always, ever**

 As Christians We have been commanded to rejoice in the Lord always! At all times! In all circumstances!

 We are to Rejoice, be joyful, be glad even in the times of trial and tribulation in this life.

 This is a defining mark of true Christianity.

 To be able to rejoice in all the situations and circumstances of life.

Frank A. Clark once said:

*Faith on a full stomach may be simply contentment--but if you have it when you're hungry, it's genuine.*

 I think that the same thing can be said about rejoicing.

 If we rejoice when things are going good it may simply be contentment, but if we can rejoice, even when things are not going so good, it is genuine…

 To rejoice in the Lord always doesn’t necessarily mean to walk around with a smile on your face 24-7. To rejoice in the Lord always is to recognize God’s Grace in one’s life 24-7 and be glad about it!

 Our rejoicing is to be “In the Lord” and in what the Lord is doing in us and through us and in others around us!

 August 9, marked the 75th anniversary of the bombing of Nagasaki, Japan.

 What you may not realize is that Nagasaki was the center of Japanese Christianity. A substantial Christian community had survived three centuries of persecution. They worshipped underground and endured martyrdom for their faith.

 They were only allowed to live their faith in public after the war at the turn of the 20th century.

 Then, on August 9, 1945, in 60 seconds, they were wiped out by the blast of an atomic bomb.

The Christians that survived response wasn't anger.

 A man, who lost his wife in the blast and who later died from the effects of radiation, said that the 8,000 Christians who died instantly in the blast had been specially chosen by God as expiation from all sins committed during the war.

He said, "Let us give thanks that through this sacrifice, peace was given to the world and freedom of religion to Japan."

 This bombing put a quick end to a war that had gone on for years saving many, both American and Japanese lives, and after the war The Japanese could worship Christ out in the open.

 Rejoicing in the Lord always is the God given ability to see the potential for good even in the horrific things that may happen in this world.

 I love the story of a Pastor by the name of Jack Hinton, while on a short-term mission’s trip, was leading worship at a leper colony on the island of Tobago. A woman who had been facing away from the pulpit turned around toward him.

 Pastor Hinton said "It was the most hideous face I had ever seen,". "The woman's nose and ears were entirely gone. She lifted a fingerless hand, a mere stub in the air and asked, 'Can we sing Count Your Many Blessings?' "

 Overcome with emotion, the pastor left the service. He was followed by a team member who said, "I guess you'll never be able to sing that song again."

 "Yes I will," he replied, "but I'll never sing it the same way."

 This leprous woman knew what it meant to rejoice in the Lord always…

**Haba 1:5-11 (NIV) "Look at the nations and watch-- and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told.**

 In Habakkuk’s day God was about to do something that Gods people thought could never happen…

 God was going to use a heathen nation to chasten the backslidden people of God…

**6 I am raising up the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwelling places not their own.**

**7 They are a feared and dreaded people; they are a law to themselves and promote their own honor.**

**8 Their horses are swifter than leopards, fiercer than wolves at dusk. Their cavalry gallops headlong; their horsemen come from afar.**

**They fly like a vulture swooping to devour;**

**9 they all come bent on violence. Their hordes advance like a desert wind and gather prisoners like sand.**

**10 They deride kings and scoff at rulers.**

**They laugh at all fortified cities; they build earthen ramps and capture them.**

**11 Then they sweep past like the wind and go on--**

**Guilty men, whose own strength is their god."**

God here tells Israel, His chosen people, the elect of God, that there is a day coming when the Babylonians, a wicked, vicious, godless people, were going to come and sweep over them.

The Babylonians would totally defeat them,

 take them into captivity because Israel, as a nation, had turned from God…

 God is speaking of total and complete defeat and destruction to Israel as a nation…..

What I want to look at is the end response of a true man of God in the face of such adversity….

 After God tells Habakkuk all that is going to happen to Israel, in the not too distant future, listen to how Habakkuk responds…..

**Haba 3:17-18 (NIV) Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls,**

**18 yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior.**

**19 The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights.**

This is what the Apostle Paul meant when he said:

Phil 4:4 (NIV) Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

 **1The 5:18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.**

 Rejoice in the Lord even though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines.

 Rejoice in the Lord even though the olive crop may fail and the fields produce no food.

 Rejoice in the Lord even though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls.

 Rejoice in the Lord even when things are not going the way that we think that they should or would like to see them go…

 Rejoice in the Lord even in the trials and tribulations of this life! Maybe, even especially, in the trials and tribulations of this life!

 How can we rejoice in the Lord even when we are going through hard times in our life?

 Because of one simple, yet proven fact….

Our God is sufficient and His mercies never fail.

 Jeremiah, The writer of Lamentations says this after this entire calamity has come upon his nation:

 Lame 3: 19-23 I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall.

**20 I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me.**

**21 Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope:**

**22 Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassion’s never fail.**

**23 They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.**

You see, we can rejoice in the Lord, even in the very face of adversity …**Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassion’s never fail. They are new every morning;**

The Apostle Paul, a man who most probably has suffered more for Christ then anyone, other than Job or Christ Himself, echo’s this same sentiment….

 **2Cor 4:7 (NIV) But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.**

8 We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair;

**9 persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.**

This is Gods promise to us as Christians!

Even when it seems like we are hard pressed on every side---we will not be crushed!

 We may be perplexed but we need not be in despair!

 Even though we may be persecuted we are not abandoned!

 Even though we may be struck down we will never be destroyed! AMEN!!

We can always rejoice in the Lord, find joy in Him, because, even if we lose everything there is to lose in this life, even life itself, we have a God whose grace is still sufficient and He has eternity secured for all who believe in and on Him!

 Even when it seems like the enemy has come in like a flood Scripture says that the Lord will lift up a standard against Him!

 Therefore Paul says: **Rejoice in the Lord always, I will say it again, Rejoice!** Be joyful in all things, in all circumstances, because you serve a God who is able to save and deliver, whose love endures forever and whose mercies and compassion’s will never fail!

 He holds us safely and securely in the palm of His hand!

 This morning, are you truly rejoicing in the Lord?

 If you were that woman who’s face and hands were eaten away with leprosy would you still want to sing Count your many blessings?

 **1Pet 4:12 (NIV) Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you.**

**13 But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.**

 What it boils down to is this…

 If we are a Christian and even though we may be going through times of adversity, of trial and tribulation in our life, this is as bad as it will ever get for us! We have the hope and joy and the promise of Heaven, of spending an eternity with Jesus in our future..

 For those who don’t know Christ, the trials and tribulations of this life are as good as it will ever get for them…

 For they do not have the hope of eternity with Christ in their future…

 You see, we are not commanded to rejoice for our trials and tribulations---we are commanded to rejoice in the Lord even in the face of trial and tribulation!

 We can do that because of the Lords great love for us and the assurance that His love for us will endure forever and His mercies to us will never fail and that His Grace is sufficient for us even in the midst of trial and tribulation.

 Do you have this hope within you this morning?

 The hope that gives us the ability to rejoice in the lord always?

**Haba 3:18 yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior.**

**19 The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights.**

 As we sang this morning----

**It will be worth it all when we see Jesus!**

**It will be worth it all when we see Christ!**

**One look at His dear face, all trouble will erase—it will be worth it all when we see Christ….**

Are you rejoicing as you await that day?

A little boy was in a relative's wedding. As he was coming down the aisle he would take two steps, stop, and turn to the crowd (alternating between bride's side and groom's side). While facing the crowd, he would put his hands up like claws and roar loudly.

 So it went, step, step, ROAR, step, step, ROAR all the way down the aisle.

As you can imagine, the crowd was near tears from laughing so hard by the time he reached the front. The little boy, however, was getting more and more distressed from all the laughing, and was near tears by the time he reached the pulpit. When asked what he was doing, the child sniffed and said, "I was being the Ring Bear."