

# Christian Joy

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Date: 27 January 2019

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[ 0 : 01 ] Well, with a view to God's blessing, let us turn back to the portion of Scripture which we read, Paul's epistle to the Philippians in chapter 3, and we can take our text this evening from the beginning of verse 1, where we read together, Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord.

Rejoice in the Lord. I want us this evening to consider the subject of Christian joy. As a believer, you are called to rejoice.

Indeed, you are commanded to rejoice. This is something that you are told to do. It is part of your Christian obedience. But what does that mean? What does it mean to rejoice? What does that involve?

What is it based on? What is rejoicing? What does it look like? How does it differ from the joy of the world? What distinguishes the Christian's rejoicing?

What distinguishes it from carnal happiness? I want us this evening to try and address some of these questions and to discover together what true Christian joy really is.

[ 1 : 12 ] This is actually really a very important subject. And not just because it's a matter of our Christian obedience. No, it's important because this is connected to every other aspect of our Christianity.

This topic, this subject of rejoicing, it deals with our whole Christian outlook and our whole Christian way of life. It deals with the way that we view the world and the way that we interpret the world. It influences the way that we react to things and the way that we deal with things. It impacts the way that we appear to others and it impacts the way that we are in ourselves.

And so bearing this in mind, this is really a subject that we need to get right, isn't it? If it influences everything else, we need to get it right. We need to understand what it is to rejoice, why we ought to rejoice and how we ought to do it.

The reality, however, is that the subject of joy and rejoicing, both in the world and sadly in the church, the subject is very poorly understood.

[ 2 : 20 ] And it is so, I think, because it's confused with a sort of worldly conception of happiness, which is largely put across as an emotional thing.

Now, as you know, your emotions are subject to circumstances. Your emotions are caused by that which goes on around about you.

So that different circumstances cause different emotions. As a rule, negative circumstances cause negative emotions.

And positive circumstances cause positive emotions. That's generally the way that it works. So you'll have positive emotions. You'll feel good. You'll feel happy when things are going well. That's when you'll feel happy. But when things aren't going well, you're not going to feel so happy. You're not going to have the same joy. You're not going to be able to rejoice because your circumstances are bad.

[ 3 : 18 ] They're difficult. They seem to be going against you. And so how do you find happiness according to the world's conception of joy and rejoicing? How do you go about cultivating joy in your life?

Well, look around you. What's the world doing? The theory is this, that you try best to minimize the negative circumstances and to maximize the positive circumstances.

So if things aren't going well in your life, if you don't feel happy, then what you do is this. You try to change things about a bit. You maybe get a new job.

Or you maybe, as it is in the world today, you get a new husband or wife. Or you get a new car. Or you decide to put an extension on the house. You do something different.

Something that you think is going to make you happy. But if things are going well and if you do feel happy, then what do you do then? Well, you try to keep things the way that they are, don't you? Because according to the world's philosophy, joy, happiness, these things are found in positive circumstances, which then produce positive emotions.

[ 4 : 28 ] So you can rejoice when you have a happy family. You can rejoice when you're enjoying your work, when you're fulfilled in it. You can rejoice when you've got good pastimes, which keep you going in the evenings and Saturdays and so on.

These external circumstances, they positively influence your emotions. And the result of that is that you feel joyful. And yet, the fact is this.

Because emotions are based on external circumstances, they're always going to be subject to change, aren't they? Because circumstances are subject to change.

Now, yes, you can try and manipulate your circumstances. You can try and keep things the way that they are. But really, your circumstances are out of your control.

Whether that be to do with your home life, your health, whether it be to do with your work life or your bank balance, you have a measure of control over these things.

[ 5 : 28 ] But at the end of the day, things can change, can't they? Your health can leave you. Your wife can leave you. We can go into another credit crunch and you can find yourself broke, perhaps through no fault of your own.

Because circumstances are out of your control. And because circumstances are out of your control, therefore, if your joy is based on emotions, which are based on circumstances, then your joy is out of your control, isn't it?

You can pursue it, yes. And you can chase after it. But in practice, joy, as the world sees it, is always going to be fleeting. And even the happiness that you do discover in life, the times that you feel happy, they will soon pass.

Because this kind of joy is always going to be crushed by the circumstances of life. And it's always going to be suffocated by the cruel terms of reality.

It's going to be stolen away by bereavement. And it's going to vanish in the face of illness. Why?

Because this kind of joy is a slave to circumstances. That's what it is.

[ 6 : 34 ] That's the joy of the world. And there's a sense in which we should be careful with our language. And we shouldn't really call it joy. It's a form of happiness.

It's, as we said, it's really an emotion. But the Christian's joy is not an emotion. The Christian's joy is not an emotion.

Now, that joy can be expressed emotionally, certainly. But in its fundamental character, what Paul's talking about here is not an emotion.

Because it goes deeper than an emotion. For the Christian, joy is a faith-fed knowledge of and delight in who God is and what God has done.

That's what joy is for the Christian. It's a faith-fed. It's always got faith behind it. And it's a knowledge of and delight in who God is and what God has done.

[ 7 : 32 ] That's why rejoicing for the Christian is always conditioned. It's always conditioned by these words, rejoice in the Lord. Whether Paul includes him or not, he sometimes does, sometimes he doesn't.

They're implicitly there. It's always rejoice in the Lord. Because the Lord, as a Christian, he is the basis of your rejoicing. Indeed, to put it another way, the Lord is the circumstance.

On which your joy is dependent. He is the circumstance. The unchanging circumstance. On which your joy is dependent. Now, when we think about what Christ, the Lord, in whom we rejoice in.

When we think about what he's done. Then quickly we realize that there's plenty of reason for rejoicing. Don't we? You think about yourself. You think about what you were.

The way you were in your sins. And you think about the way that God intervened in your life. And you rejoice. Do you not? How can you not? When we remember that it is God who works in us.

[ 8 : 36 ] Both to will and to do of his own good pleasure. We rejoice, don't we? When we consider the fact that he has begun a good work. And when he has begun that good work that he will perform unto the day of Jesus Christ.

We rejoice, don't we? When we think that the Son of Man came into the world as a servant. And was obedient unto death. That the Son of God came and that he died for sinners.

So that in whom we might have our sins forgiven. And an inheritance given. When we think about these things. Do we not have great reason to rejoice? Do we not have eternal cause to be full of joy?

Indeed when we consider that the Savior that we worship even this evening together. That as we worship him, where is he? He is exalted.

He is in your heart certainly. But he is exalted at the right hand of almighty God. That in the midst of our troubles and trials. That he is there.

[ 9 : 35 ] And that he is making continual intercession for you. That despite the reproach of men towards believers. And despite the scorn that's poured out on Christ's church.

That one day that every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. To the glory of the Father. When we think about these things. When we view the world through the lens of scripture.

We cannot but rejoice. Indeed who has more reason than you to rejoice tonight if you are a Christian. As you sit there.

If you are still in your sins. And I realize that some of you probably are. But if you were and if you are. You might experience times of happiness.

And you might experience glimpses of joy. But the clock is always going to be ticking on these emotions. Because that's what they are. This joy.

[ 10 : 34 ] This happiness. It's never going to be secure. Your joy is like sand. In a clenched fist. And it's always going to be bit by bit. Escaping your grip.

So that even when you feel happy. The knowledge that this happiness is only for a time. That this world is passing. And that the things that you hold dear. Are rusting. And corrupting.

Even that itself is going to be enough to quench. Your happiness. Is it not? And that's a difference you see. This is where the fundamental distinction occurs.

Because for the Christian. The source of our joy. Is never slipping away. It's never on the way out. Because God doesn't change.

The Lord is the same yesterday. Today. And forever. What he's done for his people doesn't change. It's sure and it's secure. Moth and rust. They cannot corrupt this.

[ 11 : 30 ] Indeed this is an inheritance which is incorruptible. And undefiled. And that fadeth not away. And that's why Paul can rejoice. Because his joy is primarily in the Lord himself.

And in the Lord's gospel. That's why some call this epistle. The epistle of joy. You think about it. The man doesn't have much to rejoice about.

When it comes to the things of the world. You remember what he is. He's in a prison cell in Rome. And he's cold and he's sore. He's shackled and he's chained. He's in bonds.

False accusations have been made against him. And he's waiting, awaiting a trial. His very life is hanging in the balance. Indeed the church itself. Those who should be caring for him.

And praying for him. Well many in that church. Many in Rome especially. They're jealous of him. And they're turning against him. In Philippi itself. As you see. As you read on into this chapter.

[ 12 : 29 ] Heretics are beginning to. To run riot in the place. They're beginning to draw people away. From the true faith. And you look at this man in his prison.

With the world against him. And his circumstances are dreadful. His situation is awful. You would say this man has got no reason to rejoice. This is the most miserable man in the world.

You would say. And yet he can rejoice. And he does rejoice. Indeed he calls other people to rejoice. Why? Well because for him to live is Christ.

And to die is gain. Because to die is to be with Christ. Which is far better. You see he can rejoice. Because he's focused on the main things. Because he's taken up really.

Fundamentally. With the only thing. He can rejoice. Because he rejoices in God. And because God is unchanging. He can rejoice. Because he knows. Although Caesar is holding him in a prison.

[ 13 : 26 ] That the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. And so he can rejoice. Because although his name is being dragged through the mud. By men. Even in the church. Yet he knows of that very name.

That is written in heaven. And although he perhaps has no access to people like Caesar. In order to plead his case. Yet he has access to heaven. He has access to a throne of grace.

He has all these things going for him. All these things that the eye of man refuses to see. Cannot see. And yet they are going for him. He rejoices in the Lord.

And he overflows with joy. It's in his very words. Now I have to say this too. That if you are not a Christian here tonight.

Then you have no reason to rejoice really. This is a command to the believer. And we have to differentiate here. If you are not a believer. God doesn't call you to rejoice.

[14:28] And you might have come here tonight. And you might have been over the moon. As your feet came out of the car in the car park. You might have had a smile on your face. And yet.

The command that I would call you to heed. Isn't the command of Paul here. Which says rejoice in the Lord. Rather it's a command of James. James who says. Be afflicted.

And mourn. And weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning. And let your joy be turned to heaviness. Because the day is coming. It's throwing near. When everything that you are happy about.

When everything that you have rejoiced in. Will be taken from you. It will be taken from you. And so don't rejoice. Rather make sure that you are found in Christ.

And to do that. To be blessed. To be happy. You have to come to terms with the facts. Do you not? What does Jesus say in the seven on the mount? He says. Blessed are the poor in spirit.

[15:28] You have to discover your own poverty. He says. Blessed are those who mourn. You have to mourn over your own sin. And your iniquity. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

You have to hunger and thirst after righteousness. If you want to be filled. He doesn't say rejoice. Rejoice. He says. You make sure that you can get to the point. When you can rejoice. You make sure you can get to the point.

When your joy. When your happiness. Isn't in the things of the world. When your eyes aren't on the things that will perish. But rather. On the saviour. And him alone.

Because then. When you do that. You have reason to rejoice. But no. There's no reason for you to rejoice. There's nothing to be happy about. If you're on your way to a lost eternity.

There's nothing to be. Full of joy about. If you're on your way to hell. Rather he says. You work out your own salvation first. With fear and trembling.

[16:26] And then you come. When you've done that. When you have a measure of assurance. When you have a measure of trust in the saviour. When you've done that. Then you come. And then. You rejoice.

And so the Christian really. Is the only one who can truly rejoice. Is the only one who God calls. To rejoice. Is the only one who can truly rejoice. But how do we show Christian joy. As a bit of an aside.

You see. We often make mistakes here. Because we realize that our joy. Is different from that of the world. And yet we tend to think that. That it looks. Very much like it.

From the outside. So we think that. If a man isn't smiling. Or if a woman doesn't look happy. Then they're not happy. If they're not visibly.

And indeed emotionally joyful. Then we tend to think. Well there's an issue with that person. There's an issue with his religion. There's an issue with her church. There's an issue with her faith.

[17:21] If things are going well. For the worldly man. You'll know it. His emotions will be stirred. His tone will be upbeat.

His outlook will be positive. There will probably be a smile on his face. And a spring in his step. But if these outward manifestations. If they're not there. Then the chances are.

That that man isn't rejoicing. If there are tears. In the eyes of a worldly man. Then the chances are. That he's not happy. But that's not the way that it is.

With the Christian. Now I'm not saying. That there isn't a place. For emotional joy. In the life of the believer. Of course there is. Indeed nothing comes through. These stir your emotions.

Like through. Spiritual holy joy in the Lord. Nothing can stir your emotions like that. However. As I've said. True as that may be. Joy in and of itself.

[18:18] Isn't an emotion. And it certainly isn't. A facial expression. It's interesting that. The Bible commands you. To do many things. But it never commands you.

To smile. I'm not saying. That you shouldn't smile. Of course. If you can you should. But the Bible doesn't command you. To smile. Why? Well because. The Bible isn't so much. And God isn't so much.

Interested in. External expressions of joy. It's easy to feign such things. As it is in. Internal. Expressions of joy. That's what true joy.

Really is. In your heart. Internally. That's where it begins. And it works its way. Outwards. We have to of course. Be balanced. Don't we? Joy. Joy.

The danger is. That we try to express our joy. Unnaturally. That we try to be something. That we know we're not. Because we feel that we have to be like that. It was said in the 19th century.

[ 19 : 14 ] That. I'm not talking about our island. I'm talking about more generally. Countrywide. It was said in the 19th century. That Christians perhaps. Over emphasized. Some of them.

The solemn nature. Of being a Christian. And the effect of that. Was that in certain circles. To smile. Or to laugh. Was seen to be light. Or seen to be frivolous.

But in the 20th century. As a sort of. Kick back against this. In many places. The very opposite thing. Was emphasized. It was urged on Christians. That they ought to be always smiling. That they ought to look happy. That they ought to look joyful. Even if they didn't feel it. Because they were Christians. And they had such reason. To be like this. And the effect.

Was that. Solemnity. In the Christian life. And in many Christian churches. Largely disappeared. And in many places. Places. It was replaced. By a fake. Sort of worldly.

[ 20 : 12 ] Emotionalism. With very little. Spiritual depth. But we have to remember. Friends. That much of Christianity. Is about balance. Not about compromise.

That's not what balance is. But about balance itself. We have to remember. That the Christian. Is a complex creature. By his very nature. His whole being.

Must be multifaceted. Because you see. The truth. That he holds dear. Is ever going to be adapting. To different circumstances. And different situations.

And in the great concoction. Of what life throws at him. He's going to have to find a place. For different things. He's going to have to learn. How to balance. Different emotions.

And different outlooks. And different approaches. How for example. Can you as a Christian. Have a smile on your face. All day. When you know that. There's sinners. That you're seeing in the street.

[ 21 : 08 ] Perhaps even in your home. And they're on the way. To a lost eternity. And they're going to perish. How can you have a smile. On your face all day. And yet. How can you have a throne. On your face all day. When you remember.

That God is good. And that God does good. And that he's done good to you. You see what I mean. There's an equilibrium. As it were. In the Christian life.

Which you just can't. Fabricate. Characteristics. And attitudes. Which seem to clash. They're brought to live. Happily together. This is what the apostle.

Reads about. Sorry. Writes about. In 2nd Corinthians. Chapter 6. And I think it's. One of. His most poetic. Chapters.

In all of his writings. And what he's doing. Is he's explaining. The apparently. Or describing. The apparently. Contradictory nature. Of faith. And he's saying this.

[ 22 : 02 ] That in the Christian life. There's honor. And there's dishonor. There's going to be evil. You're going to be spoken evil of. And there's going to be. A good report. In the eyes of men.

As a Christian. You're dying. And yet you live. You're poor. And yet you make many people rich. You have nothing. And yet you possess all things. And then he says something.

Really interesting. He says. You're sorrowful. And yet you're always rejoicing. You're sorrowful. And yet you're always rejoicing. Now for the world.

Sorrow is sorrow. And rejoicing is rejoicing. These things. They just don't fit together. But you know. In the Christian life. These attitudes. They have to meet.

These conflicting feelings. Emotions. They have to kiss. The Christian life. As I said. It's complex. It's profound.

[ 22 : 58 ] It's. It can't be imitated. It's. That's why you can't. Teach Christianity. Or sorry. That's why you can only. Properly teach Christianity.

Once the. Initial principle. Has been. Implanted. By the spirit of God. Because. I'm not saying. That you shouldn't teach. Children. Christianity. Not at all. But I'm talking.

With the real. To live the Christian life. Because you see. The Christian life. Is a supernatural life. It's a God. Originated life. It's a God. In dwelt life.

And so we must be balanced. In our attitude to life. We must be led. By the spirit. In our life. And we're not to have. A one track mind. In it. Because we have to realize.

That the Christian. Is a balanced man. The Christian. Is a complex woman. But the point is just this. As a Christian. Your joy.

[ 23 : 54 ] Isn't necessarily. Going to be. Apparent to men. And. It isn't apparent to men. Primarily. In the way that you appear. To people.

I've known Christians. And I'm sure that you have as well. And some of them look so doer. They look so doer. It's just the way that they look. It's a kind of expression. That they have on their face. But you talk to them.

You give them the time of day. And you listen to them. As they speak. And they're the most joyful of people. They put your joy to shame. They're sorrowful. And yet they're always rejoicing.

Rejoicing. They've had reason to be sorrowful. In their lives. And yet in Jesus Christ. They see this great reason. To rejoice. On the other hand. You've met people. Haven't you? And they look happy. All the time. They're always smiling. And they're always joking. And yet. With many of them. As you get to know them. They're really quite empty people. They're really quite self-conscious.

[ 24 : 50 ] And they have problems. In their lives. And they don't know how to deal with these things. And they're depressed. And so they put on a face. They put on a smiling face. But for you as a Christian.

Your joy is manifested. Primarily. In your life. Rather than in your face. In your attitude. Rather than in your smile. Your joy is seen in the way that you view life.

And in the way that you view death. Your joy is seen in the way that you react. Through difficult circumstances. And the way that you cope in the face of tragedy. That's where you see your joy.

Your unwavering joy is seen in the fact that you walk by faith.

And not by sight. In the fact that you live for the next world. And not for this world. It's evident in the fact that you can have nothing in this world. And yet be full.

That you can be poor. And yet be satisfied. With Job of old. You can be bereft of your family. And yet you can say. The Lord gave. And the Lord hath taken away.

[ 25 : 53 ] Blessed be the name of the Lord. With him too. You can be deprived of your own health. And yet you can say. Though he slay me. Yet will I trust him. And you can think like this.

And you can speak like this. And you can act like this. And you can live like this. Because your joy isn't dependent on circumstances. It's not dependent on health or on wealth.

Or family. On family or on friends. But on God unchanging. That's what your Christian joy is dependent on. On who God is.

And what God has done. And so finally. And briefly. Let us consider. The practice of Christian joy. How do we do it? How do we rejoice in the Lord?

You see. What we have here is a command. It's an imperative. Rejoice in the Lord. He's telling you to do it. He's saying to you. Be full of joy. Now.

[ 26 : 55 ] The fact that it's a command. Tells us certain things. It tells us that we ought to do it. Certainly. But it also tells us that there are times. When the Christian doesn't do it. Otherwise he wouldn't have to say it.

There are times when you're not full of joy. And this is some. And as such. This is something that we have to. Remind ourselves of. We have to be telling ourselves.

I ought to rejoice. The believer. Ought to be filled with joy. I ought to be glad. I ought to be happy. I ought to be content. Our hearts. They ought to be filled with gladness.

Our lips. They ought to be praising God's goodness. No matter what our circumstances are. Now. The problem with that is. That you know that there are times.

When you don't feel. Particularly joyful. There are days. When you don't feel like rejoicing. There are hours. When you can really feel. Very low. And so on the one hand.

[ 27 : 49 ] You can feel quite depressed. And yet on the other hand. You're being told to rejoice. So that your heart. Is telling you one thing. And yet your mind. Is telling you. In light of scripture.

To do the very opposite. And so what's the answer? What's the answer? How do we get ourselves. Into the frame of mind. To rejoice. I suppose there's a sense. In which this is the most.

Important part of the whole thing. The practical element of it. And yet it's also. Really the most simple. How do you rejoice? I just want to pick up. On two things.

Firstly. Firstly. If you want to rejoice in the Lord. You have to regulate. Your every other source of joy. You must keep. These other things.

Which make you happy. And joyful. You must keep them. In their place. And this is important. Because there are other things. In this world. Which are going to give you joy. God gives us many good gifts.

[ 28 : 45 ] Every good and perfect gift. Comes down. From the father of lights. In heaven. He gives you the gift of family. Perhaps. Children. Of work. Of friendship. Of church.

Of fellowship. Of prosperity. Of wealth. All these things. He gives. And these things can give you joy. In this life. But the problem is that you can tend to rely on them. And to look to them too much. And the secret is never to let these things. Determine your joy. Or define your joy. Never let them get that kind of grip over you.

So if you find that your joy could be taken from you. With the removal of a certain thing. Then you must reassess the way that you value that thing.

If the loss of anything in this world which you treasure. Would make you despair. Then you must reassess that too. You see. As a Christian.

[ 29 : 46 ] You must be as they say. In this world. But not of this world. You must live in it. But you mustn't live for it. For the things that it gives.

Even the best and most blessed things that it gives. You must hold these things. Good things. Many of them. You must hold them. Yes. But you must hold them with a loose grip. Because in God's providence.

Whatever it may be. Whether it be family. Or whether it be money. Or whether it be a church. These things can be taken from you. And so God has given you these things.

Certainly. But don't let them control your joy. And don't let them suffocate your rejoicing. Because that's what they'll do if you let them. That's what they'll do. To live like this.

Being joyful in the things of the world. More than in the Lord. It is to live like the world. It is to live like the heathen. It's to build your joy. It's to build your life on an insecure foundation.

[ 30 : 46 ] On ground that's bound to crumble. And so you keep these things. Whatever they may be. You keep them in their place. But secondly. And this is very simple.

But bear with me. The second way to rejoice in the Lord. Or the second thing that you need to do. Is simply to think about the Lord. To think about the Lord.

You can't rejoice without this. And I say this. As we live in a very busy world. But many. Very few of us are like Mary. Sitting at the feet of Jesus.

Listening to him. More of us are like Martha. In the kitchen. In the midst of the pots and the pans. Getting the menus ready. And setting the table. That's what many of us are like.

In our world. In our busy world. There are things in this world. Which will tend to take your time. Things which will tend. To fascinate you.

[ 31 : 46 ] In the very literal sense of the world. But the question is. Are these things taking up. So much of your time. And so much of your energy. That you don't have any time.

Or energy left. For God. Because if they are. And I suspect with many. That they are. Then you must. Turn your eyes away from these things.

Even for a time. And you must be taken up. With the main thing in this life. You must lay aside every weight. And every sin. Which so easily besets you. And you must run the race with patience.

But how am I to do it? Fixing your eyes on Jesus Christ. Fixing them. Not glancing at him. Not a quick look. But keeping your eyes on him. And if you don't do that.

Because if you don't do that. You are not going to rejoice in him. I am not talking about reading your Bible all day. What I am talking about. Is setting aside time. When you can do that. Setting aside time.

[ 32 : 44 ] Guarding time. Bookending time. That you have in worship to the Lord. Not only on the Lord's day. Not only on a Wednesday evening. At a prayer meeting. But with your family.

And by yourself. Setting aside time. That you might focus your attention on the Lord. That you might give him his place. And give him the best of your time.

Rather than the worst of your time. How many of us are guilty of doing that? Opening our Bibles before we close our eyes at night. And our eyes are closing as we open our Bibles.

Is that the time that we ought to give to the Lord? You give him proper time. Time when you can contemplate his works. When you can consider what he has done for you.

In his great mercy and kindness. Time when you can read his word. And meditate on these things. Time when you can pray over these things. And be fed by these things. Because when you do that.

[ 33 : 38 ] When you set aside that time. To think. Then you cannot but rejoice. In the Lord. In what he has done for you. You cannot but feel your heart.

Be filled with the joy of the Lord. And know that joy. To be your strength. Do you wonder why perhaps. You feel so little joy. In this world.

Well maybe this. Is why. Maybe it's because you've. Got too firm a grip. On this world. And on the things of this world. Maybe it's because. There's too much of the world in you.

And there's too much of you. In the world. Or maybe it's because. You just don't think. Anymore. You just don't. Take the time. To recall God's marvelous works.

You don't spend time with God. Even as you used to. When you were first converted. You no longer set your affections. On the things. That are above. So often they're on the things.

[ 34 : 35 ] That are in the here. And in the now. And in the present. Well call. Paul calls you here. God calls you here. To correct these things. To put them right.

To think on the Lord. To be taken up with the main things. To be most in the main things. And to rejoice in the Lord. Friends. We have every reason. To rejoice in the Lord tonight.

In light of his great and glorious gospel. You wouldn't. Debate that point. Would you? What reason you have. To rejoice. But let's ensure that. We're doing it.

Let's ensure that. Our hearts are full of joy. That we're fixing. Our hearts and our minds. On the things that are above. Let's make sure. That we're not so blinded. By this world. And the circumstances.

Of this world. That we lose our joy. Let's ensure. That we're not so. Earthly. That we lose sight. Of the Savior. Of his passion.

[ 35 : 30 ] And of his work. And of his promises. Let his friends. Make sure. That we're not so. Taken up with time. That we forget. The timeless realities. Of the gospel. Because Christian.

You of all people. Tonight. Have reason. To rejoice. In the Lord. Do it. Rejoice then. Rejoice in the Lord.

And as he says. In another place. Again I say. Rejoice. Amen. Let us pray.