

“Rejoice in the Lord Always!”

Philippians 4:4-7 – Pentecost 21 – October 18, 2026)

Philippians 4:4-7 – *⁴Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! ⁵Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. ⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

Dear Redeemed in Christ:

Have you noticed how, when you are looking to forward to some wonderful event promising a new and exciting future, it can shape your mood and outlook in life? One such occasion is marriage. Even before a man and woman exchange wedding vows, there can be great joy in the anticipation, an underlying joy that seems to color life with bright optimism, an overflowing joy in their hearts that they want to share with others.

As believers in Christ, there is one event we look forward to above all. Paul has just described it in Philippians 3:20-21: *“Our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body.”* As we live in anticipation of Christ’s coming, what joy fills our hearts as we look forward to spending eternity with Him in heavenly glory. No wonder Paul says: **“Rejoice in the Lord always!”** We have **1) His underlying joy in every circumstance of life, 2) His overflowing joy as we share His grace with others, 3) His peaceful joy as we cast all our cares on Him in prayer.**

1) His underlying joy in every circumstance of life

As believers in Christ, we do not always feel joy. If we are dealing with financial concerns, difficult relationships, troubles at work or school, it is hard to feel joy. When we are burdened with sickness or pain, would we describe it as joyful? When we are grieving the death of a loved one, it may feel like joy is overshadowed by sorrow. And how can we rejoice when we are faced with our sin, and we feel guilt and shame?

As the apostle Paul wrote this Epistle, he understood the pains, griefs, and hardships of life. Already for years he had been familiar with sharing in Christ’s sufferings (3:10). In 2 Corinthians 11:23-28, he recounts what he had suffered for the sake of the Gospel – from beatings and imprisonments, to perilous journeys by land and sea, to threats from both enemies and false friends, to hunger, thirst, cold, and nakedness. Currently, he was in prison for preaching the Gospel, awaiting an uncertain life or death sentence.

Yet despite the trials, tribulations, and uncertainties of life in this world, Paul says: *“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say rejoice!”* Outward circumstances cannot take away our underlying joy in Christ. Even when the dark clouds of adversity overshadow us, the bright sun of God’s grace still shines on us, His promises in Christ still stand as sure as ever, and we have every reason to rejoice.

We can rejoice in every circumstance because of what God’s Gospel promises. When sin and guilt trouble us, threatening to chase joy out of our hearts, God’s Gospel still declares: Rejoice! *“Your sins are forgiven you”* (Matthew 9:2). On the cross, Jesus has taken your sins all away as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12). *“There is therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus”* (Romans 8:1).

When we bear sickness, pain, and troubles that threaten to chase joy out of our lives, God’s Gospel still declares: Rejoice! *“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope”* (Jeremiah 29:11). *“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose”* (Romans 8:28).

When we grieve the death of a loved one, or maybe fear our own death, and sorrow threatens to steal joy from our hearts, our crucified and risen Savior still declares in His Gospel: *“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die”* (John 11:25-26).

Therefore *“Rejoice in the Lord always.”* His promises enable us to look beyond the troubles of this temporal life to our eternal life in Christ. As we live in anticipation of His coming again to take us to His heavenly glory, the underlying joy He gives will fill our hearts. Then it will become an overflowing joy as we share His grace with others.

2) His overflowing joy as we share His grace with others

This is Paul’s point as he continues: *“Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.”* The word *“gentleness”* includes being patient, gracious, and considerate to others. We know how difficult this can be. When we feel stressed about some great task or deadline, it is hard to be patient if others get in our way; it is easy to lash out with impatient words and behavior. When we feel hurt by what someone said or did to us, it is hard to be gracious and forgiving; it is easier to hold a grudge and retaliate. When someone is inconsiderate and unappreciative of what we do for them, it is not easy to be considerate of their needs; it is easier to withhold love and service.

Jesus is the only perfect example of gentleness. How many times, when others did not appreciate who He was and what He did for them, He just kept serving in love, ever considerate of their needs. Even in severe pain and adversity, He showed gentleness:

“who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously” (1 Peter 2:23). On the cross, Jesus graciously prayed for enemies: *“Father, forgive them”* (Luke 23:34).

Jesus did not show gentleness merely as an example for us. He did it as our Savior. He suffered and died for all our sins, all the times we have lacked gentleness toward others, all the times we have held hateful grudges, all the times we have returned hurt for hurt, evil for evil, instead of forgiving others. In Christ crucified, God treats us with utmost gentleness, mercifully forgiving all our sins, not counting them against us. Instead, He graciously counts to us Jesus’ perfect gentleness and love.

In view of this, Paul says: *“Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.”* It is a reminder that the Lord Jesus, who died for us, rose again, and ascended, will come again soon. It could be on the Last Day, or any day when He takes our souls from this world to heaven. This gives us a new outlook on life; it reminds us of what is really important as we await His coming. As we consider the grace of God in sending His Son to save us from sin and death, and the great gift He gives us as heirs of eternal life, first it fills our hearts with joy and thankfulness. Then it becomes an overflowing joy as we want to share His grace with others.

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:16: *“Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh.”* That is, we do not look at others according to the sinful nature or in a merely worldly way. We look at everyone as a soul for whom Christ died, a soul He came to redeem from sin, a soul with whom we want to share His Gospel. The grace God has shown us moves us to share His forgiveness and love in Christ with others. We can share that gentle, humble, self-sacrificing spirit of Christ as we act for the good of others, even enemies. And we pray that, as we live our faith and share His Gospel, they too may be brought to rejoice in the riches of His grace and eternal life in Christ.

3) His peaceful joy as we cast all our cares on Him in prayer

Finally, the underlying joy He gives in every circumstance, the joy He causes to overflow in daily life, becomes His peaceful joy as we cast our cares on Him in prayer.

It says: *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.”* Often we are anxious about many things. Doesn’t this mean we fail to trust God to provide what is best, even after all the gifts He has given us in His Kingdom? Jesus says in Matthew 6:31-33: *“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”*

The God who so loves us that He gave His only Son to win for us forgiveness, righteousness, and eternal life in His Kingdom, also promises to care for us in daily life (Romans 8:32). Therefore He invites us to cast all our cares on Him in prayer. We can bring to Him every kind of petition and request, not only for ourselves but for others. We can pray with confidence, knowing He will always answer in the way that is best for our temporal and eternal good. And we can pray “*with thanksgiving*.” For again, we rejoice to think of all the ways He already has answered our prayers, supplying every need of this life. Above all, we give thanks that He satisfies our greatest desire by lavishing on us all the riches of His grace in Christ and His heavenly Kingdom.

As we cast all our cares on Him, it says: “*the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus*.” The peace of God stands like a sentry, guarding our hearts and minds from troubling thoughts. Like our underlying joy, our peace remains through all the changing circumstances in life. It does not depend on our limited understanding, but on God’s promises in Christ. Romans 5:1-2 says: “*having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God*.” Every day we live in the peace of God, knowing that He forgives all our sins for Jesus’ sake, knowing that nothing in this world can separate us from His love, and knowing that even in death He will take us into the everlasting joys of His heavenly Kingdom.

When we are looking forward to some wonderful event promising an exciting future, it can shape our mood and outlook; it can color our life with bright optimism. As we live in anticipation of Jesus coming again, and the glory we will share with Him in heaven, we can “*Rejoice in the Lord always!*” For we have His underlying joy that remains constant in every circumstance of life; we have His overflowing joy as we share His grace in Christ with others; and we have His peaceful joy as we cast all our cares on Him in prayer.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. Amen.