

Philippians 4:4

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

I think most everyone would agree that 2020 was a very interesting and challenging year. For some of us, we lost a loved one. My mom and my wife's mom went to heaven in 2020, I know our worship leader's mom just passed, and our pastor's father in law past the end of 2020 as well.

My ex wife died the end of 2020, and now my son has to face his 16th birthday without his mom for the first time.

I have heard of people, who know people, who died from Covid, and one of my managers, even though we have all been working remote, was in the hospital for a month with Covid, and they actually had to be resuscitated her.

I won't even address politics in this country and how there was almost a Civil War here in the USA.

Many have lost their jobs and some even their homes. So many things we took for granted as doing, like going to a movie or out to eat, seems impossible in some areas of the USA.

And what about having to wear a mask all the time when you are out in public, we are all loving that... NOT!

With all of this in mind, people will read today's devotional verse and think, you got to be kidding me, what is there to rejoice about in all of this. I think the problem is that people are not reading it correctly. Read it again, maybe slower.

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

Still don't see it, let's remove the key word from the first sentence it and see if you get it now

Rejoice in the _____ always.

You see, the problem is that people read this and they actually change the key word (**Lord**) and exchange it for the circumstance they are facing.

- ✓ Rejoice in the death of a loved one always
- ✓ Rejoice in the loss of a job always
- ✓ Rejoice in the loss of my mommy always
- ✓ Rejoice in the loss of your home always
- ✓ Rejoice in the wearing a mask always
- ✓ Rejoice in the everything being shut down always
- ✓ Rejoice in the a family member or friend being hospitalized and not being able to go visit them always

I mean, isn't that how people read it, but it's not what it says, it says to: ***Rejoice in the Lord always.*** (underlined for emphasis) Notice Paul doesn't say to rejoice in the circumstance, but rather in the **Lord**.

How do we do this?, let me give you one example.

Every morning I spend about an hour in the word to start my day, and there have been those mornings when I wake up in a bad mode, or things haven't been going right or for whatever reason I just don't feel like being in the word. But I do it anyway, and when I do, those anxieties, or troubles, or depression, or fears just melt away. By the time I am done spending time with the Lord in His word, I feel like a totally different person, even though things have not changed. But what has changed is my perspective, because I am simply reminded Who God is by reading His word.

So, when you take today's verse and think you can't rejoice in the circumstance that's going on in your life right now, you are right, and we are not told to. But rather we are told to rejoice in Who is taking care of that circumstance, and that's what today's verse is telling us to do.

So cry out to the Lord about what's going on in your life right now, and you don't have to be happy about it. But don't take it out on God, but rather rejoice that He is with you and is handling that circumstance, even if you don't see it right now.

† **John 16:33** *These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*

† **Isaiah 41:10** *Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'*