

Joy to the World... *Really*

Sermon Series: "Joy to the World" Text: Philippians 4:4

December 5, 2021

INTRODUCTION

Make the Choice to Rejoice

⁴ *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!*

This is a C_____.

We choose to rejoice *in the Lord*. I want to suggest that we may rejoice "in the Lord" in at least three ways:

- W_____ He is
- W_____ He Has Done
- W_____ I am in Him

Paul, earlier in chapter 3 said this:

My brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you.

Rejoice in the Lord. He says, "I'll say it again. It's no trouble. I'll say it. And I'll keep saying it! Why? Because the joy of the Lord, is a safeguard for your soul.

Why is the joy of the Lord a safeguard for your soul? ***Because if you are not careful, bitterness of soul will kill you.***

WARNING! Bitterness is a Gateway Sin

Remember Moses, that whole story when he has been going back and forth between the Israelites and Pharaoh. And Pharaoh has just turned up the heat. He is now requiring that the Israelites still meet their quota of bricks but now he no longer will supply the hay that is required to mix in with the mortar. They in fact are going to have to get up even earlier, divide up their workforce, half of them collecting hay, and the other half making the actual bricks. Clearly, this is not good.

And Moses goes to God and says, "What is up? Why is this happening?" And God gives him a reassuring message. That God has not abandoned His people. That He is for them. That they need simply to watch and wait and they will see the glories of the LORD.

And when Moses brings this message, it says in Exodus 6:9 that they did not listen to him because of their harsh labor and discouragement. And as we watch this same group of people, when everything's going good, they're praising God. But when everything's going bad, they're complaining. They're moaning. They're whining. They're discouraged and depressed.

Moving into the New Testament, the writer of Hebrews be careful that you don't end up just like them!

¹² See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. ¹³ But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

Hebrews 3:12-13

RESPONSE

How are you doing on making the choice to rejoice?

Questions for Personal Reflection/Group Discussion

1. How may we choose to rejoice always *in the Lord*?
2. Why is choosing to "make the choice to rejoice" a safeguard for your soul?
3. In what sense is bitterness a "gateway drug"?
4. In what specific ways could you seek to intentionally obey the command to "rejoice in the Lord always" this week?