

Transforming Daily
“... rejoice in the Lord always ...”
Philippians 4:4

This phrase is a very popular phrase among children in children’s church and Sunday school. However, it is to be understood more seriously than a cute lyric from a song. In fact, in the Greek language, “rejoice” is written in the imperative mood. In other words, Paul commands the believer to rejoice always. Philippians is known as a prison epistle, that is, a letter written by Paul while he was incarcerated probably in Rome. In light of his circumstances, as he testifies to them in this book, he encourages the believers at Philippi to be joyful and to rejoice as they most certainly are to face adversity for the cause of Christ.

The message for the early church is the same message for the church in the 21st century. Rejoice! No matter the circumstances, and Paul faced all of them (2 Corinthians 11:22-28). There is no argument that talking about how one should live rather than actually living out what one talks about, with respect to life’s adversities, is easy. And of course, rejoicing doesn’t mean that one is always smiling, cheering, jumping up and down with a goofy sense of irresponsibility. Joy may express itself quietly, soberly and dignified. It isn’t necessarily what is expressed on the outside as much as what’s experienced on the inside. That’s why the joy of the Lord is our strength!

“Always” used here underscores the nature of our joy to be a discipline, not just a feeling. The believer is to discipline his or her life based on the wisdom, doctrine and truth of God’s Word that in every circumstance the first and last response is one of charity, compassion, caring and concern for the physical and spiritual wellbeing of others, in the name of Christ. Where do you find yourself today? Are you under the “circumstances” as it is said? Everyone is under circumstances, in situations, or facing conditions. Sometimes they are adverse circumstances, situations and conditions, and sometimes they are not. I call them faith crises.

Everyone, and multiple times a day, is either entering into, in the midst of, or just coming out of a faith crisis. What’s your faith crisis, or what are your faith crises presently? Do you feel overwhelmed? You’re not alone, and I’m not just referring to the fact that others are going through similar crises. I’m referring to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that every believer is promised. Are you a believer? That’s everyone’s ultimate faith crisis. Have you faced it? Perhaps you’re born again, but life just isn’t turning out the way you thought it would. Are you discouraged? Don’t be. Deliberately and willfully choose, today, that no matter the outcome of present adverse circumstances, situations or conditions, you are going to rejoice in the Lord always.