

“Philippians, chapter 4, verse 4, reading down through, including verse number 8, reading it from the NIV this morning, it says, Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again, rejoice. Let your gentleness be evident to all.

The Lord is near.

Do not be anxious about anything. But in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, and whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things. Okay, now, bear with me.

Title of this message? Thermometers or thermostats? I read something the other day, and I thought, man, that will preach.

I guess we're getting very secretive, are we not?

I'm going to ask you a question. Are you happy?

What's wrong with the rest of y'all?

Are you happy? Good. Is there anybody that's unhappy?

You might be, but you're afraid to say. Balcony people, are you all happy?”

“These people down here clapping for you balcony folks. God intends for you to be happy. God wants you to be happy.

Now, you need to understand that. But happiness does not come from the outside in.

It comes from the inside out.

Thermometers and thermostats. Y'all know what a thermometer is, right? Y'all know what a thermostat is, right?

Okay. Some of y'all, the last few weeks, been trying to turn it down, so your electric bill would go down, you know?

I keep...

My fear at my own home is we're going to break our thermostat. Because I'm always turning it down, and she's always turning it back up, you know?

A thermometer simply reflects the conditions around it. It responds to what it needs. It's hot, temperature goes up, it feels cold, temperature goes down.

It is utterly and completely controlled by the things around it, by what's going on around it, by the conditions, by the circumstances, by the situation, by how it feels, because it only records how it feels, right? It records hot regardless of the cold. That's what a thermometer does.

It is controlled by conditions.”

“Now, what does a thermostat do, on the other hand? A thermostat controls the conditions, okay? You set your thermostat, and hence the struggle, you know, unless you and your spouse are on the same page as your kids or whatever.

You set that thermostat at a certain point, and when you go in, it's there. Or it will get there real quick, you know? I don't understand people who turn the thermostat way up and then come on and turn it way down.

I mean, it's saving money, is it?

I mean, I know as long as you think it is, it is.

I got that.

But, you know, they got these thermostats now.

If you can pull them on your phone, can you believe it?

Of course you can.

You can do everything on your phone.

I won't get one, because I will have the thermostat down, and my wife will get on her phone and turn it up while she's at Walmart.

Because she knows I turned it down when she left.”

“A thermostat controls the conditions. If you got it set on 72 at your house, your house is going to be 72. It might get up to 73 and say, well, then it will come right back down, you know.

It controls what's going on. A thermometer only reflects what's going on. A thermostat controls what's going on.

Those are the things you need to know. So, now, if you are a thermometer person, when things are good, you're so happy. And then when something goes wrong, oh my gosh!

They were out of my favorite chips at Walmart.

I mean, you know.

Your happiness goes up and down.

The thermostat, people, is not, the thermostat is not controlled by what it feels. As far as kicking on and off it is, but beyond that, it controls what's around it.

It's got a set temperature.

We need a happiness and a joy that is not controlled by what's going on around us, but is what's controlled by what's inside of us. We need something that is controlled by the power of God that dwells within each and every one of us. And we didn't know that's what is in control”

“Now, what I just read to you, the scripture I read to you was written by a man named Paul. And Paul wrote this while he was in jail in Philippi, while he was chained up, while he was in a

prison in terrible conditions, in a terrible situation in his life. And here he is telling us to rejoice in the Lord.

He said, and again I say it, rejoice.

I mean, it's not really an ideal situation to be rejoicing in.

And yet he, why would he say this?

Because he wants us to, because he knew first, he knew, the source of his happiness did not come from the outside, did not come from his situation, did not come from his circumstances. The source of his happiness came from the inside. And he refused to allow situations and circumstances and things like that to control what God had put inside of him."

"And not only did he do it for his life, he did it for you and I. That we might know that we can have something better. That we might be able to get off of this roller coaster of emotion we ride because we're happy one minute and we're upset the next because of, like I said, because we didn't have the favorite potato chips.

Or whatever it might be. Because those are the things that seem to bother us the most. Now, I want to break this first down just a little bit for you.

The first word that Paul spoke is rejoice. And I remind you over and over, the Bible was not in its original form in the King James English. Okay?

It was not in anything. It was written in Hebrew and Greek and Aramaic. Okay?

The New Testament mostly is Greek and Aramaic. Now, this word, rejoice, you got to look the words up. You got to find out what they are and what they mean.

This word, rejoice, is a Greek word, charo. Kind of like caro, but it's in good nature. But that's not what I want you to remember."

"I want you to remember that this word is a verb.

And I want somebody to tell my daughter that I know what a verb is. She's not here. She's all about English.

What's with the English?

What's an English teacher?

I know a verb is an action word. Yay!

Yeah! Amen!

Oh, but, but, that action means you're supposed to be doing something.

Ooh.

Paul is supposed to be rejoicing.

It means we need to do something. And when Paul says it, he's not saying it as, hey, it'd be a good idea if you rejoice. It's not a suggestion.

It's more like, hey, you need to rejoice.

Because he goes on and he says, hey, I'm telling you, you need to rejoice.

You know why it's command?

Because you cannot command a feeling.

You cannot make yourself hungry if you're not hungry.

You cannot make yourself tired if you're not tired.

Preacher, I'm tired all the time. We'll try to put a two-year-old to bed when they say, I'm not tired.

It'll improve your prayer life, guaranteed.

You can't command a feeling.”

“You might try to convince somebody they're hungry or they're tired or whatever, but you can't command it, all right?

Because it is a feeling.

You can command it. You can actively, deliberately, intentionally set your mind and heart on happiness, on being joyful.

You can do that.

It is a choice.

Not a feeling.

Choosing to be happy, choosing joy over sorrow, choosing joy over unhappiness, choosing happiness is a choice. We're waiting on the feeling, and we're counting on the feeling, because, let's be honest, when we're happy, we like the feeling.

If you ever had, I mean, just really, really good ice cream. I don't mean just, oh, let me back up. I've never had bad ice cream, but I have had some really, really good ice cream.

You know what I'm saying? I mean, when you take about it, you think, oh, my Lord, this is the food of God. It's what they serve in heaven, for goodness sake.

I mean, ice cream, that's unbelievable, right? You all know what I'm talking about?

If you have, you need to go to ice cream shop.”

“That feeling passes. And then you talk about how good it was, and how great it tasted. Yet in the end.

What you need is something.

And that ice cream I'm talking about, oh, it made me happy. Oh, it made me smile. Right, until I got to the bottom of the bowl.

Yeah, I can go get more, but you can't live at the ice cream store.

I asked, they said, you gotta go home, sir.

Do you understand what I'm saying?

Do you get what I'm trying to say here? We must make a choice to be happy. We choose to rejoice.

And Paul was so adamant about it, he said it again. He said, I will say it again.

Rejoice. Rejoice.

Choose happiness.

Choose to be happy. We live in a terrible world.

Amen.

The world is full of doubt.

It's full of negativity.

I got that. There is fear standing on every street corner right now. Anxiety is through the roof.

Uncertainty about everything is every place.

There is mistrust.

The world is full of selfishness, and there is animosity everywhere.

If you choose to be.

Well, how can I choose to be?"

"You need to understand, it is your right, and it is your privilege as a child of Almighty God to be happy in this life.

You hear that?

Not a one.

I don't think they're buying this. I don't think they are. Turn the thermostat up, people.

Quit measuring how warm or how cold it is in here. Turn the thermostat up. Let's raise the elevation.

We have a choice, and it's our choice. It's our choice. You need to choose it for yourself.

You need to choose it for your family, and you need to choose it for the people around about you looking to see how you, as a child of God, are handling what's going on in this world we're living in. We must choose happiness.

We must choose to be it.

Well, how do we do this, for goodness sake?

Oh, I'm so glad you asked.

Paul tells us, rejoice in the Lord.

Ooh, in the Lord. Now, I get it."

"It's not easy to rejoice if you get a bad diagnosis from the doctor. If you get a layoff notice at work, if you have a death in the family, those things are not easy to rejoice in. I understand that.

But when you place, when God becomes the source of your joy, and not what you hear from the doc, and not what happens, and not what goes on, when God begins to be the source of our excitement, of our joy, of our happiness, it can change. Yes, there will still be bad things happen to good people, guaranteed. But in the midst of that, if we can learn to find a measure of happiness, we lose all the devastation that keeps pouring on, all the negativity that the world keeps shoving at us.

We have to find that one thing that is unshakable, that will not change, it will never change, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. He's not telling you, Paul is not saying, rejoice in your bank account, rejoice in your good job, rejoice in your health or anything like that, because all of that can change in a moment. Believe me, I know"

"Believe me, I know. Your health can change in a moment, all right? So what do you do when it changes?

You find something within you that you didn't even know was there, something God put in you, instead of just throwing your hands up and wanting to quit, you stand on what you know. God is faithful, and happiness comes from God. You know why?

Because God never fails, God never changes, and God can never be taken away from the true believer.

He will not ever leave you. He will not forsake you.

That is his promise to you. Our joy and our excitement and our happiness can only be rooted in what's going on inside us and not what's going on around us. Because if you let what's going on around you, you will be the most depressed individual that ever was.

You won't even want to get up and get out of bed because there's no good news on the news.

I'm going to give you three things real quick, and we're going to move on to something else here."

"Things to hold on to. First of all, you should rejoice what's on the inside, okay? We rejoice in who God is to us.

God is sovereign.

That means He's over everything.

God's in control of everything. There is nothing that has ever caught God.

God is for us. We can rejoice in God's provision for us and what He provides for us. What is the greatest problem in all of mankind?

And right now, some of y'all are thinking, what's this, what's this, what's this, what's this?

Two in one thing is man's greatest problem. That is sin.

That is sin.

We all have it.

We all deal with it.

That is the greatest problem of mankind, and it is the one we ignore the most. But we'll list everything else before we list that one, because nobody likes to deal with that one. But I'm telling you, that is the one and only thing that will keep you out of heaven."

"And that is the thing that Jesus has conquered in our lives if we put our lives under His blood. He has taken care of it. He has made provision for us.

He has solved that.

Your salvation is secure. He is faithful and just. And we can also rejoice in His promises.

We can rejoice because we know who God is. We can rejoice because of the privilege or the provisions of God, and we can rejoice because of the promises of God. I told you earlier, He has promised to never leave us nor forsake us.

Hebrews 13 and 5. He's promised to work all things together for the good of those who love Him. That's Romans 8 and 28, folks.

When our joy and our happiness is anchored in Jesus, what's going on around the Baptist has no effect on us. It does not control us. It does not break us down.

VMI 8 and 10 says, the joy of the Lord is your strength.

The joy of the Lord is your strength."

"Psalm 16 and 11 says, in thy presence is fullness of joy. Habakkuk 3 and 18, I will enjoy in the God of my salvation. The preacher, I just don't have it like I used to.

Okay, listen to this. Psalm 51 and 12 says, David was telling God, Lord, restore unto me the joy of your salvation and uphold me with your preaching. Lord, if you're here this morning and you just felt like you had it, but you don't have it right now, maybe you need a respiration.

Do you know what it is to restore something?

To bring it back to its original state.

They do houses. They do old cars.

Jesus will do it for you too. He will bring you back to your original state of salvation.

Now, Paul doesn't just leave us hanging. He goes on in the sixth verse, and he tells us how we need to do it.

Okay?

The NIV in the sixth verse says, do not be anxious about anything. But if everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your request to God. Now, I want to read that sixth verse to you from the New Living Translation.”

“I really like it.

It says, don't worry about anything.

Some of y'all would have nothing to do if you didn't worry about everything.

What am I going to do today?

Don't worry about anything. Instead, instead, pray about everything. Pray about everything.

Tell God what you need and thank Him for all He has done. Take all your words, your fears, your anxieties, and give them to God by faith and prayer.

But with them, there's something else in there.

With thanksgiving, with...

I've been telling you what you need to do, what you can't do.

Let me tell you what you can't do now.

You cannot be truly thankful to God for things, and worry about them at the same time.

You can't, because if you do, you're not being truly thankful.

You cannot be truly thankful to God, and worry about it at the same time.

You can't.

Being thankful changes things.

Changes your attitude.

You go from a bad attitude to an attitude of gratitude, and we need that. It changes your outlook. It changes your perception of things, how things will proceed to you.”

“It shifts everything from a negative to a positive in your life. Paul says, be not anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God. That's what we need to do.

We need to be doing those very things to find the happiness that God intends for us to have, because God does not want you to be miserable. And PS.,

God is not the one who makes you miserable.



He's the one who wants to bring you out of it.

You have an enemy that will keep you unhappy and miserable just as long as he possibly can.

And we make it so easy for him to do that.

Because if he don't know what's wrong with us, we're telling it.

We put it on Facebook about how miserable we are. I don't get that. I don't get that, you know?"

"We need to be the bright light in the midst of a dark world. If we're going to mope around and look like the rest of the world looks, how do they know we know Jesus? Because they're going to say, man, if that's what knowing Jesus is about, I'm going to stay where I'm at.

I mean, look at that church much.

I mean, there's more life in the general visitation than there is in church service. You ain't been to some places I've been, obviously.

There is joy in this world and is bound in the person of Jesus Christ.

So I can tell you.

But Paul doesn't quit there.

He goes on.

The seventh verse says, And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding.

I've lived this one.

I'm living this one right now. What's that mean?

It means people will look at you on your worst day and say, How are you going wrong?

I'm going to get this wrong, got that wrong, got this wrong. Because I know whom I have to leave."

"And I'm still persuaded that my God is able to keep that, which I have committed unto Him. You know what I committed to my God?

Me. Me.

Whether I like what's happening, whether I dislike what's happening, no matter what's going on in my life, whether I understand it, whether I don't, I know in whom I have believed in. And I am still persuaded and will continue to be persuaded that my God is able. And I will learn to find happiness in the midst of what I don't like.

I will learn to find joy in the midst of sadness because I know in whom I have believed. Church, that's what it's about.

The peace of God.

How can we have peace when the world is falling apart and when the wheels are off the cart, the cart's even in the ditch? Well, thank God, there was a ditch to get in. The cart could have been in the middle of the water.

You can't swim.

What are you going to do then?

God knows what he's doing. You don't have to like it.

You have to trust him.

You have to trust him.”

“And when you trust him, you will make it.

May I ask you a question?

We're all looking for happiness.

Where have you been looking for it at?

I started to date myself so bad in just then. I started to say, hey, y'all are waiting for Publishers Clearinghouse.

I'm calling you.

You young people don't have a clue what I'm talking about. My age group, we knew Publishers Clearinghouse.

Yeah.

I've never seen them on my street anywhere I've ever lived. Where are you looking for your happiness at? Where are you looking to find joy in this life at?

Is all you see is the bad?

Can you not see the good?

You need to look inside and know that Jesus is in there. And if he's not in there, he wants to be in there, and he will change your life. He'll wreck your world, the world you know right now, and give you a better world because there is a better one to be had.”

“There is happiness and there is joy, folks. I'm telling you the things in this life that we find that put so much happiness in, that only last for a moment, and they're gone. And they are very fragile in most instances.

In this life, I look in the mirror, and I, who is that guy looking back at?

And where is all the hair he had?

And why is his beard white now?

He didn't use to be.

What happened?

It was all so quick. And it was so quick.

Those of you who are my age and older, you know what I'm talking about.

You young people.

Oh, man, he did that.

Your day's coming, Lord Harrison. I'm telling you it is.

We will put our hope and our trust in an unchangeable, unshakable, unbreakable foundation of Jesus Christ.

What are we going to put them in?

Jesus is.

Do you remember, I got four verses and I'm frozen.

I know you're thinking, I got 30 minutes.

You don't."

"Matthew 2 and 10. Do you remember what the wise men said when they saw the star? Matthew 2 and 10 says, when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

Remember the message of the angels in Luke 2 and 10? When I wrote that out, I thought, that's cool.

Matthew 2 and 10, Luke 2 and 10, on hand and hand.

The angel said to the shepherd, fear not, for I bring you good tidings of great joy, which will be to all people.

Jesus said this in John 16 and 24.

He said, ask and you shall receive, that your joy might be full.

In John 15 and 11, Jesus said this.

These things have I spoken unto you personally.

Jesus is talking to each one of us personally.

And the things he's talking about are the things in this book right here. He said, these things have I spoken unto you, that my joy, the joy of Jesus, might remain in you.

I'm telling you, that is God's desire for everyone.

To be happy. I'm telling you, that is God's desire for everyone to be happy."

"This life, your living, no matter how good or how bad you may think it is, it is God's gift to you.

He wants you to be happy.

He wants you to prepare you for the next place where there is nothing but joy, there's nothing but happiness in a place called heaven. There is only one way to get to heaven, too, by the way, and that's through Jesus Christ. He's the only way.

He said, I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no man comes to the Father but by me. If you think there's another way, you're wrong. I'm sorry.

He's the only way.

But until you get there, and you satisfy being miserable, you don't have to. You don't have to.

Now, right now, right now, this moment, your enemy is telling you, don't buy into what he's trying to tell you.

I know what's going on.

And for a brief moment, whew, the monitor went up to some of y'all. And right now, it's going back down."

"When you put your faith, what are you looking for that you think is going to make you happy? Whatever it is, it ain't going to last unless it's Jesus. I don't know if he'll last, because my Bible says he's the same yesterday, today, and forever.

That's the secret.

Stand with me this morning."