

That's Easy For You To Say

Text : **I Thes. 5: 16-18 ; Phil. 3: 17-4:7**

S#1.

A. If taken seriously, living a life surrendered to Christ is extremely challenging. **S#2**

1. **Luke 9: 24** ... In order for one to save his life he must lose it.
 - a. By this Jesus taught the total surrender of one's life to Him.
 - b. The Apostles echoed His teaching ... **Gal. 2: 20** ... crucified with Christ
2. **Matt. 10: 37** ... Father or mother , ... son or daughter more than me.
3. **Luke 6: 28** – **bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.**

** This is one of those lessons that's much easier talked about than applied.*

S#3.

B. Story of Freddy's Monday. (Not the one on Elm St.)

1. He sat up late to watch his team in the playoffs only to see them eliminated in the final seconds by highly improbable "hail Mary" pass; so he woke up grumpy.
2. At 9:00 he calls his wife on top of the world; he had just gotten a \$10K bonus.
3. At 4:00 he's back in the doldrums because his son was cut from the basketball team.
4. At 7:00 p.m. Fred is all excited because he just found the perfect car ... used bonus.
5. At 9:00 he carefully drives home in a downpour to find a flood - broke sump pump.

C. Freddy is the typical person of the world.

1. His level of happiness corresponds to the circumstances of his life.
 - a. It is reactionary, dependent upon things largely outside his control.
 - b. It is sensual, **i.e.**, his happiness is dependent upon things that are experienced.
2. Thus, by its very nature, happiness being experiential cannot be consistent.
3. Happiness, being an emotional response to circumstances, cannot be commanded.

D. The man of God lives by faith so he can choose to live a more steady life.

1. We can't always control our circumstances, but we can control how we respond.
2. The man of faith will respond on the basis of his faith.

Rom. 1: 17 – **For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith;** **S#4.**
Cf – Gal. 5:22 **as it is written, "But the righteous man shall live by faith."**

3. Because faith can be constant / consistent, his response can be constant / consistent.
4. Because faith is a decision by the will of man, his response to life is his decision.
5. So, ones response to life can be commanded because it's not based on circumstance.

I Thes. 5: 16 – **Rejoice always; 17 pray without ceasing; 18 in everything** **S#5.**
give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

I. Christians are commanded to live rejoicing at all times in all circumstances. S#6.**A. The English word “rejoice” has a similar definition to the N.T. word. S#7.**

1. Rejoice : to feel joy or great delight (Merrian – Webster)
2. Verb describing the action of feeling an emotion.

B. The N.T. word translated “Rejoice” has a variety of uses.

1. **Chairo** : 1 to rejoice, be glad. 2 to rejoice exceedingly. 3 to be well, thrive.
2. When writing it is sometimes used as a salutation ... “**Hail**.”

C. Greek tenses are pertinent to the meaning of words. S#8.

1. Chairo (rejoice) is an imperative verb ... it is a command.
2. Chairo is a present active indicative verb ... happening now and continuing

B. The command is “Rejoice always.” (I Thes. 5: 16) S#9.

1. Christians are commanded to live lives that are characterized by rejoicing .. Joy.
2. Christians are commanded to rejoice even when they are being persecuted.

I Pet. 1: 6-7 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if **S#10.**
 necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, 7 so that the
 proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable,
 even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory
 and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

3. No one wants suffering, but when it comes Christians rejoice even in suffering.

a. **Acts 5: 40-41** They took his advice; and after calling the apostles in, they **S#11.**
 flogged them and ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus,
 and then released them. 41 So they went on their way from the
 presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered
 worthy to suffer shame for His name.

b. **Acts 16: 22f** ... Paul & Sila beaten, in inner prison, in stocks, singing

II. How is it possible to rejoice in the face of such adversity ? S#12.**A. The Christian’s rejoicing is based in relationship rather than experiences. S#13.**

1. Experiences are inconsistent so a steady response is not probable.
 - a. In the introduction Freddy had repeated good and bad experiences in the same day.
 - b. Happiness is an illogical response to a flooded house and destroyed furnishings.
 - c. People very often have no control over their circumstances.

2. **BUT ...** the Christian has total control over his relationship with Christ.

- a. Christ will freely accept any believer who will surrender to Him in faith.
- b. As the Apostle, we can have faith that Jesus will keep us saved.

II Tim 1: 12 – **For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; S#14**
for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able
to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.

- c. Jesus will never forsake us so we can rejoice in our security. **Heaven is ours.**

Heb. 13: 5 – **Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, S#15.**
being content with what you have; for He Himself has said,
"I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,"

B. Our rejoicing reflects a deep-seated confidence that God is in control S#16.
of everything for the believers good and for His glory.

- 1. **Rom. 8: 28** – **And we know that God causes all things to work together for good S#17.**
to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.
- 2. NOTHING happens that God does not cause or at least allow to happen.
- 3. In the midst of trials we can't see any possible good but God will bring it in His time.

C. The story of the composer Horatio Spafford illustrates this faith best : S#18.

1.

Horatio Spafford (1828-1888) was a wealthy Chicago lawyer with a thriving legal practice, a beautiful home, a wife, four daughters and a son. He was also a devout Christian and faithful student of the Scriptures.

At the very height of his financial and professional success, Horatio and his wife Anna suffered the tragic loss of their young son. Shortly thereafter on October 8, 1871, the Great Chicago Fire destroyed almost every real estate investment that Spafford had.

In 1873, Spafford scheduled a boat trip to Europe in order to give his wife and daughters a much needed vacation and time to recover from the tragedy. He also went to join Moody and Sankey on an evangelistic campaign in England. Spafford sent his wife and daughters ahead of him while he remained in Chicago to take care of some unexpected last minute business. Several days later he received notice that his family's ship had encountered a collision. All four of his daughters drowned; only his wife had survived.

With a heavy heart, Spafford boarded a boat that would take him to his grieving Anna in England. It was on this trip that he penned those now famous words, *When sorrow like sea billows roll; it is well, it is well with my soul.*

2. Listen to the words of the hymn he wrote in his grief ... “It Is Well With My Soul.”

It Is Well With My Soul

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

My sin, oh the bliss of this glorious thought!
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to His cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

For me, be it Christ, be it Christ hence to live:
If Jordan above me shall roll,
No pang shall be mine, for in death as in life
Thou wilt whisper Thy peace to my soul.

And Lord haste the day, when my faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
Even so, it is well with my soul.

Refrain:

It is well (it is well),
with my soul (with my soul),
It is well, it is well with my soul

III. We must all prepare to have our ability to live rejoicing challenged.

S#19.

A. Ever individual will face adversities that challenge his faith.

S#20.

1. We all deal with other people and people let other people down.
2. Everyone dies so something will end our life on this earth.
3. If we share the gospel as we must we risk the occasional negative response.

B. Congregations will face adversities that challenge their joy.

1. As parts deal with issues, the whole is affected. (spiritual, physical ... hurricane)

2. Conflicts arise in the best of families; it's part of being human.
3. The more dynamic a congregation the greater Satan's opposition.

*** Remember Eph. 6: 10f : *On this earth we are in a perpetual state of war.***

S#21.

C. The kingdom of God is under attack more than any time in modern history.

1. The opponents of Christianity are systematically seeking to marginalize us.
 - a. We are intentionally misrepresented. (*Dishonestly caricatured.*)
 - b. We are ridiculed and villainized on the basis of their caricature.
2. For example, public figures are painted as fools for believing in creation.
Remember Sarah Palin in the 2008 campaign.

D. We must take these attacks seriously because they can lead to persecution.

1. *Read history.* This is how the extermination of the Jews began in Germany.
 - a. Propaganda slandered the Jews until they were viewed as a threat.
 - b. They were depersonalized and objectified as the caricature of evil.
2. Pressure has caused some denominations to alter their doctrine to gain acceptability.
 - a. The style of their worship has changed to attract those who seek entertainment.
 - b. They have yielded to social pressure to put women in leadership .. *elder, preacher*
 - c. They accept clearly ungodly perversions. *homosexual marriage, even preachers*
3. Those who preach the gospel are viewed as outcasts by much of society.
 - a. What is the gospel ? *All are condemned by sin, but Jesus offers salvation.*
 - b. If you tell someone he will not go to Heaven society reacts very negatively.
Who are you to say that if someone doesn't accept your God they are lost ?
 - c. Who are you to say that my actions are morally wrong; I'm not hurting you.
4. It has come to the point that if one tries to hold to our heritage or simply repeats our traditional American values he is considered radical.

E. As days darken, how is the Christian to maintain his spirit of rejoicing ?

1. Keep in mind that happiness and joy are not the same thing.
 - a. We can rejoice in the face of evil, but happiness is more of a challenge.
 - b. Joy is a choice, not a reaction.
 - c. *We need to be more like the thermostat than the thermometer. (control vs react)*
2. Be aware that nothing and no one on this earth can take away what is really important to a Christian.

- a. People in the world pursue acceptance and possessions.
- b. Christians pursue relationship with God and a home with Him.

S#22.

S#23.

IV. Unsuccessful attempts to suppress our rejoicing yield positive spiritual fruit.

A. It reinforces our faith in God's sovereignty over His creation.

S#24.

- 1. We academically accept **Rom. 8: 28** but when we see it in our own lives, it's real.
- 2. **Gen. 45: 4-8** ... Imagine the heart of Joseph as he was elevated to be ruler in Egypt.
- 3. God has a plan for the life of every one of His children, **but** he doesn't reveal it ahead

B. When Christians rejoice in adversity, we bring glory to God.

S#25.

- 1. The earth isn't the center of the universe; God is concerned about the spiritual realm.
 - a. **I Cor. 11: 10** ... Regarding attire, women must consider the angels.
 - b. **Luke 15: 10** ... The angels rejoice over a sinner repenting.
 - c. Beings in the spiritual realm are aware of how we live.
- 2. When people of the world see us react in a godly way when we are wrong....

I Pet. 4: 12-17 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; **13** but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. **14** If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. **15** Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; **16** but if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name. **17** For *it is* time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what *will be* the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

S#27.

S#28.

C. The attitude with which we face life influences all those around us.

S#29.

- 1. We can be the person others want to be around or one they avoid.
- 2. Last week Phil encouraged us toward personal ministry ... *attitude is where it starts.*

S#30.

D. The faith that causes one to live with an attitude of rejoicing results in Heaven.

- 1. **Matt. 5: 11-12** Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. **12** Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. S#32.S#33.
- 2. **Luke 10: 20** – do not rejoice in this, rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven.

Lesson Text :

I Thessalonians 5: 16-18

16 Rejoice always; **17** pray without ceasing; **18** in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3: 17 – 4: 7

17 Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. **18** For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are enemies* of the cross of Christ, **19** whose end is destruction, whose god is *their* appetite, and *whose* glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things. **20** For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; **21** who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

1 Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved. **2** I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord. **3** Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in *the cause of* the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!
5 Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near. **6** Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. **7** And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.