

“REJOICE IN THE LORD”

Psalm 33

Intro: It is very clear to anyone who reads the Bible with any understanding at all, that the Lord, Jehovah, intends for His people to be a happy people. That is not only indicated by the first verse of this thirty-third Psalm, but we see it in the beatitudes of Scripture. Psalm 1 begins on that note. And usually the teaching of Scripture enforced by the exhortations of Scripture emphasize the importance of this fact, that God wants His people to be a happy people, but it is contrasted like it is in Psalm 1 by contrasting true happiness with the false.

One of the first verses of Scripture that I learned years ago when I started to choose verses that I wanted to commit to memory, was Psalm 5:11.

Psalm 5 is one of David’s many Psalms, and he said in this verse:

11 But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.

And then David followed verse 11 with verse 12:

12 For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.

You may notice in your Bible that Psalm 33 is not attributed to David, but one reason I believe that David did write it is because it begins on the same note upon which Psalm 32 ends, and Psalm 32 is a Psalm of David. Let me read for you Psalm 32:11 along with Psalm 33:1 and you will see what I mean:

32:11 Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

33:1 Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright (Psa. 32:11-33:1).

Now it is not just that we are to be a glad people, or a joyful people, but with both of these expressions we have the same prepositional phrase which follows both verbs. The Jewish believers were to “be glad in the Lord”; they were to “rejoice in the Lord.” This means that we are to be glad in Who the Lord is. We are to be glad in what the Lord has done. And we are to be glad in the Word which He has given to us. Notice that David referred to the Word in verse 4. We will never find any imperfections in the Word, and we will always find that God’s works are in complete harmony with His Word. You never have to worry about the Lord.

Psalm 33 (2)

He is just exactly as He always has been, and just like He has revealed Himself in the Word. God does not promise us one thing, and then do something else, or something completely different. And this is a major reason that we need to “rejoice in the Lord” especially in these days when we don’t know who we can believe.

So we are to be a joyful people, but our joy is to be “in the Lord.” The latter part of verse 1 which says, “For praise is comely for the upright.” This means that “praise” is what you would expect to be characteristic of the people of God. A “righteous” person and an “upright” person are two ways of saying the same thing about a true child of God.

So among all of the people on the earth in any and every generation, the people that you are to expect to “rejoice in the Lord” are the people of God. And this is *loud* praise. That is, it not just noisy praise, but praise that we the people of God love to make known in singing, and with musical instruments, many of which had specifically been designed and produced by David. The first three verses of Psalm 33 are words which express *worship for the Lord*. This is nothing like the world’s music, but right down to the instruments used were especially for the Lord.

Notice in verse 1, “rejoice in the Lord.” In verse 2, “praise the Lord.” And in verse 3, “sing unto the Lord.”

Let me ask you a question for all of us to think about. Do you think that this is the way the world thinks about those of us who profess to know God, people who are trusting in the Lord Jesus? Our joy in the Lord is to be contagious toward those who don’t know the Lord. We don’t glory in ourselves, or in what we have done. We rejoice in the Lord and in what He has done, and continues to do for us. And it is all written out for us in His Word. And what it tells us about God is just as up-to-date as it was when David wrote it, and it was as up-to-date then as it had been before the foundation of the world.

Beginning with verse 5 we see in this Psalm several reasons why we rejoice in the Lord. And the first of these has to do with His work as the creation of the universe and all that is in it.

At this point it would be good for all of us to go back to read the Biblical account of creation in Genesis 1 and 2, the first two chapters of the Bible. “The Lord loveth righteousness and judgment.” Both of these words have

Psalm 33 (3)

to do with that which is pleasing to Him, according to His decreed standards of right and wrong. And the people of God especially, but in another way it is true of all people, that “the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.” When God concluded each of the six days of creation He saw that what He had done was “good,” and that the six days of creation added up to that which was “very good.” Psalm 19:1 tells us that “the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork.” And then King David went on to say in verses 2 and 3 of Psalm 19 that day and night in all generations, and in all nations the message of a good God continues to go out from creation. And yet in higher education today, and often it begins below the higher, men choose a Godless process of evolution which makes no sense, and blinds people’s eye to this great evidence of the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of God. When God was preparing the earth for man, He left nothing out that was essential for man’s existence, nor for solid evidence of the existence of God.

The evidence of divine creation continues right down through verse 9. I hope you sense the power of the words that King David has given us as he wrote under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 6 tells us how the heavens and their host came into being. It stated twice so that we will not miss it. It was “by the word of the Lord,” and “by the breath of His mouth” – two ways of saying the same thing so as to emphasize the truth of what he was saying. That is all that it took, as we read over and over again in Genesis 1, “And God said . . .”

We know from Genesis 1 that when God brought the materials together out of which He made everything in creation, that the earth was covered with water. Then God separated the water so that there would be dry land. And the sea became a vast storehouse for that which was necessary for life on the earth. And the implication is that this was a work which remained, separating the dry land and the sea except in times when God for His own purposes causes upheavals in nature to express His power and usually His judgment upon the sins of people.

What a lot of truth the Spirit of God enabled King David to compress in just three verses. But with verse 8 comes an exhortation, and in verse 9 the reason for the exhortation. What should be every person’s response to the truth of God as the Creator. (Read verses 8 and 9.)

Psalm 33 (4)

When we see the marvels of creation, and see it correctly, we don't worship creation, but we are to worship the Creator. Why? Because all He had to do was to speak, and it all came into being. And at His command it "stood fast." And it continues to the present time. And so we are introduced here to the providence of God. Not only is He the Creator of the universe, but He sustains it, and is sovereign over it.

Now we have seen so far in Psalm 33 that we are to "rejoice in the Lord" as a dominant characteristic of our salvation. By our understanding of creation and how it came to be, we are to worship the Lord, to fear Him and submit to Him as the One Who providentially continues to supply our needs, and the needs of creation. There is hardly a subject in Scripture that is more important than for us, and all people everywhere, to learn to fear the Lord.

The tenth and eleventh verses teach us more about the sovereignty of God. Not everyone fears the Lord. It was not long after Adam and Eve were created, when sin entered into the world. From that time on people have been born into the world as sinners. King David calls all of those who have not been declared "righteous" through faith in Christ, "heathen." What does this word mean?

"Heathen" are people who are not the people of God. It became a word that was used for Gentiles in contrast with the Jews, the nation that God chose through whom the promised Messiah would come. But when the Jews lived like the Gentiles, and not according to the Word of God, this word "heathen" applied to them. The masses of the people of the world are heathen. They do not know God. They do not think like God does. They do not live to please God. This is descriptive of the greater part of Americans. They are heathen. Our leaders have purposes in mind that are not only different from the will of God, but are directly opposed to the will of God. Verse 10 tells us who is the stronger, God or the heathen, and Who eventually is going to win. And this truth is given an even stronger emphasis in verse 11. (Read verses 10 and 11.)

And so now look at verse 12. Obviously the wisest thing for all people to do is to make sure that they are on the Lord's side. It may look to us today like wrong is prevailing everywhere, but if we know the Word, and the Lord of the Word, we know that ultimately the Lord will prevail, and "the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15). And if you

Psalm 33 (5)

want to know more about this, you need to be attending Trinity on Sunday evenings to hear Pastor Will teach the Book of the Revelation.

Notice that in verse 12 we have the wonderful doctrine of election. If God had left us in our sins, none of us would ever have turned to Him. He has chosen us. He has called us, and we have come to Him. He has saved us. And He is keeping us. And He has made us His inheritance so He is going to make sure that He does not lose a single one of us.

Our reasons to “rejoice in the Lord” are increased as we move on to verses 13, 14, and 15. Here is another phase of the sovereignty of God. The Lord looks down from heaven, and He know what is going on in the life of every person. Nobody can hide from God; nothing we do can be hidden from God. Both verse 13 and verse 14 tell us this. All of the repetition in the Word, and especially for us this morning in Psalm 33 are so we will see what is really important, and, hopefully, believe it.

What does verse 15 add to all of this? It tells us that God is the One Who has “fashioned” the hearts of all men so that He can see all that they do. But the word “hearts” indicates that God even sees what men are thinking, and how they propose to out wit God. There are no closed doors which the eyes of God cannot see through, nor which God Himself cannot penetrate. Those who today think that their plans are going to take everyone by surprise, are not taking the Lord into consideration. And here is a big reason for us to rejoice in the Lord.

At this point David, who was a king, talked about kings. He had a large army, and had won many victories. Kings, or presidents, or dictators, or whatever title they may have, are not as sovereign, not as powerful, as they are inclined to think that they are. The same applies to all of the Goliaths of history. With their power they are powerless in comparison with the Lord. (Read verses 16 and 17.) We wouldn’t know these things if the Lord had not told us in His Word.

But as we come to verse 18 the Lord was speaking through King David by the power of the Holy Spirit, we see how the truth that will cause great distress to the heathen who either ignore God or don’t believe that even God can stop them, is truth that gives the child of God real hope.

God sees all that the wicked are doing, and is prepared to thoroughly frustrate and nullify their plans. Yet the Lord also sees us, His people.

Psalm 33 (6)

He knows our fears and frustrations, our feeling of helplessness and hopelessness. And He is concerned for those of us who hope in His mercy even when it seems that, humanly speaking, the wicked are going to get the best of us too.

Verses 18 and 19 give us the Lord's promise to help us, and to deliver us. Remember how powerful His Word was at creation. If He could, as He did, create this universe out of nothing, and keep it going to full capacity down to the present day, then how comforted our heart should be by reading, and thinking about, and praising the Lord for verses 18 and 19.

In verses 20 and 21 we see how the people who read this Psalm are inclined to respond (which even included King David). The people tell what they will do in response to Psalm 33. And then the Psalm is concluded with a prayer:

22 Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we hope in thee (Psa. 33:22).

Concl: We live in very troublous times. Our situation seems to be getting worse and worse. Evil seems to prevail everywhere. But these are days when we need the Lord of Psalm 33. We do not know where we are in the plan and purpose of God. The Lord's coming for us may be very near. Or it may not be. But what we know is that if we stand on the Word of God, we can peace in troubled times knowing that God is sovereign over all men, that He knows all that is going on to defeat His purposes in the world. But we know that God is greater than all the powers of earth and hell, and that ultimately we, and everyone else who lives, and who has ever lived, will see the fulfillment of what the Apostle Paul, who shared the faith of King David and expressed in 1 Tim 6:15-16, speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ,

15 Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;

16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.

May the prayer of Psalm 33:22 be our prayer, and let us continue to "rejoice in the Lord" because that is what is expected of the Lord's people at all times and in all generations. And we can do it by the grace of our sovereign, faithful, and loving God.