

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

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And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. —
Philippians 4:4-7

It says “Rejoice in the Lord always.” But how does one rejoice in the midst of the daily grind, let alone when things are going absolutely down the drain? Some periods in life are just plain awful, and there are many circumstances in life that are certainly NOT joyous. Why would someone even consider rejoicing then?

Well, this passage does not tell us to rejoice in our circumstances. Frankly, it says “rejoice in the Lord.” God is always God, regardless of what is going on in our individual lives. We believe, faithfully, that God’s love is complete, and so adequate for all times, good and bad alike. God loves us all the time. That is worth rejoicing over. We believe, in faith, that God is with us, even when we cannot sense God’s presence. That too, is worth rejoicing over.

When times are tough, simply remembering that we believe God is with us and for us through it all can lift our spirits. Focusing on God’s love and not our fear or despair or pain will strengthen us as well. This is not to say we are denying the existence of our pain or discouragement, but that we recognize we always have a choice what we pay attention to: we can cling in faith to God’s presence and continuing love OR we can grasp ahold of fear and get “frozen” there eventually barely able to have any other response. When we cling to the Lord and

choose to rejoice in God's good and abiding love, eventually we will come through whatever difficulty and we will be renewed. When we are renewed in our spirit, then we can respond to God and others in a whole new way. We continue on the never ending cycle of being renewed, responding to God and others in faith, and rejoicing in the Lord through every phase of life. The Lord is near... rejoice! And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your heart and your mind in Christ Jesus.

Blessings to you,
from Pastor Karla

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