

# Fulton County Gospel News

*Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World*

“. . . Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body.” - Ephesians 5:23

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## WHAT WILL YOU DO FOR ME?

by Marvin L. Weir

In these modern times preachers and elders are often asked, “What programs do you have for my family and me?” One is sometimes tempted to give the answer that these folks desire by saying, “For the wife we have a ‘hop till you drop’ weight loss program, and for the children we provide a youth minister that is programmed by the kids, and for the man of the house we have a 12 minute special class on how to be successful without spending too much time with the Bible.”

It is tragic that many are motivated only by their “felt needs,” and it is downright deplorable that so-called elders and preachers do all within their power to provide these folks satisfaction. The “what do you have to offer me” disease has eaten away at the Lord’s church like a dreaded cancer. Instead of treating this spiritual malady with a strong Biblical injection, many leaders have allowed the “tares” (Matthew 13:35) to be fertilized!

Peter reminds us that we should seek to follow in the steps of Christ (1 Peter 2:21). It is recorded that Christ “*came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many*” (Matthew 28:20). The Lord possessed a servant spirit. He came into this world asking not what could be done for Him but seeking what He could do for others.

How **unlike** the spirit of Christ is the spirit that is manifested today by so many who profess to be Christians! Instead of seeking to glorify God for all He has done in their behalf, these seekers of “self” demand to be served and catered to at every turn. The honor that belongs to Christ is given to men.

What if Christ could visit in every home today and ask each of us, “What will you do for me?” It is a simple question that Christians may ignore now but not in the hereafter. Some aren’t doing much of anything for the Lord! They want the blessings that come from the Lord, but they are content to let others work in the vineyard. They want to go to Heaven while serving the devil. They want the care and concern of others while they remain unconcerned and carefree.

**What if Christ were to ask, “Why did you learn about everything important to you and fail to learn of My Word?”** Could it be that the Lord and His church are not as important to some as they would have you to believe? We find time to do those things we desire to do. Don’t kid yourself into believing that you are putting the Lord first (Matthew 6:33) when you open your Bible during the week only if you attend a Bible class. But then – some do not open their Bible in Bible class because they have no Bible to open!

What if Christ were to ask, “**Why did you never invite anyone to the services of the church?**” You have invited folks over for lunch, to social gatherings, and to recreational outings. Are you more interested in the pleasures of this life than Heaven? Have the “cares of the world” choked out spiritual matters? (Luke 8:14). Is the Lord’s church really important to you? If someone you invited were to attend regularly for several weeks would he see you at each of the services? Do we really care about lost souls?

**What if Christ were to ask, “Why did you sit for years and let others do all the teaching?”** Some people will not prepare themselves to teach. The Hebrews writer admonishes, “*For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food*” (5:12). There are grade levels from toddlers to adults that need to be taught. Someone must teach!

It has always amazed me that so many are competent and capable in the secular world but absolutely void of talent in the spiritual realm. Such a double standard will not bode well for one in the Day of Judgment.

**What if Christ were to ask, “Why were you not willing to be faithful in assembling with the saints?”** We live in a society where many are willing to work long, hard

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*works: show me thy faith apart from thy works, and I by my works will show thee my faith” (2:18). What will you do for Christ? It will matter – one day!*

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## REASONS TO REJOICE

by Lee Moses

In many books of the Bible, certain words stand out and convey themes of a particular book. In the inspired epistle Paul wrote to the Philippians, these words are “joy” and “rejoice.” Paul used these two words sixteen times, as well as a use of “gladness.” It did not bother Paul in the least that the Holy Spirit had inspired him to be repetitive in this respect: *“Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe”* (Philippians 3:1). Paul was glad to be able to write a message of rejoicing. Throughout this epistle are various “Reasons to Rejoice.”

### The Want of the Lord

God desires rejoicing. Indeed, the imperative *“rejoice in the Lord”* (3:1) is a Divine imperative. Jesus sought the joy of His apostles: *“And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they [the apostles, LM] might have my joy fulfilled in themselves”* (John 17:13). Jesus prayed for the joy of His apostles, and spoke for the joy of His apostles (John 15:11). Those things which Jesus said are revealed to us, that our joy might be full as well (1 John 1:4).

Some have the idea that God wants everybody to be miserable. Generally, those who believe this do not want anybody telling them that there are some things they must do and some things they cannot do. However, God wants to rejoice and He wants mankind to rejoice (Isaiah 65:18-19). God not only desires that we rejoice, but also took steps to see that we would have cause for rejoicing.

The first time the word “rejoice” is used in the New Testament is at the birth of Christ: *“When they [the wise men, LM] saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy”* (Matthew 2:10). The word for “rejoice” also means “be full of joy.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, it might be said that the wise men were “full of joy with exceeding great joy” that they were to see the Christ child. There was certainly good reason for them to rejoice. His names would signify that He would be *“God with us”* and the One Who would *“save his people from their sins”* (Matt. 1:23, 21). And the wise men from the east had more reason to rejoice than they may have known, as this salvation was not limited to physical Israel, but would be extended to everyone of every nation who *“feareth him [God, LM], and worketh righteousness”* (Acts 10:34-35). God had a design for the reconciliation of man to Himself (Ephesians 1:9-10).

God provides for mankind a joy incomparable to any other known by man. As Jesus said, *“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly”* (John 10:10). This by no means guarantees Christians the best outward circumstances (compare with 2 Timothy 3:12). However, God provides joy in the face of the **worst** outward circumstances:

### continued from page 1

hours to be a success in secular endeavors. Some pay “lip service” to the soul being more important than anything else, but then they are too busy being successful to be regular in attendance. For these folks, neither Hebrews 10:25 nor Matthew 6:33 take priority over laying up earthly treasures! Jesus said, *“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also”* (Matt. 6:19-21).

Our **actions** demonstrate our faith and trust in Christ and His church. James cuts to the heart of the matter in saying, *“Yea, a man will say, Thou hast faith, and I have*

*Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” (Matt. 5:11-12).*

Brother Dub McClish explains, “To ‘rejoice in the Lord’ does not mean that we are to paste a fake smile on our faces and walk around like zombies. However, we should likewise guard against being perpetual ‘sourpusses’ and turning into cynics.”<sup>2</sup> God provides internal joy, but that joy is not internal alone. “Joy is not just inward. It has a cause and finds expression.”<sup>3</sup> God provides a reason to rejoice in that He desires that we do rejoice.

### **The Workers for the Lord**

It is truly a joy having faithful brethren. Paul prayed often about the beloved brethren at Philippi: “*Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now*” (Philippians 1:4-5; compare with 4:10, 17). The Philippians likewise anticipated a joyful reunion with Paul (1:25-26), and with the faithful messenger Epaphroditus (2:28-29).

Paul’s greatest joy was seeing his spiritual brethren succeed. He looked forward to the Philippians successes, and to seeing the fruits of their successes at the glorious Last Day (2:2, 16-18; 4:1; compare with 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20). Unfortunately, there were some brethren for whom Paul could not rejoice: “*For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell*

*you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ” (Philippians 3:18). Paul had “great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart” because of “my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh” (Romans 9:2-3). He was referring to Israelites, who had “not attained to the law of righteousness” (verses 4, 31). Fleshly Israel’s failure to follow Christ broke Paul’s heart, as did the failures of those who had once followed Christ. Nonetheless, we can rejoice in every success of our brethren in Christ—as we hear of foreign evangelists carrying the Gospel to new lands, as we learn of churches standing firm for the Truth in the face of adversity, or as we see young babes in Christ maturing in the faith to become productive workers for the Lord.*

### **The Word of the Lord**

Paul exclaimed, “*Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice*” (1:18). He could not rejoice over the motivations some held in preaching Christ (verse 16); nonetheless, he rejoiced greatly when the truth of Christ’s Gospel was preached. He knew very well the blessings available to those who heard.

You see, the word of the Lord had been a great blessing to him, as it is to any who receives it. Jeremiah said, “*Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts*” (Jer. 15:16). The psalmist wrote of the blessed man, “*But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night*” (Psalm 1:2). It is cause for rejoicing whenever Christ is preached; whether we hear Him preached, or hear **of** His being

preached (Acts 8:5, 8, 35, 39, 11:18).

### **That We Are in the Lord**

Paul repeats two final times the imperative to “rejoice.” He writes, “*Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice*” (Philippians 4:4; compare with 2:18; 3:1). He speaks of a rejoicing that does not end. This continual rejoicing is “***in the Lord***”—it is possible only for those who have been baptized into Christ, and remained faithful in the Lord. One cannot have true joy if he does not have Christ. There is no other religion which offers the hope and joy Christianity affords (3:2-3).

The Christian knows how to maintain joy in Christ. Warren Wiersbe notes three attributes found in the verses immediately following Philippians 4:4 that enable one to maintain this joy in the Lord: **(1) Right praying.** “*Be careful* [“anxious,” American Standard Version) *for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God*” (4:6). The Christian is to be anxious for nothing, yet he is to pray about everything. And right praying requires adoration, supplication, and thanksgiving. As Wiersbe points out from this epistle, one needs the single mind of Philippians 1 to give adoration, the submissive mind of Philippians 2 to come with supplication, and the spiritual mind of Philippians 3 to give God thanks. If these are being practiced, one will have the secure mind of Philippians 4. **(2) Right thinking.** Paul exhorts, “*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if*



there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (4:8). What we think upon controls our attitude, and in turn controls our life. As Solomon wrote, “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (Proverbs 4:23). **(3) Right living.** Paul goes on to say, “Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you” (Phil. 4:9). There is indeed a right and a wrong way to live. While the wrong way might grant license for self-indulgence without regard for consequence, eventually consequence catches up with wrong living.

The Christian can rejoice that he is in the Lord, because is able to look beyond things temporal (2 Corinthians 4:18-5:1). The heathen has all of his joy placed in this world. However, when things of this world depart from him, in what can he rejoice? Paul wrote this epistle of joy while he was **in prison**, yet he could be thankful even for his imprisonment (Phil. 1:12-14; 4:11). Even in death, one who is “in the Lord” is blessed (Revelation 14:13).

**Conclusion**

As Christians, we should rejoice in the joy we have. This may sound redundant, but we should rejoice that we have true joy, unlike any other known to man. There are good reasons for Christians to rejoice: Rejoicing is the want of the Lord, we are blessed with the faithful workers for the Lord, we are blessed with the word of the Lord; and we are in the Lord. However, if one is not in Christ or has left Christ, there is no cause for rejoicing. Notwithstanding, even heaven can be provided a reason to

rejoice: “there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth” (Luke 15:10).

<sup>1</sup> “Chairoo,” in William D. Mounce, *The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993), p. 478.

<sup>2</sup> “Losing All Things to Gain Christ,” in *Studies in Philippians and Colossians*, ed. Dub McClish (Denton, TX: Valid Publications, 2000), p. 122.

<sup>3</sup> “Chairoo,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999 printing), 9:363.

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**GOD’S AUTHORIZED WORSHIP - COLOSSIANS 3:17**

1. **LORD’S SUPPER** - The New Testament and early church history record that Christians met on the first day of every week (Sunday) to worship God and remember Christ (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:23-34; 16: 1-2).
2. **PRAYERS** - (Acts 2:42; Philippians 4:6-7; I Thessalonians 5:17-18).
3. **SINGING** - God’s word authorizes only vocal music and specifically singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12). The New Testament shows no use of mechanical instruments of music in worship to God by the church Christ established. Church history notes no such use for nearly 700 years after the New Testament was completed. It is an innovation of men, not of God.
4. **GIVING** - Free-willed, cheerful, generous, and every week (Acts 20:35; I Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8 & 9).
5. **PREACHING OF THE WORD** - The gospel of Christ, not men’s doctrines nor entertainment, saves and strengthens us (Acts 2:42; 20:7; Romans 10:17; I Corinthians 1:18-23).

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