

★ Rejoice!

To Live Is Christ

4th - 6th Grade
Lesson 12

Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.

—Philippians 4:4

You have probably heard this verse before. Perhaps you have even memorized it. Many people have written music using this verse as the text of the song. Paul wrote this verse when he was in prison. It's pretty amazing that someone could write these words while he was in prison. Paul had been through a lot during his ministry for Christ. He had been put in prison many times. Paul wrote in the first chapter of Philippians, "For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain." Paul's whole life was consumed with serving Jesus. He didn't care what happened to him as long as he did what God wanted him to do.

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

—II Timothy 4:6-8

Paul loved Jesus so much and wanted to serve Him so badly that he said he was ready to be killed for the cause of Christ at any time. Many people in Paul's time were being killed because they believed in Jesus. At the end of his life, Paul felt like he had done everything he was supposed to do, and he was ready to see his Heavenly Father.

We know from the Bible that Paul had some physical problems. We don't know what they were, but Paul called his problem a "thorn in his flesh." We also know that Paul didn't have any family. He didn't have a wife and children. Paul served God alone. He suffered in prison alone. He suffered with some physical problems. But, still, Paul instructed that we should rejoice in the Lord always. In this lesson, we are going to learn how Paul was determined to be happy no matter what happened.

He Walked with God

And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

—Acts 16:25

Paul had a relationship with Jesus. Going to church every Sunday, going soul winning, and working in the church doesn't mean you have a relationship with Jesus. You can't have a relationship with someone without talking to and spending time with that person. Paul must

have spent a lot of time in prayer with God. Paul also must have praised God. Even when Paul was in prison, the Bible says that he sang praises to God. It's important that we praise God for what He's done for us. It helps us realize who He is and how grateful we should be.

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.

—Philippians 4:8

Not only did Paul pray and praise God, but he also spent a lot of time thinking about things that were godly. He wrote a list of things that we should think about. If Paul had thought about his situation, he probably would have been very discouraged. But instead, he thought about what God had done for him. He thought about good things. We should be careful not to have negative thoughts. When we think negatively, we quickly develop a bad attitude.

For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

—I John 5:4-5

Our situation in life may not always be perfect. We might not like everything that happens to us. We may be hurt by what happens to those around us. What we must remember is that bad things happen to everyone, but we have Christ on our side!

He Won Souls

Paul spent his entire life telling people about Christ. Even when he was in prison, he didn't stop telling people about Jesus. Even though he couldn't have a scheduled time to go out soul winning, he gave people the gospel and told them the greatest news they could ever know. Soul winning will give you a special kind of joy. Nothing is greater than being able to show someone how he can have Jesus as his Savior. If you ever feel down, you should go soul winning or try to tell someone how to know Jesus Christ as Savior. Doing so will put you on the winning side.

He Looked Forward to Heaven

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

—Philippians 1:21

Another reason Paul could rejoice in the Lord despite the circumstances is because he was looking forward to the day he would see Jesus in heaven. Paul said that his life here on earth was to live for Christ, but to die would be better because he could see Jesus. No matter what happens to us on earth, some day we are going to see Jesus and spend eternity in heaven with Him.