

December 23, 2022

Let Your Joy in the Lord Be Evident

[Philippians 4:4-5](#)

⁴ Rejoice^[a] in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.^[b] ⁵ Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.

Of the four themes of Advent, “joy” holds a special place in my heart. I am not talking about the feeling of joy that comes from exciting circumstantial situations, such as catching a big fish, a grandchild’s special accomplishment, or your sports team pulling off a huge upset. Those are fun, fleeting moments of joy and pride. I am talking about lasting joy that comes from knowing Jesus, which permeates your character and helps you through the difficult, uncertain times as well as uplifting you in the good times.

I love the joy that comes from being in the presence of the Lord. It was first experienced long ago when Elizabeth’s baby leapt in her womb when Mary, with child, greeted her. The shepherds glorified God for all they saw and heard. The three kings being overjoyed when they saw the star over Bethlehem. And when Simeon praised God for Jesus being a Savior to the Gentiles as well as the people of Israel.

It continued throughout Jesus’ life, death and resurrection, and through the ages to today thanks to the Holy Spirit, which He sends us. As Christians, we should all rejoice in His presence and let it be evident to all by the way we live day in and day out.

As I write this devotion, it is the 75th anniversary of the US Air Force. My wife and I spent twenty-three years of our life in the AF during which we lived in many communities across the States. One of the constants and blessings of that service is that we were always able to find a good church home where God’s presence was obvious, and we felt welcomed. Sometimes, we had to shop to find a spiritual home based on the Bible. But God always led us to where His presence could be seen and felt through the “love, joy, peace, and hope” of its members.

We live in difficult times where culture has impacted our lives and institutions, including our churches. I firmly believe if we let Jesus’ four special gifts guide our lives with the Holy Spirit’s help according to His purpose, then we will be carrying on His work. We should do so with a rejoicing attitude and a gentleness that is evident to all we encounter so we can bring others to Him. Keep in mind Dr. David Jeremiah’s advice: “Be sensitive to whoever God brings across your path today, listen for the leading of God, believing that every meeting is a divine appointment.”

Prayer: *Dear Father, this Advent season renew our commitment to using your gifts of love, joy, peace and hope to help us to grow in grace and to be more effective servants in taking the Gospel to where it is needed and to ministering to those less fortunate. Amen.*

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