



THE CHALLENGER

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PROCLAIMING THE WORD TO THE WORLD

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Rejoice in the Lord! It Is a Command! Let's Do It!

RADIO MESSAGE BY DWIGHT PORTER, D.D.

THE shortest verse in the Bible (Greek construction) sounds forth this same command: "Rejoice evermore" (I Thessalonians 5:16). To rejoice is to declare by outward manifestation an inward conviction. *A silent witness?* The Lord knows! This is an audible declaration of thanksgiving, praise, and adoration of the Person who means so very much to us. It is a declaration of His glorious eternal provision for us. How many people heard you rejoice in the Lord yesterday? Today? How many will hear from you tomorrow? "Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!" (Psalm 107:8; ff).

Paul's Personal Demonstration

Let's return to the book that God gave him for us. Paul exhorted us to rejoice, realizing its source. It came from recognizing that which the Lord has provided for us and placed the consciousness of His actions in our soul. We have no business rejoicing in some earthly possession or an experience. We are to rejoice in the Lord. Hear

REJOICE in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice (Philippians 4:4)

Paul's

admonition again in Philippians 3:1: "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." Here is a man of God who practiced that which he preached. "But I REJOICED in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity." (Philippians 4:10).

It was the Lord who motivated Paul's thanks for these Philippian people. Even when he faced death at the hand of the Jews and Romans, he declared his course of action: "Yea, and if I be offered up on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and REJOICE with you all. For the same cause also do you joy and REJOICE with me." (Philippians 2:17,18). Let come what may, Paul rejoiced in the Person who so miraculously revealed Himself years before on the Damascus Road. By the way, the reason for God's sovereign action that day was due to His knowledge of the second question Paul would ask in reaction to this marvelous revelation. Question number one: "Who art thou, Lord" (Acts 9:5, 6, 16; 20); question number two: "Lord, what will thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6). Do you remember the Lord's answer to that last question? "For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake." (Acts 9:16).

Paul's Message

It was not that of our Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, or the Charismatics. He

proclaimed the Person who revealed Himself to Paul. He received his sight, was filled with the Holy Spirit, was baptized and received strength from meat (Acts 9:18,19). This is the sequence of events. The next verse states: "And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues (plural), that He is the Son of God." (Acts 9:20). No wonder Paul suffered so much. Was there a more important place to declare the Messiah had come? Can you imagine a more hostile place for such a message? On that Damascus Road, with papers to attack the Christians with a hostile attitude, Saul was transformed into Paul. From that moment on, He was attached to the Lord Jesus Christ. "Christ is preached; and I therein do REJOICE" (Philippians 1:18).

Suffering Changed Not His Rejoicing

"Who now REJOICE in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church. To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect (mature) in Christ Jesus." (Colossians 1:24, 27, 28). The Apostle Peter proclaimed this same course of action in his instruction to us: "Wherein ye greatly REJOICE, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations. That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be

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(REJOICE—Continued from page 1)

tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 1:6,7).

Why So Little Joy Today?

Since I am going to answer this question, naturally I raise one that I can easily answer. We must know the Lord's provision if we are to rejoice in Him. There is no other position or possession that generates real joy. Paul was not the first to rejoice in the Lord. "Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and REJOICED; for God had made them REJOICE with great JOY; the wives also and the children REJOICED, so that the JOY of Jerusalem was heard even afar off". (Nehemiah 12:43). Trust generates confidence and peace. "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" (Psalm 5:11). Leave your Bible closed and your reason and motivation for rejoicing will never be your portion. "Make a JOYFUL noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before His presence with singing." (Psalm 100:1,2).

Joy is a delightful state of the mind and heart. It is not focused upon our possessions or a perfect environment. The Hebrew form means "to leap or spin around with pleasure." Personal possession of joy is from the present and future assurances of God's goodness being your possession. "But Christ as a son over His own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the REJOICING of the hope firm unto the end." (Hebrews 3:6). Note it is hope (faith) that owns our rejoicing. "And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and JOY of faith" (Philippians 1 :25). The moment we believe the promises of God, rejoicing is within our heart and mind. Keep the Book closed which contains a revelation of a great God and His promises and never will you have a motivation for rejoicing. Remember, to wait until you feel like it is the kiss of death upon such action.

The source of our rejoicing is the consequence of our position in Christ. We are to rejoice in the Lord. There are assurances in the Bible for unsaved people as well as the saved (biblical terms). The unsaved can be assured of the flames of hell. They have no hope of a bright, brilliant future with God in heaven. They have nothing to rejoice in down here upon the earth, prior to the entrance in their final abode. Friend, if you are not in Christ and rejoicing, God has told you to repent of your sin (turn away from it) and to trust Christ to deliver you of it by His death and resurrection. Will you allow and believe Christ to die in your deserved place, to take your curse and condemnation before a holy God? "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23). Will you by faith accept that gift right here and now? If not, when? You have God's promises. Believe them!

My Christian friend, do not live on a lower level than God provides. Do you possess genuine joy? Do your friends and relatives see you as a rejoicing Christian? The JOY of the Lord demands your fellowship and obedience. Does He have them? If some of you suddenly start rejoicing, it would shock your neighbors, relatives, and church friends. When are you going to obey God and rejoice in Him and His many favors known to you? Begin today! Start now!

REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS, AND AGAIN I SAY REJOICE.

It's Your Choice!

To rejoice always or be affected and influenced by everything and every- body in this world.

To believe God's promises or forfeit them by unbelief.

To obey His direction and possess His blessing or receive the consequences of disobedience.

WHICH WILL IT BE?

(Personal Word — Continued from page 3)

old...and have been in prison for 31 years. I've been set free! I need any literature ...any prayers." – inmate

"Dear friends in Christ. Thank you for your recent donation of 'The Challenger' to our chapel. The community here...greatly appreciate your continued thoughtfulness and generosity." chaplain

"I am saved by the grace of God... and in prison for doing drugs. I am 21 years old and have 2 children. I would like to know Jesus Christ a whole lot more than I do now. Please help me. Hope to hear back from you soon. - inmate

Working together

We are so blessed to have such dedicated volunteers working together from several different locations, as well as such dedicated prayer warriors for this ministry. Those who are able to give beyond their time and prayers with financial support do so with the same remarkable dedication. Thanks go to all of you. Your labor of love is not overlooked or taken for granted. And the Lord is more aware than we are. Please continue in prayer as we seek to be of help spiritually to God's people through the new birth by grace through faith in Christ.

Important Mailing Information

It is important that literature requests, letters and donations be mailed to PO Box 5900, Titusville, FL 32783-5900, and **NOT** PO Box 400. That address is being phased out and soon will not be available at all. Your mail will ultimately be returned to you.

All **Bible Correspondence Courses** must be mailed to the Satellite Beach address. In a future edition we will print, Lord willing, an abridged version of our literature sheet with the available materials for anyone desiring them.

We are praying that the Lord will allow a handful of Spanish articles and the English equivalent to be requested in that list as well. Thank you so much for your cooperation in this matter.

Personal Word



In the 22nd Psalm, we have a prophecy of the coming Messiah. Our Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled this Psalm on the cross as the Good Shepherd giving His life for us. Listen to the distress: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded." Psalm 22:1-2,4-5

Do you sense what many believers are sensing of late? That the Lord is removing His hand of protection and His presence from us in this once great nation of people and churches? We can look back and see historically in this church age how God

dealt with our fathers, grandfathers, and beyond. They trusted the Lord, they prayed, and the Lord delivered them. And now we have come to our time and we see the great need for deliverance and revival, and we pray in earnest. Yet we see a greater separation than ever in others from God and His Word. Many have felt they have had to 'dumb-down' the gospel message to get people to respond, never realizing that what they are doing has no power to save, only give people a false sense of safety in their worldliness. Where are our prayers going? What are they accomplishing?

The Lord of glory cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" as He was becoming sin for us, as God laid on Christ the sin debt of all of us. A holy God cannot look on sin, and the payment of blood by an innocent Substitute paid the debt of sin that we could never pay. God's plan was moving as His word said it would. Christ came, "to seek and to save that which was lost." It was always the plan from before the foundation of the earth.

As we look around today and pray, let us not forget that God's word is still being fulfilled and moving toward a judgment unlike any other in the world. God's Word says,

"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." - II Tim.3:13-14 The light that we are called to be that is set on a hill shines brighter and brighter as the days grow darker and darker.

Letters To The Editor

"Greetings in Him! I am a 12 day (from 8/16) born again Christian. I am 53 years (Continued on page 2)

(DON'T PLAY—Continued from page 4) man relationship between a father and son is used. As an application, why isn't someone a fool who professes to be a Christian that has disdain or contempt for his heavenly Father's instructions? In Prov.19:3, we see that a fool does cause great injury to the cause of Christ.

I do not stand with the platform of ministers of all types of cults and religions, nor the outcry from hypocritical and corrupt politicians who denounced the proposed burning. Their records are not without serious blemishes and in some cases, atrocities. Try taking a Bible to Saudi Arabia, or several other Middle East Arab nations. Try witnessing to them of the Lord Jesus Christ. Try holding a prayer meeting together. Anyone remember the French and Spanish Inquisitions, or the Catacombs?

The Word of God is our platform, whatever the circumstances of life or the government we are under. You need to read I Thess. 2:2-3,6-12; I Peter 4:12-15. In Titus 3:2-3, we read, "To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." A studious look at the website of the Gainesville ministry manifested the character of what we were before we were saved: foolish, hateful, and hating one another. There is nothing Christian about that. If we are to hate, the Psalmist said that we who love the Lord are to hate evil - anything unrighteous or sinful. Our Lord sent men out before to be harmless as doves and wise as serpents. Our Lord told us that we are to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth. We can be all of those things, under the authority of God's Word, while still seeking those who are lost in their sins, living out holy Christian lives, praying for our country and its leadership to come to the Lord and seek His guidance and wisdom, and taking every opportunity to stand with the truth, and against the lie as well as the liars - wherever it or they may be found.

Dr. T. Michael Eccleston—Editor

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DON'T PLAY THE FOOL

"Then said Saul, I have sinned: . . . behold, I have played the fool and erred exceedingly."

I Samuel 26:21

The word Saul used to describe his actions was the word, fool, and it carries with it several meanings: to be silly or stupid, to be wicked, or to be figuratively perverse. In Titus 2:1-8, born again believers of all ages are admonished to conduct themselves in a certain manner, so that, (1) "the Word of God be not blasphemed," and (2) that "he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you." We are also told in II Cor.6:3, "Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed." In verses 4-10, we are given the various circumstances to comply with the third verse.

We live in the days of II Timothy 3:1-5. These are perilous days – days of apostasy, and we certainly do not condone this prevailing "form of godliness" that results in the denial of the power of God. One of the more recent displays of 'playing the fool' has been from Gainesville, Florida, and out of the Dove World Outreach Center. Their pastor threatened to burn the Koran on Sept.11. We are not of like mind in far too many areas to get us off message here.

If someone wants to burn books, fine, but at the least, it would be helpful to understand its context. In Acts 19:18-19, we read, "And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver." Curious arts: a description of the magic and occult these people were involved with. It meant, to meddle as a busybody, in the only other place in the New Testament that the word was used. The Lord describes that what they HAD been doing was to take pains and care for that which was not worth the trouble or effort in this peculiar world of magic and sorcery, because it promised way more than what it could deliver. By the way, God's Word forbids believers to even tamper with any of those things. They are very dangerous and destructive. Well, the Gospel of Christ broke Satan's hold on the people of Ephesus, and they came to Christ by faith, confessing their involvement when lost, in black magic, as well as demonstrating that they had repented by publically burning these highly valuable books on charms, spells, magic, etc. One must remember that these people were burning their books. Not someone else's. It does make for quite a difference. Many of us who have come to Christ would be smart to have burned or trashed the devil's materials that we read or listened to (music). It certainly would be a figurative way to break any hold of sin's power in the past. I wouldn't sell it or give it to anybody else. It would make no sense if one realized the hold that was on your life before you were saved.

Anyway, the above is not what was happening at Gainesville. Considering what the Bible says about the fool, here are some passages to consider: Prov.13:16, we see that a fool has no tactfulness, no discernment, no counting the cost – he just spreads open before all his foolishness. In Prov.12:15, we see that a fool uses himself as the measuring rod for what is right, just like in Judges 21:25, and in Prov.14:12, and without realizing that his actions can be destructive, even to himself. In Prov.15:5, a hu-

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Dwight Porter, D.D., Founder

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"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Corinthians 15:58

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