

No Jesus breathes the Spirit into you that you can genuinely rejoice.

Not rejoice in the situation but rejoice in knowing and being known by Jesus. Rejoice knowing Jesus is with you, that you're in him, right now.

I rejoice as I come to Jesus, not worrying, not cursing the situation, but rejoicing in Jesus, knowing he has won the victory. Knowing in him I have the strength to cope with anything. I rejoice in Jesus, and let the joy of Jesus' living presence win the day.

Hard times will come. People will irritate me, and I'll annoy the heck out of people. I'll feel imprisoned, down, even depressed at times, but in Jesus I'll

always be able to live in the joy of his presence. Jesus' presence is my joy, my life, my hope, my identity.

So when you're feeling like complaining, invite Jesus into the middle of what you're experiencing. Invite Jesus in. Focus on him. Listen to him. Rejoice in him. Let Jesus take control and shape you, shape the way you act and talk. Invite Jesus in and discover life lived in his fullness. That's joy.

This isn't some psychological trick. This is inviting the very real, living, breathing person Jesus, to send the Spirit to be with you, flooding your heart with his presence. So the presence of God, in the person of the Spirit, shapes you,

takes control, gives you true hope.

Today I invite you to rejoice in Jesus always; that living, breathing person, who rejoices in you. Rejoices in sharing his life with you, his love with you, his hope with you, his future with you, his very person with you.

Today don't complain, bring the situation and your heartfelt feelings to Jesus, inviting him in. Today bring that relationship, that painful relationship, that person you find annoying, bring them to Jesus. Ask him to flood your heart with his Spirit, his love, his grace, his mercy and forgiveness. Let the presence of Jesus shape your response to that person, and rejoice in the Lord.

11 October 2020

REJOICE IN JESUS ALWAYS

Philippians 4:1-9



Today we've just heard part of Paul's letter to the community of faith in Philippi. This letter was written by Paul when in prison. In prison because of his public witness to Jesus. His enemies didn't only want Paul in prison, they wanted him dead.

I don't know about you but I'm thinking that if I found myself in prison threatened with the death penalty, I wouldn't be all that happy. You might even get a bit of complaining from me. Actually I'd have to confess it takes a lot less to get me complaining; like my whipper snipper not starting, dropping something, and I really go to town if I stub my toe.

Paul mentions two people complaining

about each other; Euodia and Syntyche. Have you ever complained about another person? They have disagreed with you, offended you, said something less than tactful about you, they've got different opinions to yours and won't change. Have you ever complained about another person, because sadly I have to confess that I have.

I've noticed that when I focus on what gets me to complain; you may be surprised by this. When I focus on what gets me to complain, when I focus on who I complain about, I just complain all the more. I end up intensifying my dissatisfaction. I become frustrated, angry, resentful, bitter, I wish they

could cop it in the neck like I am. That's when I focus on what, or who, gets me to complain.

What was Paul's plea to Euodia and Syntyche? He pleaded with them to shift their focus to Jesus. To shift their focus to Jesus and rejoice.

When I shift my focus to Jesus and invite him to soften my heart, to let me see the situation and the other person through his eyes, change happens

When I look at people through Jesus' eyes, I don't see a pain in the neck. In Jesus I see someone who is incredibly precious to Father; his loved child. I see someone

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples

who needs to know Father's love deep in their hearts, or more often than not I see that I need to know Father's love, through Jesus, deep in my heart.

For me to complain and simply see someone as a pain in the neck, tells me that there is something about God's love, something about Jesus, I don't know, because if I did, if I did, I'd seek to bless them not curse them.

I'm called to repent.

Repentance is one of God's greatest gifts. I rejoice in the gift of repentance. I'm never trapped by my mistakes; deliberate or otherwise. Wouldn't that be a downer; trapped and defined by all my mistakes. That would be enough to make anyone depressed.

But Paul points toward a life of rejoicing. We have

every reason to rejoice. I'm never trapped in my mistakes, I can repent, call on Jesus, live in his grace and amazingly be set free to live out his loving nature. In Jesus I have every reason to rejoice.

Notice that Paul doesn't focus on the

We have every reason to rejoice.

situation he finds himself in, he focuses on Jesus. Jesus who has given his life for him. Jesus who holds Paul in his hands, even in prison. Paul rejoices in knowing Jesus, in being able to talk with Jesus about everything and anything. Listening to Jesus' response. What joy, knowing, hearing, experiencing Jesus response.

Paul's joy is never dependent on where he finds himself. Paul's joy doesn't

flow from other people's praise. Though, Paul's joy is personal, for it is found in the person, Jesus.

Prison doesn't determine who Paul is, Jesus does. Prison doesn't determine Paul's future, Jesus does. Just because Paul is

in prison it doesn't mean he's trapped, locked up. No, in Jesus he is totally free. You can't imprison Paul's spirit.

Sometime before Paul wrote this letter he had been to Philippi and imprisoned for his faith, as he often was. As Paul was in prison in Philippi we're told; "the jailer put them into the inner dungeon and clamped their feet in the stocks. Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were

listening..." (Acts 16:24,25)

Here we have Paul and Silas in the depths of the prison, because they liberated a woman from slavery to a demon. Their crime was that the slave owners couldn't make money off this woman as a fortune teller anymore. So they spit the dummy having Paul and Silas beaten and imprisoned. What a lament these slave owners must have had, I mean how dare these guys disrupt their making money.

But Paul and Silas aren't found having a gripe, they're found singing to God. Prison never defined Paul's identity; it just gave him a captive audience to tell about the joy of life with Jesus.

Paul isn't just focused on Jesus as some mental way of distracting himself

from his pain. No Paul is focused on Jesus, knowing the person, knowing his love for him. Paul is focused on what the living breathing person Jesus says, promises, does. Paul is focused on Jesus presence with him through the Spirit.

Paul and Silas

Rejoice in Jesus love for the other person.

weren't in that prison simply seeking to do the best they could. No way! The Spirit was with them, giving them the joy that comes from his presence, from being found in Jesus.

Paul's pain was real, but it didn't define who Paul was, nor did it have the final word. Paul, in or out of prison, found his identity in Jesus; Jesus' death and resurrection. Paul was able to rejoice in Jesus; knowing

Jesus, knowing Jesus held him in his hands. Knowing Jesus determined his future. Paul looked to Jesus and the hope he offered.

So Paul could live out those amazing words; "Rejoice in the Lord always". Paul didn't become bitter and resentful seeking revenge. No Paul says; 'Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.'

Gentleness isn't the same as whimpyness. To be gentle takes great strength, the strength that comes from Jesus. The strength not to seek revenge, not to curse but to bless, but to rejoice in Jesus love for the other person.

Jesus sends the Spirit to breathe that into you. To cast out bitterness, revenge, complaining, because they're not of God, and they certainly aren't how you live life to the full.