Rejoicing Despite Suffering

Jan Philip Svetlik · 2 Corinthians 6:10 · April 28, 2025



We need to rejoice in the Lord. But the question is, of course, what about all the suffering that surrounds us? And what about when we have to go through difficult times? Isn't it quite normal to be sad sometimes? After all, Jesus also wept at Lazarus' tomb or in Gethsemane. This brings us to an important question:

Is it possible to be sad and rejoice at the same time? Yes, it is possible. It's a paradox – an apparent contradiction. But that is exactly what the Bible shows us: It was the case with Paul and his coworkers, for example.

This is why Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 6: "as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing" (2 Cor. 6:10). And a chapter later, he says: "I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation." (2 Cor. 7:4).

That sounds strange. But it was **a spiritual reality**! Paul knew times when he was downcast and even despaired of life. And yet he had a constant deep joy in his heart. And he had it even when he had already been imprisoned for four years and wrote to the Philippians from prison:

"*Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!*" (Phil. 4:4). Imagine that:

- The happiest man in Rome.
- Sitting in prison.
- Encouraging others who are free to rejoice in the Lord.

Some of the Philippians must have remembered the time of Paul and Silas in Philippi, how they sat in the dungeon with their backs beaten bloody and their feet in stocks. And how the two of them sang songs to the glory of God at midnight. So, for them, it was clear: **with Paul, this was not theory but lived practice!**

Or think of the Macedonians. Paul writes about them: "*... that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality.*" (2 Cor. 8:2).

These Christians were persecuted. And they were also poor. But despite this, they had such joy in the Lord that they gave the shirt off their backs for the persecuted believers in Jerusalem. Their joy in the Lord meant that they took pleasure in giving to others – and no sacrifice was too great for them! I find this really challenging for our own life of faith!

Nehemiah already said in the Old Testament: "*Joy of the Lord is your strength.*" (Neh. 8:10). **What you focus on often determines how you feel.** The reason why many of us are often so powerless and depressed is because we have the wrong focus. Because our thoughts so often revolve around negative things.

I can say this from my own experience, and I know what a mental merry-go-round you can get into. How trapped you feel when you constantly have negative thoughts.

But when we consciously focus on God and rejoice in Him, we receive spiritual strength. Then, we go from strength to strength.

Source https://thebiblestudy.site/article/rejoicing-despite-suffering/