

The Rejoice Principle

TRANSCRIPT (AUTO-GENERATED)

Wayform number six, The Rejoice Principle. Are you any good at rejoicing? Rejoicing is celebrating.

It's expressing joy. Some years ago, I was teaching two of my boys, Ben and Lachie, how to play cricket, and they were getting pretty good.

They were quite young, and we were in the backyard, and we'd just bought a new tennis ball, because as you know, backyard cricket sometimes involves balls going over the fence, and one of our neighbours had received so many balls, they'd stopped

returning them. Their fence was too high to climb, so we sort of needed their cooperation in the matter. First ball, Ben bowls to me, I hit it towards Locke.

He dives full length, now he's only seven, so it's not that far, but he catches it one handed. First ball with the new tennis ball.

Locke jumps to his feet and does what any self-respecting cricketer would do, he throws the ball into the air, an exuberant celebration, but it goes straight backwards and over the high fence, never to be seen again.

We walk back inside, cricket was over for the day. Are you any good at rejoicing? Rejoicing wasn't Locke's problem, direction in his expression of joy just needed some work.

Are you any good at rejoicing? Some years ago, our daughter got engaged to a young man from church and at a morning service, my wife Leanne announced it as part of the announcements.

It was like you just put silencing headphones on and pressed the silence button, nothing. All you could hear were tumbleweeds rolling. The congregation didn't know collectively how to celebrate the moment.

That wouldn't happen now. We've learned how to rejoice. You see, there are some things that need to be rejoiced over.

The Apostle Paul is writing to a church that he started in a place called Philippi in Macedonia. It's not too far from Gallipoli, and he's writing to them from prison in Rome. And he says in Philippians chapter 4, verse 4, rejoice in the Lord always.

I'll say it again. Rejoice. The Apostle Paul can say rejoice in the Lord always.

I will say it again. Rejoice. Because he believes what Paul wrote in Romans 8.28.

And we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Paul says to us to rejoice always, because he knows that God is good, and God is up to something good for those who love him and are called according to his purposes. Paul's commendation to rejoice continues. He says, rejoice in the Lord always.

I say it again. Rejoice. Let your gentleness be evident to all the Lord is near.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Paul's in prison, and he has learned the power of rejoicing in God's goodness, no matter what the circumstances, because the Lord is near. I think we can lock this in. We can rejoice always, because God is with us.

The presence of God has always been his greatest gift to his people. All throughout the Bible, we see God's being with his people as the decisive game changer. It's exactly what Paul says in Philippians.

Rejoice because the Lord is near. God is with us when we belong to him as his children by faith. And this naturally results in an attitude of gratitude, an attitude of thankfulness, which leads to rejoicing.

Paul is writing to the church at Philippi because he knows them. It was Paul who first told them about Jesus and Christianity. You can read about what happened on Paul's first visit in Acts 16, verse 22.

The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, this is from Acts, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods.

After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. It doesn't sound like much fun. They were missionaries doing God's work, and yet this is what God allowed to happen to them.

It doesn't stop Paul and Silas. They're committed to rejoicing in the Lord always. They're in prison, and yet they pray and sing hymns to God.

Seven years ago, last Wednesday, a friend of mine who was with us today, of course, this book is based out of a preaching series that was done at NorthernLife Baptist Church.

Seven years ago, last Wednesday, a friend of mine who was with us today, Michelle and I, share an anniversary. It was seven years ago, on the 24th of August, that she first left for long-term work in Rwanda.

And it was seven years ago, when I preached this message, that our family moved from the Sutherland Shire in the south of Sydney into our new home in Mount Kola to do ministry at this church. It was a big day, that moving day.

Over the years, we had collected a bit of gear, and so there were two large moving trucks carrying our stuff.

Ben, my son, and I were driving our van, which was full to the brim, and our job on this horrible, raining, stormy day was to drive five minutes ahead of the removalist, go to the real estate agent, grab the keys, and open up the house in time for

them to arrive. What could go wrong? Well, since it was pouring raining, I wanted to grab a bilge pump to be ahead of the game in a potential flood area of the house that I'd identified, so we stopped off at Thornley Bunnings, my new Bunnings.

Grabbed the pump, walked back to the car, took out my keys, and there was no car key. It had been there, but somehow now it wasn't there. It had come off.

Now to spare you the pain of the detail, it was nowhere in Bunnings. How do I know that? Because we looked over basically every square inch of that floor.

What to do? No keys, removalists coming, two trucks full of our gear, paying by the hour. My wife Leanne is about 45 minutes behind coming in another car.

We figure I can get her keys for my car. So I ring the agent who takes the house key over to the two imminently arriving removalist trucks.

There was a security screen on the back door, which needed to be opened to get the fridge in, but the keys didn't open that screen door. So the removalist guys had ripped the door off its hinges to get in, in the pouring rain.

We arrived finally, and then our daughter started having a terrible nosebleed, so bad that it really became like a crime scene.

Oh, and by the way, we couldn't get the electricity turned on, so by this stage, everything is being done with two candles.

The house is dark, blood is everywhere, mud is everywhere, and we hadn't fit all of our gear in the two trucks, one van and a car, so I needed to hire another van tomorrow to go back and get the rest of the garage cleaned out by mid-morning.

I go to bed and wake up the next morning to discover that our house is on a much busier road than we realized. And at six in the morning, the traffic is noisy, which is the point of my story.

Lying in bed at the crack of dawn, I start working out how much money we'll lose by selling the house immediately. I'm stressing and fretting and calculating, and then I'm struck by a truth. The Lord is with us.

He's been guiding us. And I remember how blessed are we that we own a home in Sydney, that we have a healthy family. There's a lot of bloodstains around the place right now, but otherwise healthy.

And I start rejoicing in the Lord at 6 a.m., the 25th of August, because He is still worthy to be praised. The Lord is near. I don't hear the traffic noise anymore, and we've been blessed beyond our expectations in that house.

God turned up in my bedroom early on that morning, and He brought me peace beyond human understanding. And He can do the same for you, whatever you're going through. Paul and Silas praised God.

They rejoiced in the Lord before God came through with a miracle. They praised God and rejoiced for the who and not the what. Sometimes the what is confusing, just what God is up to in your life.

What's unchanging, though, is the who, who God is. Praise Him, rejoice in Him for the who and not the what.

Paul wrote in Philippians 4, Don't be anxious about anything, but in every situation by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God, and the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds

in Christ Jesus. With thanksgiving, know the Lord is near. You can rejoice. Rejoice in the Lord always because God is with us.

And secondly, rejoice in the Lord always because God is able. Ephesians 3 verse 20 says, He is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine according to His power that is at work within us.

God is able to do what you need Him to do that you might rejoice. So Paul and Silas are in prison, and they don't let that stop them. They start singing worship songs at midnight, and then all of a sudden God turns up.

Acts 16, suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open and everyone's chains came loose.

The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted, Don't harm yourself, we're all here.

God is a God who hears the cry of His people and comes to the rescue. He's not only present in our distress, but He is able. He is willing and able.

He can unshackle chains in our lives. He can break open prison doors. He can set captives free.

My friend Michelle has an adopted Rwandan daughter named Flora. Michelle arrived in Rwanda in August of 2015, and she was all set to write the first early childhood curriculum for teacher training the country had ever seen.

It was an epic kingdom good to write a national program for teachers, and she had been led by God to be part of it. Within a couple of months of arrival in Rwanda, Michelle met a newborn little girl who had lost her mum at just 19 days old.

Michelle began full-time care of this tiny person named Flora at six weeks of age.

Since Flora's dad was incapable of caring for her and was later deported back to Burundi, Michelle was God's answer to Flora's needs, and pretty soon Flora was adopted as Michelle's only daughter.

God is good and he is able, and he has a special place in his heart for the widow, the orphan, the poor and the refugee. He has made a way for the chains to fall off and new life to be available.

Flora has a loving mum and family and an international village who believe that God has good installed for her life. Paul says, Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice.

In every situation by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. What do you need to rejoice and thank God for in faith because he is good? Praise him for the who and not the what.

Praise him and rejoice in him for who God is and trust him that the what is coming and will be good, immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine. Rejoice in the Lord always because God is with us. Rejoice in the Lord always because God is able.

And thirdly, rejoice in the Lord always because God is able to save. The story of the Philippian jailer is a story of radical spiritual transformation.

After the ground shook and the chains fell off, Acts 16, 29 says, the jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell, trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

They replied, believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household. Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night, the jailer took them and washed their wounds.

Then immediately he and all his household were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and said a meal before them. He was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God, he and his whole household.

What must I do to be saved? Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. They did believe, and they were filled with joy, which is the foundation of rejoicing, joy.

Do you want the joy of the Lord in your life? Do you want forgiveness of sins, eternal life, the capacity to live a God-honoring life? God is not just with everyone, God is with those who belong to him through faith.

The jailer had a realization, I'm not right with God. Maybe today you can relate to the statement, what must I do to be saved? Which means, how do I get right with God?

The Bible says that every one of us has sinned. We've disobeyed God and because of this, are deserving of being separated from God forever.

But Jesus, God's only son, has lived the perfect life we could never live, to die our death taking God's punishment for our sins in our place. And that is good news. That's news worth rejoicing over.

What must we do to be saved? Believe. Believe in Jesus like you believe in the chair you're sitting on.

Believe that he loves you and is able to save you and you will be saved. Believe that he deserves the glory and praise of your life. Believe that you have received forgiveness and eternal life by his grace and the result will be joy.

Some of us feel like we're too far gone for God's forgiveness, but you're wrong. God is near and able. He is able to save you.

Believe in Jesus and you will be saved. Rejoice in the Lord always because God is with us. Rejoice in the Lord always because God is able.

Rejoice in the Lord always because God is able to save. Are you any good at rejoicing in the Lord? It comes from gratitude for who he is, what he has done and what he is going to do.

Who he is, what he has done and what he is going to do.