

“Rejoicing in Hope”
Romans 12:12
(Preached at Trinity, January 30, 2011)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **Verse 9** Paul says our love for one another must be without “hypocrisy.” The word means our love must be genuine, sincere.
Love is our chief duty. It is the anchor that keeps us firmly planted in the faith.
Our love for Christ, His people, and His church must serve as our motivation for using our gifts.
2. In **Verses 10-13** Paul sets forth several virtues that flow forth from love. This is one of the reasons love is so essential in our lives. Everything else depends on it!
Paul considers in these verses our love for Christ and our love for our brethren.
Then in **Verses 14** to the end of the chapter Paul summarizes the charge of our Lord in **Matthew 5** – “Love your enemies.”
3. As Paul considers these virtues he begins first with our duty to our brothers and sisters in Christ. “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love”
Then, in **Verse 11** Paul states that love will drive us to diligence in service.
Romans 12:11 – “not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;”
Paul is admonishing us as the slaves of Christ to give ourselves to His service with burning zeal without hesitation, without laziness, and without fear.
4. This morning I want to direct your attention to the first phrase of **Verse 12** – “rejoicing in hope”
“rejoicing” – a present participle from the word χαίρω -
It refers to the state of being joyful.
NIV – “Be joyful in hope”
5. There are two subjects for examination here. One is the joy that fills the life of the believer and the other is the subject of hope. Hope becomes the basis of our joy.
Remember, this is flowing forth from **Verse 9**. Love is the foundation upon which all of the other Christian virtues rest. Ultimately our joy flows out of our love for Christ and our confidence of His love for us.
6. First, I want to look at the Christian hope and then we’ll look at the joy that flows from that hope.

I. What is hope?
A. Hope for the Christian is based upon a future expectation
 1. It is a bold confidence
 2. Hope in English and the common modern understanding of the word implies an expectation but not necessarily a certainty. It is more like a strong desire.

- a. The young person hopes to get a good job, get married, have children, etc.
 - b. The adult hopes to get a promotion, hopes to maintain good health.
 - c. For most this word is more like “wishful thinking”
This isn’t the Christian concept of the word.
3. The Christian’s hope is based on absolute certainty, an unflinching confidence. Remember, these things flow forth from love. The knowledge of Christ’s love for us and the evidence of our love for Him gives us confidence that are the children of God.
 4. We have the blessed promises of God concerning our future. Much of our redemption is still future. We saw this back in **Romans 8**
Romans 8:22-24 – “For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. ²³ And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. ²⁴ For in hope we have been saved . . .”
 5. In other words, although our salvation has not yet been brought to completion, we rest in confident expectation.
- B. This lively hope, this great confidence rests upon our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2 Corinthians 1:20** – “For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.”
1. This life is full of difficulty. There are many uncertainties. Everything you own could disappear tomorrow. But our hope is not in this world. Our hope is built on the sure foundation of Christ.
 2. Your confidence can only be based upon your relationship with Christ
Paul was driven by this confidence
^{NAS} **Philippians 3:12** – “Not that I have already obtained *it*, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.”
 3. Do you know Him – not of Him or about Him. Do you know Christ?
Is your hope built on Christ?
My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly trust in Jesus’ Name.
 4. It is because of our hope we press on. Our hope is in Christ. We are patiently waiting for Him. This is made possible because of our confidence of His love for us and by the love that God has placed in us.
2 Thessalonians 3:5 – “And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.”

5. God says our reward is sure. His promises are true. Our life must be one of pressing on in confidence and hope.
Titus 2:11-14 – “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, ¹² instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus; ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.”
6. What is the impact of this hope upon our daily lives? It fills us with joy unspeakable.

II. How do we describe this joy?

- A. It is a joy that transcends the situation of our life
 1. Paul’s ministry was filled with great difficulty. He suffered physically from the demands of the ministry. Often he suffered at the hands of men who despised the Gospel.
 2. Paul was able to see beyond the condition of his life.
Acts 20:24 – “But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”
2 Corinthians 7:4 – “Great is my confidence in you, great is my boasting on your behalf; I am filled with comfort. I am overflowing with joy in all our affliction.”
 3. Throughout history Christians have been joyful in the worst of situations.
1 Thessalonians 1:6 – “You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit,”
 4. How can this be? What is this joy Christians have above all other men?
- B. First, we need to understand this is one of the fruits of Christianity
 1. It is one of the fruits of the Spirit
Galatians 5:22 - “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy . . .”
 2. It is one of the great gifts of our Christian conversion
 3. The Spirit of God fills us with joy – our heart has been changed. The focus of our heart’s desire has changed
 4. You should always ask yourself: What is the source of my joy?
- C. A man’s joy is always based upon acquiring the pursuit of his heart
 1. A man’s heart is always drawn to his treasure
Matthew 6:21 – “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”
 2. For the people of this world their joy is always based upon earthly things Possessions, family, friends, prestige and power, pleasure, comfort If any of these things are removed all joy is removed. The truth is all of these things are transitory. They can leave us at any moment.

3. The Christian's joy is based upon other things. He too has possessions. He too has friends and loved ones and they bring him joy. But these things are not the ultimate source of his joy.
- D. God is concerned about the happiness of His people. The question is what is the source of that happiness?
1. Does God want you to find happiness and joy in material things?
 2. Does God want you to find joy in the comforts of earthly life?
 3. The worldly man sees Christianity as a hard and joyless life.
NAS **Matthew 25:24** - "And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed. And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.'"
 - a. They see God as hard and strict and without a regard for our joy
 - b. They can't see value in the Christian life. Paul was poor, homeless, often without friends, persecuted. They would see Paul's life as a life full of sorrow. Paul said, "I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation." 4. The Christian has found the source of true joy.
- III. What is the foundation of the Christian's joy
- A. It is a joy based upon finding our greatest possession in Christ
1. Jesus says this is at the very heart of Christianity
Matthew 13:44 – "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field."
 2. We have received of the greatest gift – John 3:16
 Jesus is that "Heavenly gift" spoken of in Heb. 6:4
 3. Remember, **Verse 12** is flowing off of **Verse 9**. We have fallen in love – we have the joy of being in love with the King of the universe
NAS **Song of Solomon 5:10** - "My beloved is dazzling and ruddy, Outstanding among ten thousand."
ESV – "radiant and ruddy"
NAS **Song of Solomon 5:16** – "And he is wholly desirable. This is my beloved and this is my friend,"
KJV **Verse 16** – ". . . yea, he *is* altogether lovely."
 4. What is your treasure? What is the chief focus of your love? What has your heart? What brings you joy?
- B. It is a joy found in our fellowship with Christ
1. Not only do we possess Christ. The Christian has found a relationship
 2. Fullness of joy comes only through a fellowship with Christ
1 John 1:3-4 – "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴ And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full."

3. Our life is a pursuit of knowing Christ more. This brings us joy. We find joy in the things that draw us nearer to Christ. We find joy in prayer, joy in His Word, joy in coming to the Lord's Table, joy in fellowship with the saints.
 4. For the Christian we have found fullness of joy in the presence of Christ
Psalm 16:11 – “Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore.”
Psalm 43:4 – “Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.”
- C. It is a joy based upon our reconciliation with the Father
1. We rejoice that our sins have been forgiven
 2. For us salvation is a continual source of joy
NAS **Isaiah 61:10** – “I will rejoice greatly in the LORD, My soul will exult in my God; For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.”
 3. We now have the privilege of adoption
 - a. As God's children we now have access through prayer
 - b. We will spend eternity with our Lord
 4. We share in all of the benefits of redemption
 - a. We have the peace of Philippians 4:6-7
Philippians 4:6-7 – “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”
 - b. We have the comfort of Romans 8:28
 - c. We have the assurance of Matt. 6:33
NAS **Matthew 6:31** - "Do not be anxious then, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we clothe ourselves?' ³² "For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.”
 - d. We have great boldness in knowing God defends us
Psalm 5:11 – “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.”
- D. It is a joy based upon obedience
1. Jesus said His greatest satisfaction was in doing the will of His Father
NAS **John 4:34** – “Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work.”

2. He also said that we will find the greatest joy in obedience.
NAS **John 15:10** - "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. ¹¹ "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full."
 3. This is a two-fold joy
 - a. That Christ's joy might be full in us.
 He is filled with joy over our righteousness.
NAS **Zephaniah 3:17** - "The LORD your God is in your midst, A victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy."
 - b. That our joy might be full in Him.
Philippians 4:4 – "Rejoice in the Lord always: *and* again I say, Rejoice."
 4. The Christian finds it a true joy to please Christ, to honor Him, to obey Him. Is this your source of joy?
- D. The Christian finds true joy in the fellowship of the suffering of Christ
1. Paul stated emphatically that his relationship with Christ in all things was his greatest treasure
Philippians 3:10-11 – "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹ in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead."
 2. Scripture continually teaches the joy the believer has in suffering for the sake of Christ
Luke 6:22-23 – "Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. ²³ "Be glad in that day and leap *for joy*, for behold, your reward is great in heaven. For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets."
James 1:2-4 – "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have *its* perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."
1 Peter 4:12-13 – "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; ¹³ but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation."
Acts 5:41 – "So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for *His* name."
 4. Stand fast in the faith. Stand boldly in the face of opposition. You will find great joy if you are called upon to suffer for the cause of Christ. Suffering for Christ may take many different forms. Stand fast for His glory.

Conclusion:

1. All of these things are not the schemes of religion and the wishful thinking of men. They are based upon the reality of our blessed hope in Christ Jesus.
2. Nothing upon this earth is our source of joy. Our joy must be fixed upon Christ. Are you ever filled with unhappiness or discontent? Why? What is your source of joy?
3. We must never forget that our ultimate joy is reserved for eternity. We must fix our sights upon the hope of glory.
It is by faith that you lay hold to this blessed promise. It is by this faith that you can live your life with exceeding great joy even in the midst of great sorrow and adversity. Nothing or no one can take that joy from you.
4. And this faith in the sure promises of Christ is the basis of our hope and the source of our joy. May your joy be full.