

Rejoicing in our Joy

By Tim Disney

Today is the third Sunday of Advent and Last week Tom & Alberta gave us a message on “Lights, Camera, Action!!” Using Mark 1:1-8 about John the Baptist preparing the way for Christ. I would also like to touch on John the Baptist, but this time using John’s account in John chapter 1.

“As Christians, we often forget that God is just as concerned about the “lights and the position of the camera” in our lives. God wants our camera to be focused on Jesus and he wants our life to be lived “in Him” as the Holy Spirit directs the action’s that follow. This awareness allows us to “Rejoice in our Joy.”

Question.... “Do you feel that there is not much “Joy” in your life right now? Well, we are encouraged in scripture not to fret, God is “preparing the way” and preparing you so that when it comes time for that “joy” to be shared, you will be ready.

Who is this man named John?

John 1:6-8, 19-28..... “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. (7) He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. (8) He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. (19) This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” (20) He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, “I am not the Messiah.” (21) And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” he said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” he answered, “No.” (22) then they said to him, “Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” (23) He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, “Make straight the way of the Lord,” as the prophet Isaiah said. (24) Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. (25) They asked him, “Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?” (26) John answered them, “I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know. (27) The one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.” (28) This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.”

Who was John? He was a man “rejoicing in his joy!

Here was a man who was related to Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, coming to witness about Jesus to the world. He must have known that there would be trouble and difficulties ahead for him to stand before these representatives of the Pharisees. They wanted to know who he was. But John the Baptist wanted them to know who Jesus was. He knew that Jesus was the savior of the world and John’s joy was his willingness to sacrifice his life for Jesus.

James 1:2.... "Count it all joy" when we have trials, test and difficult moment. I could have said "rejoicing in our trials." But if our focus is on our trials, then we might be overcome with doubt. But if our focus is on Jesus (for he is our joy) we become stronger with purpose and Godly confidence. (verse 3)

John the Baptist was prepared and ready to" prepare the way" for Jesus!

In my spare time I'm reading a book titled "killing Lincoln." A historical account of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.

President Lincoln was raised in a Baptist family. He didn't go to church much in his adult life. But the Bible was a very important part of his daily life. I'm sure that this gave him great comfort.

Mr. Lincoln looked much older than his 56 years of age. Felt the weight of the nation on his shoulders. Did not sleep well. Sometimes went without sleep for days at a time. When he did sleep, nightmares haunted him. He believed that he would be killed in office. This man was unable to "rejoice in his joy." He had a lot of enemies and he knew it. But he did have a certain amount of Godly understanding. He was a very good man to lead our nation.

I have a Christian friend whose name is Greg. He is a man that I see "rejoicing in his joy. His wife Kathy has MS. She too is rejoicing in her joy. This has dramatically changed the way they live their lives. I know that Greg & Kathy wake up every day knowing that the challenge of rejoicing in their joy gets tested over and over again.

How about us

Our rejoicing in our joy can only stay positive and strong through our relationship with Jesus Christ. Our connectedness through church attendance, prayer & bible study. Faith talks (group meetings) and encouraging one another.

Especially during this advent season we are encouraged in **1Thess 5:16-24.....** (16) "rejoice always, (17) pray without ceasing, (18) give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (19) Do not quench the Spirit. (20) Do not despise the words of prophets, (21) but test everything; hold fast to what is good; (22) abstain from every form of evil. (23) May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (24) The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

If you are having a difficult time right now, rejoice in your joy. Because God is blessing you with great opportunity to draw even closer to him through a relationship with Him.

Why? Because Paul is reminding us that as Christians we need to see the benefit of “choosing” to rejoice always. To “choosing” to pray without ceasing. And “choosing” to give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Rejoicing in our joy is really our willingness to sacrifice.

I remember a good Christian friend of mine who died a few years ago. Set an incredible example of rejoicing in his joy. Paul Griego had Parkinson disease. He never complained and never allowed the disease to steal his joy. (explain)

Tim Tebow is another example of a Christian who is rejoicing in his joy. How? He has chosen to live his life for Jesus Christ. No matter what it will cost. (explain)

Closing

As Christians we all have decisions that need to be made. When we make them, do we make them with “how would Jesus handle it” or do we make those decisions impulsively?

I think God is watching and waiting to see where we put our confidence. I think you do too. So let us together “rejoice in our joy” before the Lord!!! Amen