

Watching the television news recently, I found myself almost overwhelmed with the violence and world tragedies that fill the nightly news feed. There doesn't seem to be any good news to celebrate. It seems, at least on the surface, that there is not a lot to rejoice over.

However, when we come to the Bible, and the Psalms in particular, we are encouraged to rejoice in the Lord. We are asked to do this often despite our circumstances; while in the world we predominantly rejoice in times of happiness and joy, or when we acquire a new possession like a house or a car.

PSALM 33 opens with a cry to rejoice in the Lord. This speaks of rejoicing in the sovereign control of the Lord. This is particularly important to understand because when a crisis comes our way, we feel things are out of control. When we rejoice in the Lord, we are rejoicing in the fact that despite the circumstances from a human perspective, we worship a God who controls all things.

We are to rejoice in the Lord with musical instruments, with our voices, and with new songs. However there is one prerequisite to such rejoicing. Only the righteous can rejoice in the Lord or indeed want to. Only those who are in a right relationship with God can rejoice in the Lord or indeed have a desire to rejoice.

In **verses 4-5** we are encouraged to rejoice in the WORD OF GOD. We can rejoice in the fact that the Word of God is true. This is vital because we have many today within the church who are bringing the truth of God's Word into question. I remember some 10-15 years ago listening to the American Episcopalian Bishop John Spong [now retired] being interviewed on ABC radio. He openly denied the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, the Cross of Christ, the atonement of Christ, the death of Christ and the resurrection of Christ. So the key foundation stones of our faith were dismissed as some sort of myth.

However, the righteous are encouraged to rejoice in the accuracy of God's Word. Thus we are to rejoice in the Word of God because it is not only true, it is absolutely trustworthy.

We can rejoice also in the justice and righteousness of God's Word, which proclaims the incredible goodness of God.

In **verses 6-9** we are to rejoice in GOD'S CREATION. Once again we are brought face to face with the word of God. By the word of God the heavens were made. This speaks of the power and authority of God. By God's word the stars were born and the oceans were created. We can rejoice in a God who is all powerful and all knowing.

Continued over

**SING
JOYFULLY
TO THE
LORD.**
PSALM 33:1

PRAISE the Lord for:

- ★ **A number of recent gifts towards our project fund for Impact Africa mission trip**
- ★ **The very positive and encouraging response to the last edition of Challenge**
- ★ **A number of people making the decision to come onto our Challenge Board**
- ★ **Recent evangelism training weekends with a few churches who are keen to evangelise their local area**

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PLEASE TURN OVER

Contact us by phone (08) 9453 3311 or fax (08) 9453 3006

Email: info@challengenews.org

PRAYER needed for:

- ★ **Impact Africa team in South Africa. Dates away July 2-22. Pray for the Lord's protection over the team, as we fully understand some areas of ministry can be risky**
- ★ **The various ministries areas for Impact Africa team - Prison, Children, Street, Hospital and Paper distribution throughout Johannesburg**
- ★ **Open doors and opportunities to share the gospel with people for the Impact Africa team**
- ★ **The various ministry organisations we work with in South Africa - Multi Ministries, World Hope Prison Fellowship, Mayfair Baptist Church, Cheerful Care Givers, Gospel Outreach Centre**
- ★ **A financial officer in our Perth office. We seek a suitably qualified person for day-to-day bookkeeping. Two days per week is a minimum requirement. Please contact the office if you are interested**

Thus when we meditate on this we are brought to a place of fearing God, of standing in awe of just who God is, and that He should be so gracious in His dealings with us.

In **verses 10-15** we are to rejoice in the sovereign CONTROL OF GOD. God reigns over the nations. No matter how powerful and well equipped for warfare the nations are, they are still under the rule and authority of God. Also we see that the Lord's plan, counsel and directives reign supreme and do not change. We can rejoice in this. The nations that make God Lord of all things will be blessed.

Lastly in **verses 16-22** we rejoice in the Lord's DELIVERANCE AND PROVISION. Often when in dire straits we are tempted to rely on our own resources. This is why the psalmist says, "No king is saved by the multitude of an army. A mighty man is not delivered by great strength."

We need to understand that when we are in difficult circumstances, God is often trying to teach us to depend on Him. We read in verses 18-19, "Behold the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His mercy. To deliver their soul from death and to keep them alive in famine."

We can rejoice in the Lord's care, protection and provision, and as we do, we grow in our understanding of the power, authority and majesty of the amazing God we love and serve.

CARL CARMODY, EDITOR OF CHALLENGE

MY RESPONSE

Post to: Challenge Literature Fellowship, PO Box 978, Cloverdale WA 6985 or Fax to **(08) 9453 3006**

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**THE EYES OF
THE LORD ARE
ON THOSE WHO
FEAR HIM.**
PSALM 33:18