

I was recently on a plane and recognised that when I was talking to someone I was complaining more than I was rejoicing. It seems that once you begin to focus on what you don't like then very quickly you can add to the list of things that you are not very happy about. Before I knew it I was complaining about the seats, complaining about the number of people on the plane and so on. Isn't it strange how sometimes a little voice will whisper in your ear and say how about looking for those things that you can rejoice in the Lord over?

Almost immediately I began to think that flying certainly is much better than walking or swimming for that matter. I realised then that rejoicing in the Lord is something that we have to be intentional about and take the opportunity to look around and see what it is that we can rejoice in.

**Psalm 33** is a Psalm that helps us get our focus on rejoicing primarily in the Lord and the various aspects of what it means to know the Lord. As much as I find myself seeing the evil of the world and really speaking out about the things that I dislike I find it is always better when I take time to look for things to rejoice in the Lord over. This doesn't mean that we become dreamy or strange in our perceptions of what is going on around us but it does mean that rather than let those things get us down we choose to rejoice in the Lord nonetheless.

There are five things that the Psalmist encourages us to rejoice over, and I trust that in this brief space I can encourage us all to learn afresh what it means to rejoice in the Lord.

#### **PRAISE the Lord for:**

- The many ministries and individuals that continue to use the paper for evangelism
- Our Challenge directors around the world. They are our vital link in terms of promoting and distributing the Challenge newspapers in their countries and beyond
- The completion of discipleship material into various languages which are used predominately in prison ministry throughout Africa with our mission partners

The first point that the Psalmist brings to us in the opening three verses is to rejoice in the Lord and more appropriately how we should rejoice in the Lord.

#### • **First of all we see that we are encouraged to praise the Lord with our voices.**

This may mean that we come together in church and sing songs of praise or indeed it could mean just sharing with a friend chatting about things of the Lord and what it means to know Him. It could also mean that we praise the Lord with our musical instruments so in other words we are able to use our musical instruments to express our heartfelt thanks to the Lord. We can also praise Him with new songs and I know there are many in the church today that are gifted at writing new songs of praise and thanks to the Lord. There are songs that move my heart deeply to praise and thank the Lord for who He is and for what He has done. I think it is

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important to make a distinction here which is that only the righteous can truly praise or worship the Lord. Now this can apply on both side of the scales, if you will, where by the righteous who are not walking with the Lord cannot truly worship the Lord in Spirit and in Truth.

We can also make a point here that those who have never come into a personal relationship with the Lord can never truly worship the Lord either.

• **Secondly, we can rejoice in the Word of God in v.4-5.**

Now why is it that we can rejoice in the Word of God? Well there are a number of reasons that the Psalmist tells us; first of all that the Word of God is true. There is nothing worse than reading some of the modern magazines that seem to enjoy such incredible circulation. It is quite fascinating to read the different headlines of the various magazines that are in opposition to one another writing on the same person or topic. What is often more amazing is how two magazines can come with totally different stories on the same person or the same subject. What this highlights for us is that what is written in these magazines is simply not true or right. So we can rejoice in the Word of God because it is true. God has inspired His Word and every jot and tittle of it is true. So therefore by implication we can also rejoice in the Word of God because it is trustworthy. For example as we memorise the Word of God and hide it in our hearts we know that His promises are true and amen. I have lost track of the times where I have read stories and illustrations of Bible heroes who have placed their trust in the promises of God's Word and have found a sure ground on which to stand.

**PRAYER needed for:**

- Our Malawi project as all roads leading to Blantyre have been destroyed due to cyclone. Our papers are produced in South Africa and then trucked up to Malawi
- Upcoming Impact trip to South Africa (July) - (a) pray all ministry areas are finalised soon (b) pray for team unity (c) pray for our first timers (x13) that they will be bold and courageous as they step out of their comfort zone
- Project funding for various areas of ministry with Impact Africa while in South Africa. Our goal is \$45,000

Then we can also see as the Psalmist indicates to us that we can rejoice in the Word of God because it is just and righteous. We need to recognise that God does judge our sin, that God does deal with our rebellion, but He does it in justice and righteousness. So we can have confidence that as we rejoice in the Word of God we can do it because His Word is just and righteous. Then last we can see that the Word of God proclaims the goodness of God and as we read of this we can rejoice in God and who He is. As we look around the Psalmist tells us that the whole earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.

Stay tuned for next month as we look at verses 6-22 where we rejoice in His creation, His sovereign control and His provision.

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