

## Rejoice Always

It does not take long to find out that this physical life is not fair, at least from our perspective. Bad things happen to good people (i.e. **Judges 6:13**). Good things happen to bad people (**Psalms 73:1-5**). It rains on the just and the unjust (**Matthew 5:45**). Pain and disease are no respecter of persons or age. Length of illness has nothing to do with age. Sometimes the phrase of a song comes to mind, "Gloom, doom, and agony on me."

Have you heard the saying, "If I knew I was going to live this long, I would have taken better care of myself"? Job said that man is born of woman and is of a few days and full of trouble (**Job 14:1**). There is a time for everything, a time to be born and a time to die (**Ecclesiastes 3:1-2**). It is appointed unto man once to die and then comes the judgment (**Hebrews 9:27**).

One can be foolish and shorten the life (**Ecclesiastes 7:17**). One can have a reasonable length of time on the earth (**Psalms 90:10**). One may even be able to extend life (**2 Kings 20:6; Isaiah 38:5**). It is not the length of days that make the difference, it is the quality of the life lived (i.e. **Numbers 23:10**).

However, there is good news. We can learn to rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice (**Philippians 4:4**). In our "darkest hours" He is with us (**Psalms 23:4**). In our "hardest struggles" He is with us (**2 Corinthians 12:10**). In every hardship, regardless of how long, He is with us (**Hebrews 13:5-6**).

We live in a world specifically designed by God for humans (**Genesis 1:1; Psalms 19:1; Romans 1:20; Psalms 104**). We have been created by God in His own image (**Genesis 1:26-27**). It is God who has designed us (**Psalms 139**). He molds and shapes us according to His will (**Jeremiah 18:1-6**).

God is our refuge and our ever present help (**Psalms 46:1**). The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him (**Psalms 103:17**). He hears our prayers (**James 4:16-18**). He places us in the body just as He pleased (**1 Corinthians 12:18**).

We have been given Jesus who paid the price for our sins (**1 John 2:2**). He is our merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God (**Hebrews 2:17-18**). Therefore, we are able to boldly come to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace to help us in the time of need (**Hebrews 4:16**). We are to take up our cross daily and follow Jesus (**Matthew 16:24; Luke 9:23**).

We have the Holy Spirit as Comforter and aids us in our prayers (**Romans 8:26-27**). As we walk in the Spirit we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh (**Galatians 5:16**). As we sow to the Spirit we shall reap everlasting life (**Galatians 6:8**). We have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise (**Ephesians 1:13-14**).

We have God's Word to guide us through this life (**2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12**). This is what we are to live by, "It is written" (**Matthew 4:4**). This is where we draw patience, comfort, and hope (**Romans 15:4**). This is where we find out that all these things are so (**Acts 17:11**).

We have the spiritual body of Christ to help and encourage us (**Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27**). It is here that we teach and admonish one another (**Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16**). It is here that we stir up one another to love and good works (**Hebrews 10:23-25**). We

have the hope of an eternal inheritance reserved in Heaven (**1 Peter 1:4-5**).

He has abundantly supplied our every need (**Philippians 4:17-19**). He is able to exceedingly abundantly above what we think (**Ephesians 3:20**). He gives purpose and direction to life (**Acts 17:24-28**). And, of course, He has prepared a place for us in Heaven (**John 14:1-4**). May we be faithful to the end and receive that crown of life (**Revelation 2:10**).

Something to think about!

David B. McElwain