

SERMON LISTENING WORKSHEET

Date: June 15, 2025

Passage: Philippians 4:4

Title: A Glad Dad

A Sermon Summary

- I. Introduction: One important key for being a good dad is joy and rejoicing. This idea comes from Philippians 4:4, and applies to everyone, but we're applying it to dads today.
- II. The Challenge: Being a dad involves many hardships and sacrifices. It feels like a choice between being unselfish (making sacrifices) and being miserable. High expectations on fathers make joy seem impossible. Dads might feel they need to trade joy for responsibility. "How are you going to be joyful when so much of fatherhood requires dying to self?"
- III. The Command: Rejoice Always! Paul's command in Philippians 4:4: "Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say, rejoice.". This is a command, not optional or a bonus. You cannot sacrifice joy to do what's right, because rejoicing is one of your duties. Paul himself rejoiced even in chains and suffering, demonstrating it's possible. We are called to make rejoicing a priority.
- IV. Understanding Joy and Rejoicing. What does it mean to rejoice? It's not just feeling happy or a pleasurable emotion. You can't be commanded to feel an emotion "always". The Bible shows joy can coexist with sorrow (2 Corinthians 6:10; Jesus weeping). There are different kinds of joy and rejoicing: Natural joy/rejoicing: An emotional overflow or response to something physically good, happening *to* you (like a sailboat responding to weather). Spiritual joy/rejoicing: Comes from a mind and will that has been transformed by God. It is a decision of your will; like a boat with someone at the wheel, going in a chosen direction regardless of conditions. Spiritual joy involves your understanding (seeing something as beautiful/good), your will (wanting it), and your affections (valuing it), and *sometimes* your feelings follow. Rejoicing is remembering what you've seen is good, wanting that good, and deliberately turning your soul towards it as your supreme good. It's about lining your soul up with what you value, not just a momentary feeling.
- V. Where to Find Joy: "Rejoice in the Lord" * The Greek root of "joy" and "rejoice" is "grace" (undeserved kindness). Biblical joy is built on grace. God's grace produces joy in us. "Rejoice in the Lord" means rejoicing *because of* or *in union with* the Lord. God is the fountain of joy; when you become a Christian, you are united to Jesus and placed in this river of joy. The command to rejoice is to "enjoy your joy" – to actively draw from the joy you already possess in Christ. It's like counseling a married couple: "You are married, now think and live like it".
- VI. What Rejoicing Looks Like: Paul's Example Paul's life showed joy through his orientation around Christ being glorified and magnified, regardless of his personal

circumstances. He prayed with joy for others' spiritual good, even from prison. He rejoiced that Christ was proclaimed, even if others had bad motives. His ultimate good was Jesus' glory, not his own comfort or reputation. You know if someone is rejoicing not by their feelings, but by what they pray about, how they respond to disrespect, what they want, and the direction their life is heading. The most significant issue is what you value as your ultimate good – is it Christ being glorified?.

- VII. **Why Rejoicing Matters: Maintaining Reality** Rejoicing enables us to keep living in a way that lines up with what we know is real. If you don't rejoice, you'll grumble, and grumbling distorts your sense of reality, making difficulties seem overly important. We easily forget what is true and give too much credit to temporary feelings. Rejoicing is about taking charge of your emotions (like a cowboy leading wild horses). You must stir yourself up and align your mind, will, and actions with the truth that Jesus is most important.
- VIII. **How to Rejoice Always, Especially as a Dad.** It is possible no matter how difficult fatherhood is, not because of personality, but because if you are a Christian, you already have joy. You are in Christ, a joyful place. To rejoice always, we need to: Remember what God has revealed about what is most beautiful and valuable (Jesus). Ask God to help us truly believe that and think on why it's true. Stir up worship by meditating on Jesus. Don't listen to lies, especially from yourself or others. Remind each other in the church of what is real, especially the grace we've been shown. Develop friendships with people who put their joy in the right place. One of the greatest gifts dads can give their children is an example of what real joy looks like.

Key Application Point

Rejoicing in the Lord is an essential and vital duty for dads (and all Christians), not an optional feeling to be sacrificed for responsibility.

To elaborate on this core application:

- **Joy is a Command, Not an Option:** The message underscores that Paul's instruction to "Rejoice in the Lord always" is a direct "command" and not merely a suggestion or a bonus if circumstances allow. It is "essential" and "one of your duties", meaning you cannot sacrifice joy to do what is right, as rejoicing itself is part of doing what is right.
- **Rejoicing is a Deliberate Act:** Biblical joy and rejoicing are not primarily about fleeting pleasurable emotions or feelings. Instead, spiritual rejoicing is described as a "decision of your will" and "an act of a mind and will that has been transformed by God". It begins with "seeing something beautiful (understanding), wanting it (will), valuing it (affections), and then sometimes—but not always—feeling it". This

involves "deliberately turn[ing] your soul towards" Christ as your "supreme good" and "lining your soul up with what you value" .

- Joy is Already Present in Christ: For Christians, this constant rejoicing is "possible...because if you are a Christian, you already have joy" . You are "IN CHRIST," which is described as a "very joyful place to be" . The command to rejoice is an invitation to "enjoy your joy" – to actively draw from the joy you already possess through union with Christ .
- It Requires Remembering and Stirring Up: Obedience to this command looks like "REMEMBERING THE GRACE THAT GOD HAS SHOWN YOU, AND SEEKING TO STIR YOURSELF UP TO VALUE IT AND DELIGHT IN IT" . This involves remembering God's revealed truth about what is most beautiful and valuable (Jesus), believing it, thinking on why it's true, meditating on Jesus, and not listening to lies .
- It Maintains Alignment with Reality: Making rejoicing a priority "enables us to keep living in a way that lines with what we know is real" . Failing to rejoice can lead to grumbling, which distorts one's sense of reality and causes one to forget what is true . It is about "taking charge" of your emotions and "stirring yourself up" to align your mind, will, and actions with the truth that Jesus is most important.
- It is a gift you can give your children: One of the "greatest gifts" dads can give their children is "an example of what real joy looks like" .

Personal Reflection Questions

- The sermon distinguishes between natural joy, which is an emotional response, and spiritual joy, which is a decision of the will. If true rejoicing is about "deliberately turning your soul towards" what you know and value as "your supreme good," even when you don't "feel it", what concrete steps could you take to practice this type of spiritual rejoicing when the demands of fatherhood (or life) make you "feel terrible"?
- The message argues that rejoicing is "one of your duties" and "essential", not a bonus or something to be sacrificed for responsibility. If not rejoicing can lead to "grumbling" and a "distorted sense of reality" where you "forget what is true", how might your daily approach to responsibilities, such as changing a diaper or attending a parent-teacher meeting , change if you truly embraced rejoicing as an integral part of your duty?
- The sermon posits that Christians already "have joy" because they are "in Christ", meaning they are united to him and are "in this river of joy" that flows from God. If the command to rejoice is an invitation to "enjoy your joy", what specific aspects of your union with Christ or the gospel might you need to actively "remember" and "meditate on" in order to stir up this joy and keep your "soul lined up with what you value" amidst life's challenges?

IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION

The pastors have a standing open office hour during lunch-time on Thursdays from 12-1. You can join via the Google Meet code in the bulletin.

