TEXT: Romans 14:17

**17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy [*chara*
] in the Holy Ghost**
(Romans 14:17, KJV).

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy [*chara*], peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law
(Galatians 5:22-23, NASB).

INTRO:

We live in a wicked time. Satan is unleashing his fury against Christians and Jews. However, we do not need to be fearful. We do not have to be moved by outside circumstances. We are moved by the Word of God and by the Holy Spirit. We can have peace in the storms of life. We can have joy in all circumstances and we can rejoice in all circumstances.

All of us have suffered the loss of loved ones, experienced illness, had relationship problems, had financial problems and have suffered persecution as Christians. However, in spite of all this, God has given us a peace and joy that cannot be taken away by these evil circumstances. We still have an underlying joy. Laughter is good, but it is transitory. Illegal drugs or alcohol can stop pain for a short time, but when the effects wear off, the problems are still there--even worse, because drugs are addictive. All human attempts at solving the basic human problem of sin and the resulting suffering, are doomed to failure. Only God can help us through Jesus Christ! When we accept Christ as our Savior, our sins are forgiven and the Holy Spirit takes up his residence in our hearts. He brings with him a new nature--the nature of God. He imparts to us his love and joy!

Christian joy is not a human joy--it is the gift of God, brought by the Holy Spirit.

Joy [*chara'*] is a noun. Rejoice [*cha'iro*] is a verb.

1. Rejoice because your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life:

19 "Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you. 20 "Nevertheless do not rejoice in

this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven." 10:21 At that very time He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, and said, "I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from {the} wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight (Luke 10:19-21, NASB).
A. "Rejoice" is *chairo*, "to rejoice, be glad, to rejoice exceedingly, to be well, thrive". Here is a description of the verb *chairo*: The tense is present, denoting ongoing action; The voice is active, showing that we are the ones to act; The mood is imperative, denoting a command. (SEEDMASTER). Hence,
Jesus commands us to rejoice as a lifestyle because our names are written in heaven.

B. "[Jesus] rejoiced" is *agalliao*, from *agan*, "much" + *hallomai*, "to leap, to spring up, gush up: of water," hence, "to exult, rejoice exceedingly, be exceedingly glad" (SEEDMASTER). This compound Greek word is used as a spring of water that is gushing up. Water is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Hence, the Holy Spirit within Jesus produced joy in Jesus' heart. Jesus expressed his great joy by praising God. Let us also express the joy in our hearts because our names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life!

2. Rejoice when a lost person is saved:

2 And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. 3 And he spake this parable unto them, saying, 4 What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? 5 And when he hath found [it], he layeth [it] on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together [his] friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. 7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. 8 Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find [it]? 9 And when she hath found [it], she calleth [her] friends and [her] neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. 10 Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth
(Luke 15:2-10, KJV).

If the angels of heaven rejoice when a lost person is saved, shouldn't we? If you have ever led a lost person to Christ, you know the joy it brings!
A. God said for us to be holy:
14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts {which were yours} in your ignorance, 15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all {your} behavior; 16 because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY" (1 Peter 1:14-16, NASB). [Peter is quoting from Leviticus 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7.]

27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither [whatsoever]

worketh abomination, or [maketh] a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life (Revelation 21:27, KJV). Take time to read Revelation 21--the whole chapter. The Apostle John says that God shall wipe away out tears:
21:3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, 4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be {any} death; there will no longer be {any} mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away" (Revelation 21: 3-4, NASB).

Jesus associated with sinners because he loved them. He loved sinners but he did not participate in their sin. We have all sinned and Jesus died that we might be forgiven and saved. We must never despise or look down on anyone, but love everyone as Jesus did.

B. God also said for us to love one another:
11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another (1 John 4:11, NASB). God loves sinners and we should also:
8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8, NASB). God has given us the ability to love the unlovely **"...because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us**
(Romans 5:5, NASB).

Let us join heaven in rejoicing when a lost person accepts Christ as Savior!

3. Rejoice when you are persecuted:

10 Blessed [are] they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are ye, when [men] shall revile you, and persecute [you], and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great [is] your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you (Matthew 5:11-12, KJV).
A. Jesus tells us that we are blessed when we are persecuted. The Amplified Bible defines "blessed":
11 Blessed--happy, to be envied, and spiritually prosperous [that is, with life-joy and satisfaction in God's favor and salvation, regardless of your outward conditions]--are you when people revile you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil things against you falsely on My account
(Matthew 5:11, AMP).
A candle shines brightest in darkness!

Paul and Silas were placed in jail for preaching the Gospel and for casting out a demon. Here is the biblical account:
22 The crowd rose up together against them, and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them and proceeded to order {them} to be beaten with rods. 23 When they had struck them with many blows, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them

securely; 24 and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. 25 But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; 26 and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened. 27 When the jailer awoke and saw the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. 28 But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!" 29 And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas, 30 and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." 32 And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. 33 And he took them that {very} hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his {household.} 34 And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household (Acts 16:22-34, NASB). Paul and Silas were beaten, jailed and placed in stocks. They were hurting and in a bad environment. However, they did not complain but rather were filled with joy. They rejoiced--sang hymns and prayed! As a result the Philippian jailer and his family were saved!

B. Jesus tells us to rejoice when we are persecuted. The word "Rejoice" is *chairo*, "to rejoice, be glad, to rejoice exceedingly, to be well, thrive" (SEEDMASTER). (Tense is present; Voice is active; Mood is imperative.)
Jesus commands us to continue to rejoice when we are persecuted!

4. Rejoice when you are tempted and tried:

2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have {its} perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. 5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him (James 1:2-5, NASB).
A. Abraham was tested. This was probably the most severe test of his life. God had promised him and Sarah a son. They waited twenty-five years for Isaac to be born. Then, God told Abraham,
2 ..."Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you." 3 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. 4 On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance. 5 Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go over there; and we will worship and return to you." 6 Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on

together. 7 Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." And he said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" 8 Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together. 9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10 Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 12 He said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." 13 Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind {him} a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. 14 Abraham called the name of that place The LORD Will Provide, as it is said to this day, "In the mount of the LORD it will be provided." 15 Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, 16 and said, "By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice" (Genesis 22:2-18, NASB). For three days, Abraham travelled with his son to Moriah. Abraham knew that the practice of infant sacrifice by pagan cultures was evil. Yet, he recognized God's voice and knew that God had commanded him to sacrifice his son of promise.

Could it be that Isaac had begun to compete with God for first place in Abraham's heart? You see, God *never* wanted Abraham to kill his son and offer him as a burnt offering. God gave Isaac to Abraham and wanted Abraham to give Isaac back to himself. God wanted Abraham's complete allegiance--his whole heart.

Isaac also had a part to play. He submitted to his father in ultimate trust.

Abraham trusted God. He believed that God would keep his promise even if he had to raise Isaac from the dead:
17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten {son;} 18 {it was he} to whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED." 19 He considered that God is able to raise {people} even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type (Hebrews 11:17-19, NASB).
As a consequence of Abraham's obedience and faith,

1. He became the father of the Jews. The Lord used Israel to record the accurate description of the One True God in the Old Testament.
2. He became the spiritual father of all Christians--Romans 4:11-16.
3. He became the progenitor of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior--Matthew 1:1

God knew that that Abraham would make the right choice before he began Abraham's test. Likewise, he knows that we will be purified, become a better person and God can use us in a greater way after testing.

For a more complete teaching on Abraham's sacrifice of his son, read Chapter One of my free ebook, *The Ten Commandments*. Download this book free at http://BusterSoft.com/JRCM .

B. Job was also tested. Satan slandered Job to God and God allowed Satan to test Job within certain limits. Satan then killed Job's children, servants and livestock. Next, he made Job very ill. Even Job's wife said **9 ..."Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!"** (Job 2:9, NASB). Job refused to charge God foolishly. Job probably expected to die. However, he had a resurrection faith and made this confession of faith:
15 Though he [God] slay me, yet will I trust in him... (Job 13:15, KJV).

25 "As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth. 26 "Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God; 27 Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me! (Job 19:25-27, NASB). After his test, God blessed Job:
10 The LORD restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the LORD increased all that Job had twofold. 11 Then all his brothers and all his sisters and all who had known him before came to him, and they ate bread with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him for all the adversities that the LORD had brought on him. And each one gave him one piece of money, and each a ring of gold. 12 The LORD blessed the latter {days} of Job more than his beginning; and he had 14,000 sheep and 6,000 camels and 1,000 yoke of oxen and 1,000 female donkeys. 13 He had seven sons and three daughters. 14 He named the first Jemimah, and the second Keziah, and the third Keren-happuch. 15 In all the land no women were found so fair as Job's daughters; and their father gave them inheritance among their brothers. 16 After this, Job lived 140 years, and saw his sons and his grandsons, four generations. 17 And Job died, an old man and full of days (Job 42:11-17, NASB). *Rejoice continually when you are being tested!*

5. Rejoice because of the living hope that Jesus brought:

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to {obtain} an inheritance {which is} imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you greatly rejoice [*agalliao*], even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, 7 so that the proof of your faith, {being} more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 8 and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly

**rejoice [agalliao] with joy [*chara*, "joy, gladness"] inexpressible [*aneklaletos*
, "unspeakable"] glory, 9 obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls**
(1 Peter 1:3-9, NASB).

Jesus' resurrection was proof that the Father accepted his sacrifice for our sins. It is the solid basis for our future resurrection. This is not a mere human hope. We use the word "hope" to mean "wishful thinking." We may say, "I hope we have good weather for the picnic." Or we may say, "I hope that I get a million dollars." The Christian hope is a hope that is sure--it *will* come to pass. God will raise Christians from the dead with a perfect body--an immortal body that will never die; that will never suffer pain or sickness. Christians will also have a new mind. Paul says that,

8 Love never fails; but if {there are gifts of} prophecy, they will be done away; if {there are} tongues, they will cease; if {there is} knowledge, it will be done away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part; 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. 11 When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. 12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known (1 Corinthians 13:8-12, NASB).

Christians will be "glorified," i.e., our salvation will be completed. There will be no trace of the curse left. Our bodies will be perfect. Our minds will be perfected--we will have no bent toward sin and we will understand those mysteries that puzzle us today. We will know fully.

Let us rejoice because of the living hope of the resurrection! If you do not have this hope and do not know Christ as your Savior, would you accept him now?

CONCLUSION: Christians, don't let Satan steal your peace or your joy. Instead,

16 Rejoice evermore (1 Thessalonians 5:16, KJV). . **<><**

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In Essentials: Unity; In non-essentials: Liberty; In all things: Charity—Peter Meiderlin 1626.

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