

→ God's order to rejoice

**I Thess 5:16 Rejoice always,** <sup>17</sup> **pray continually,** <sup>18</sup> **give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.**

1. The Lord order the people of Israel to rejoice in the presence of Him.

1) At the feast of the Lord.

Deut 16:15 For seven days celebrate the festival to the Lord your God at the place the Lord will choose. For the Lord your God will bless you in all your harvest and in all the work of your hands, and your joy will be complete.

2) At the worship service.

Deut 27:7 Sacrifice fellowship offerings there, eating them and rejoicing in the presence of the Lord

God wanted to have joyful fellowship with the Israelites. It was God's desire that the Israelites would not suffer, but would serve the Lord and walk in His abundant blessings.

2. Jesus commanded us to "rejoice" in the midst of persecution

➤ Rejoice in the midst of persecution

Matt 5:11 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

➤ Jesus became an example

Heb 12:2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. **For the joy set before him he endured the cross,** scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3. The Apostles followed Jesus

1) In prison, Paul "continued to rejoice and encouraged the people to rejoice as well."

Phil 3:1 Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you.

2) Peter also taught him to rejoice in the midst of persecution

I Pet 4:13 But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

3) Jacob also taught him to rejoice in the midst of persecution

James 1:2

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds,

4) The disciples in the book of Acts rejoiced in the midst of persecution.

Acts 5:41 The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.

4 How can we rejoice in the midst of persecution?

- 1) Because we have the salvation of our souls 【I Pet 1 : 8 ~ 9】
- 2) Because if you endure the persecution of this world, the rewards of heaven are great. 【IPet 1:7, 4:13, Matt 5:11】
- 3) Because we can share in the suffering of Jesus' cross. [I Pet 4 : 13]
- 4) Because through suffering, faith grows. 【IPet 1 : 4】
- 5) Because we can be victors through Jesus. 【Rom 8 : 37】
- 6) Because in the midst of suffering, the Lord answers us when we pray. 【John 16 : 24】

5 It takes faith to “rejoice” in the midst of suffering

- 1) God's kingdom is filled with joy. 【Rom 14 : 7】

Rom 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and **joy in the Holy Spirit**,

- 2) Joy is given through faith. 【Rom 12 : 12】

Rom 12:12 **Be joyful in hope**, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

- 3) The fruit of the Spirit is Joy 【Gal 5 : 22 ^ 23】

Gal 5:22 But **the fruit of the Spirit** is love, **joy**, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Christians rejoice not only in times of joy, but also in times of pain. Not the fleeting joys of this world, **We can rejoice at any time because we have been given faith and the Holy Spirit, which lead to eternal life and heaven.**

Application