

Remember The Risen Christ And Rejoice.

Text: 2 Tim 2:8-13

Suggested Hymns:

103, 95, 161, 159

- 1) For Jesus Christ Is the "Good News"
Which We Gladly Tell
- 2) For Jesus Christ Supplies The Grace To Endure
Whatever Hardships The Gospel Involves
- 3) For Jesus Christ Guarantees Unending Happiness

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is 2 Timothy 2:8-13, ⁸ *Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel,* ⁹ *for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained.*

¹⁰ *Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.* ¹¹ *This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him.* ¹² *If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.* ¹³ *If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Could anything be more appropriate to this season than to sing praises to God? We have celebrated the glorious Easter Festival and its happy aftermath. Spiritually we are basking in the sweet and comfortable afterglow of that all-victorious event which sounded the death knell of death, shattered the empire of evil, and forever conquered our archenemy, Satan.

For four weeks now the church has been ringing the joy bells of that "victory with peace" which was established when our risen Lord certified beyond all doubt — that He is God's Son, that His Word is true, that His Father's wrath over sin is appeased, and that we shall live with Him forever.

No wonder this is such a joyous season. Let us therefore draw from this text in God's Word the appropriate theme, *Remember the Risen Christ and Rejoice*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. *Remember the Risen Christ and Rejoice*

For Jesus Christ Is the “Good News” Which We Gladly Tell

We have here the words of a great man of God who had learned how to be happy in the most unlikely and unpromising situations. It is the Apostle Paul, imprisoned at Rome, writing to his beloved young brother in the ministry, Timothy — and listen to his revelation of the secret of joy even under great suffering: “⁸ *Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel.*”

This is the best and only basis for solid happiness that you will find anywhere in the world: “**Remember Jesus Christ!**” Why, the simple utterance of that wondrous name above all names is enough to instil hope, peace, and joy into the troubled heart!

Jesus Christ is the very essence of the “*Good News*” that was long ago proclaimed on Bethlehem’s plains and which has been resounding everywhere across the earth ever since.

The wonderful word “*Gospel*,” all that it means, all that it offers, all that it supplies, means nothing more or less than the good news which Jesus Christ brought down from heaven to earth, namely, that “*God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*”¹

Jesus Christ is the glad tidings that God has kept His Word to man. He is the assurance that every ancient promise has been fulfilled, or that it will be fulfilled.

A Proven Fact

⁸ *Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel.* That is a mighty incentive to rejoice in the Lord, for it guarantees that all these things we read and study in our Bibles, that we hear in our churches and Christian schools, the wholesome doctrines set forth in the Catechism and hymnals and Bible-centred Christian literature, are not just words which people have thought up and written down, but that these things are as sure as God Himself, because His own Son appeared here in human flesh and blood to verify them!

Isn't it wonderful to have no less an authority than St. Paul himself tell us here that Jesus Christ is the "*Seed of David*," which is just another expression for "*God's own promised Messiah*," and that when He was physically raised from the dead, God set His divine seal on everything Jesus ever was or said or did!

Actually here we are assured that the whole truth about Jesus Christ, true God and true man, conceived, born, suffered, crucified, dead, buried, and gloriously risen again is factual. That is the ground of Paul's confidence, and that is the one great message which he preaches cheerfully to all people everywhere.

Paul's Gospel is the simple story of Jesus and His love for us poor mortal sinners, the divine Saviour whom every one of us so greatly needs. He identifies Jesus Christ as his own Gospel: "*For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.*"²

Now, just as soon as St. Paul found in this plain Gospel of Christ his own peace and joy, he made it his business to pass it on to everybody else. That was his happy vocation to the end of his days. That was Paul's very life — to preach Christ and to live Christ — and in doing that he was supremely happy.

As we look around at Christian people and observe how little real joy they seem to derive from their Christian faith and fellowship, we wonder why. Who has a better right to rejoice than we who have found the answer to every problem in Jesus Christ?

Now that our Saviour's work for us is completed, why don't we personally enjoy to the full what He has done for us? He assures us in John 16:22, *I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.* Surely there is room for a Christian sense of humour and wholesome laughter.

2. Remember the Risen Christ and Rejoice

For Jesus Christ Supplies The Grace To Endure Whatever Hardships The Gospel Involves

Obviously it was not easy for Paul to keep preaching, teaching, and reaching with a smile — indeed it was very hard, yes, even dangerous at times. But Paul was not primarily concerned about himself, and probably that is just why he was such a healthy-minded, happy man.

He wasn't self-centred. His world did not revolve around himself. He was concerned that all the rest of God's children should have that Saviour, too; so at the risk of his own comfort, future prospects, yes, even his own life, he ventured here, there, and everywhere to tell of the "Good News."

And so he experienced in his own life those wonderful words of Jesus written in Mark 8:35, ³⁵ *For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.*

Now he was sure that the Lord he proclaimed would be able to take care of His own. So Paul was altogether unafraid, and he tells us here about his personal experiences in preaching and teaching God's truth, ⁹ *for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; ...* ¹⁰ *Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.*

In other words, Paul says: "In my endeavour to tell about Jesus I have suffered great hardships — in fact, they treat me like a common criminal, and they have thrown me into this prison. I endure all this and anything else that may happen to me for the sake of God's children. I want them also to have this salvation which I have in Jesus Christ."

The Gospel Cannot Be Chained!

Just think of that man of God there in a Roman prison. He is willing to be in chains just so that others may have that saving Gospel which will rescue them from sin and damnation and death!

Paul trusts that his Lord will see him through this ordeal. He is sure that God's Gospel will win through in the end. He says: "They can chain me, but they can't chain the Gospel." As Chrysostom said: "They bind the hands, but not the tongue."

Paul is ready to suffer anything as long as the Gospel gets out to more and more people. And that is exactly what was happening — everywhere people were talking and telling others about Jesus Christ. Personal witnessing became second nature to every Christian.

The Christian "underground of the first century" transmitted the story of the Cross to every sector of the civilised world and penetrated every level of society.

And so Paul was getting his way, even though his enemies thought they had him stopped! What a lover of men, what a philanthropist, how unselfish that man Paul was! What a Christian empire builder!

How he puts us to shame! What petty, small, mean, little men and women we are in comparison! There are rivalries, disputes, personalities — what a scandal they are to church life! What little things we allow to stop us from doing and daring for God and souls!

How we shrink and shirk even the simple little duties of routine church life and worship and work! How small we are! How St. Paul inspires us to do good things, fine things, big things for God and for our fellow men! **“Remember Jesus Christ”** as Paul did, and we shall find that Jesus will supply the incentives, the endurance, and the enabling grace to be His ambassadors to our time.

Then we shall rejoice indeed, for Jesus Christ, who is God’s own Good News, shall be dwelling in us, and so our life will be full of meaning and purpose and fulfilment.

3. Remember the Risen Christ and Rejoice

For Jesus Christ Guarantees Unending Happiness

The third basis for rejoicing in the risen Christ is stated here in His guarantee of endless happiness, **“¹¹ This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. ¹² If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. ¹³ If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.”**

This amounts to a declaration of God’s absolute and final faithfulness to every promise and every word He ever spoke or recorded. It is an unconditional guarantee — just as the apostle confesses elsewhere, as we read in Romans 8:31–39, **³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?**

³³ Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

³⁵ *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?* ³⁶ *As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."* ³⁷ *Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.*

³⁸ *For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,* ³⁹ *nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

A certain naval officer, who was a sincere Christian, took his wife along with him on one of his voyages. A terrible storm arose, and the wife, sitting near him in a cabin, was terrified and suggested that the ship might sink. Her husband, however, was perfectly calm and composed, which greatly surprised his wife.

She asked: *"My dear, how is that in this storm you are not afraid? How can you be so calm in this awful storm?"* The officer then rose from his chair, drew his sword, and pointing it at the breast of his wife, asked her: *"Are you afraid?"* "No," she replied. *"Why not?"* "Because," she answered, *"I know that the sword is in the hands of my husband who loves me and will not hurt me."*

"Exactly so," said her husband; *"I know in whom I believe. He is my heavenly Father. He who holds the wind and the waters and the waves in His hand loves me and will protect me from harm."*

May the Gospel of the risen Christ possess you completely, so you will have genuine joy, spiritual resources to meet every crisis, and finally the bliss of an eternal home, where you will sing His praise with the elect in glory.

Let us conclude with the words of the hymnist,

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ John 3:16

² 1 Cor. 2:2