

## Seek the Lord and Rejoice

Faith the size of a mustard seed. A little yeast leavens the whole lump. The pearl of great price, a field of hidden treasure.

Rom 8:26-39

26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

31 What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?

32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all-- how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.

34 Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died-- more than that, who

was raised to life-- is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

36 As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,

39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(NIV)

Matt 13:31-33

31 He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field.

32 Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches."

33 He told them still another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough."

(NIV)

Matt 13:44-52

44 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls.

46 When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

47 "Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish.

48 When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away.

49 This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous

50 and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

51 "Have you understood all these things?" Jesus asked. "Yes," they replied.

52 He said to them, "Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old."

(NIV)

Ps 105:1-11

1 Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done.

2 Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts.

3 Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.

4 Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always.

5 Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced,

6 O descendants of Abraham his servant, O sons of Jacob, his chosen ones.

7 He is the LORD our God; his judgments are in all the earth.

8 He remembers his covenant forever, the word he commanded, for a thousand generations,

9 the covenant he made with Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac.

10 He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree, to Israel as an everlasting covenant:

11 "To you I will give the land of Canaan as the portion you will inherit."

(NIV)

Gen 29:15-28

15 Laban said to him, "Just because you are a relative of mine, should you work for me for nothing? Tell me what your wages should be."

16 Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel.

17 Leah had weak eyes, but Rachel was lovely in form, and beautiful.

18 Jacob was in love with Rachel and said, "I'll work for you seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel."

19 Laban said, "It's better that I give her to you than to some other man. Stay here with me."

20 So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her.

21 Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife. My time is completed, and I want to lie with her."

22 So Laban brought together all the people of the place and gave a feast.

23 But when evening came, he took his daughter Leah and gave her to Jacob, and Jacob lay with her.

24 And Laban gave his servant girl Zilpah to his daughter as her maidservant.

25 When morning came, there was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? I served you for Rachel, didn't I? Why have you deceived me?"

26 Laban replied, "It is not our custom here to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one.

27 Finish this daughter's bridal week; then we will give you the younger one also, in return for another seven years of work."

28 And Jacob did so. He finished the week with Leah, and then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife.

(NIV)

### SEEK THE LORD AND REJOICE

When the building is on fire and all the exits are blocked, it must be hard to find a reason to rejoice as you seek the Lord. And yet we heard numerous stories of people who were trapped in the World Trade Center Towers on September 11<sup>th</sup> who had a strong enough faith in their God that they were not afraid to face what

was going to happen. Their only thoughts were of their families, reaching out to them by cell phone to say good-bye, or to say a word of condolence and comfort. The brave men and women on flight 93 were willing to sacrifice themselves to save countless others, as we now know that plane was meant for Capitol Hill and the Capitol Building itself in Washington D. C. While God allowed those acts of violence and terrorism to happen, I state firmly that He will not allow those lives to have been lost in vain. We don't yet see what God has in store for us. And in the heat of battle, or amid an argument with you spouse, or while you are sitting in a hospital emergency waiting room because your child has been in an auto accident, or your physician comes to you and says that the cancer you have is terminal, seeking

may not be the first thought on your mind, and rejoicing is certainly not going to be near the top of the list of emotions either.

In the Old Testament, we can read the story of Jacob and how he came to be married to Rachael and Leah. He didn't want to be married to two women, but his future father-in-law had other plans. Jacob agreed to work for Laban, Rachael, and Leah's father for 7 years. At the end of that time, the agreement was that Jacob would be given Rachael in marriage. The scripture says the time went by quickly because Jacob was so in love with Rachael. Genesis 29: 15 – 28. When the time for the wedding, came, Laban gave Jacob Leah, instead of Rachael. When Jacob realized the deception, did he say, "Well Laban that was a pretty sneaky trick to pull on me but that's okay because

God has a plan for me and all of this will out just fine”? No, he was angry and felt cheated and he ended up working another 7 years for Laban. God did have a plan and He was working it out for the good of the whole world, but at the time, Jacob didn't know it.

It's the same for us today. We can be enduring some devastating trial, a financial setback, a health problem, a family problem, or something at work, we may have lost money in the stock market because of the unscrupulous acts of some big corporation's CEO, or be having to sit by and watch while a loved one passes away. Whatever it is may seem insurmountable and unfair at the time that it is happening to us, but God is on our side! God has done and will do great things. We can't even begin to imagine

how good the future is going to be. That's what David the Psalmist is trying to tell us in Psalms 105: 1- 11. The God that we worship is truly the most awesome being that could ever be, and he has chosen us to be His people, he has made promises to us, and He will take care of us.

Jesus was trying to help His disciples understand how important it is to have faith in Him and God's coming kingdom by illustrating the point with a series of short parables. As I explained to the children today, the kingdom of God is a treasure that we can place in our hearts and keep it there where it can guide our thoughts and influence the way we live. Just as an irritant in an oyster produces a pearl of great price, so the

trials and troubles we face in our lives will produce great goodness in time.

And there's even better news, when we are in the middle of one of these trials, and we perhaps lose faith a little and begin to question God, or are in so much pain that we can't even say a word, the Holy Spirit kicks in and talks to God for us. And, it doesn't matter what happens to our physical bodies after we have accepted Christ as our savior because once that happens it's all over! We win! It's the field goal in the last second, the game winning homerun in the bottom of the 9<sup>th</sup> inning. That's what Paul is trying to tell us in his epistle to the Romans the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter starting in verse 26. Let's read it again, there is nothing in heaven or on earth that can separate us from the love of Jesus Christ. That's a powerful and

comforting statement to take to heart. Like a hidden treasure, or the pearl of great price, hang on to it and like the mustard seed or the yeast in dough, let it grow until it fills your mind and body with faith that will help you rejoice when you seek God and find Him.