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| **The Injunction to Rejoice!**  *Promise: the hope in Christ’s victory is well founded and sure* Pastor Timothy A. Duesenberg Zephaniah 3:14-20; Ps 85; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 7:18-28 (Third Sunday in Advent), 12/15/24)  *Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.* – Ph 4:4  **Lead In –** I like to distinguish between the words joy, happiness, and pleasure. The three words can be related. And depending on how you define each word they may have a lot in common. But by distinguishing them, I think it is possible to have a deep-seated joy whether or not you are particularly happy at the moment. The same thing can be said in relationship to pleasure. Joy is not dependent upon having pleasure. Biblically, we are commanded to rejoice. We are not commanded or promised that we can always be happy in this age. And we are even warned against seeking pleasure all the time...   1. **The Beleaguered Nation Told to Rejoice**    1. Zephaniah’s vision of the distant future…    2. Era of salvation and restoration has begun…    3. The faithful are urged to rejoice… 2. **Doubts Surrounding the First Advent**    1. JB sent two disciples to Jesus…    2. Some signs and God’s word need to suffice for now…    3. Messengers are integral to our hope… 3. **The Imperative to Rejoice in the Lord**    1. Joy does not come from ease of life or temporal goods    2. The Good News of Jesus’s victory over sin, death…    3. The constant hearing of the victory announced…   **Final Word –** As it is written in the Book of Isaiah, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news.” There is a legend of old that arose out of the war between the Greeks and the Persians. As the legend goes, Pheidippides ran all the way from the Battle of Marathon to the city of Athens, roughly 26 miles, to proclaim the Greek victory over the Persians, in 490 B.C. And he did so by shouting, “Rejoice! We can rejoice! And then, as the legend has it, in total exhaustion he collapsed and died. Supposedly, this inspired the race known as the Marathon run. A much greater victory over our enemies of sin, death, and the devil is announced no matter how far or how fast preachers come to the pulpit. And with the victory, I implore you. Rejoice! Rejoice Always! And again I say rejoice!  **Lk 7:18-19** The disciples of John reported all these things to him. And John, calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?”  **Lk 7:22-23** And he answered them, “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.”  **2Pe 1:19** And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. | **Zephaniah 3:14-20 ESV**  *Israel’s Joy and Restoration*  14Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! 15The Lord has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil. 16On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: “Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak. 17The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing. 18I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival, so that you will no longer suffer reproach. 19Behold, at that time I will deal with all your oppressors. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. 20At that time I will bring you in, at the time when I gather you together; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes,” says the Lord.  **Ro 10:14-15** How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”  **Ro 10:17** So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.  **Ph 4:4** Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.  **1Th 5:16-17** Rejoice always, pray without ceasing.  **Mt 5:11-12** “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.  **Lk 10:20** “Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”  **Jn 16:22** “So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.”  **Ro 12:12** Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.  **Ro 8:38-39** For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. |