

BE OF GOOD CHEER, Acts 23:11
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INTRODUCTION: Happiness is mostly a choice not chance. It is living above the situation and circumstances of life – even when, at times, they are extremely difficult. Most people are as happy as they choose to be and even Christians may be only as happy as they let God help them become.

No one likes stress, struggles, suffering and strife. However, these come with living in this world system that is under the curse of sin and in opposition to God's right to govern. A believer does have help – God invites us to bring all our anxieties to Him for help, I Peter 5:7.

I. DEFINITION OF THE WORD CHEER

A. Cheer is only used eight times in the New Testament: Matthew 9:2; 14:27; John 16:33; Acts 23:11; 27:22, 25, 36.

B. The Greek word is, *euthumeo* meaning eu, well and *thumos*, mind or passion, as to be put in good spirits. While the word does include the concept of cheerfulness and happiness, it really anticipates that these emotions are based on an internal courage, confidence and comfort received from God. It is far more than fun, impromptu joy and baseless emotional thrills.

II. DEMONSTRATIONS OF THE WORD CHEER

A. As related to disease, Matthew 9:2. The sick man is not told to be of good cheer because Jesus healed him, but rather because the Lord forgave his sins. Both would be cause for rejoicing, but one is so much greater that the other becomes insignificant.

When the believer understands sickness and health, heaven is the ultimate healing.

B. As related to danger, Matthew 14:27. The disciples needed to learn that danger, while difficult to go through, is never without the presence of the Lord, who can walk on water, v25, 26, still the storm and rapidly move them out the realm of the danger itself, v31. Every believer needs to learn the same lessons the disciples needed. Neither they nor us can learn that the Lord is greater than the dangers we face without actually first facing the dangers. It is hard to help others who hurt without first hurting ourselves, II Corinthians 1:3-5.

C. As related to dissension, Acts 23:11. The Lord told the Apostle Paul at his conversion that he could expect nothing but hardships, beatings, arrests, imprisonments and rejection in every city he entered. Eventually he died an early death. The same was told to all the disciples. In forthright contradiction to present-day preaching, fame and fortune was not the future for the apostles, nor was an easy life to be the source of pleasure. Their joy was in Jesus and serving Him.

Paul was to testify in the highest courts in the Roman Empire. He was to be the test case for all other believers in the land so they would be granted the right to religious freedom and liberty of conscience.

D. As related to decrees, Acts 27:22, 25, 36. While Paul was being moved from Caesarea to Rome, the ship in which he was traveling was in a storm for several days and nights. Paul requested the passengers and crew to be of “good cheer” because in the providence of God no one will lose their lives, v22. He knew this through direct information from God, (divine decree) v 25. They were to stay in the ship (human responsibility) v 31. God’s decrees are providentially determined, yet they are often carried out in a divine/human cooperative.

III. THE DYNAMICS OF THE WORD CHEER, John 16:33

The cheerful Christian life is not native to the individual believer nor is it the results of circumstances that interact in their lives. Rather, it is the result of the personal presence and power of the Lord as He works through each situation to sustain and assist the believer. This power is described by our Lord in John 16:28.

- A. The power of eternity existence of the Lord.
- B. The power of the enfleshment of our Lord.
- C. The power of the death and resurrection of our Lord.
- D. The power of the ascension of our Lord.
- E. The power of victory of our Lord v33.

When the Lord said to “be of good cheer” it is not an empty platitude. It is believable and doable even under the darkest human conditions. The Lord is not on His way to help us. He is already and always beside us in the power to comfort us – *to come along beside with power like a fort.*

Christ said He was the over comer, *nikao*, “the mighty prevailing one.” In Him we can have courage, confidence, comfort and companionship while we wait on His coming. Be of good cheer! Live with eternal values in view. Know for sure that eternity will justify every injustice of this world!

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