



ARTICLE

REJOICE, PRAY AND GIVE THANKS
IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

PRAYER SPOTLIGHT

THANKSGIVING PRAYER

FBC Today

UNLEASHING THE GOSPEL



REJOICE, PRAY AND GIVE THANKS IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

At the end of each year, major news agencies would do a special review reflecting and commenting on major events that had occurred throughout the year. One of the major headlines for 2024 was President-elect Donald

Trump surviving an assassination attempt on his life. His political comeback had sent shockwaves around the world as many braced for another 4 years of political uncertainties.

NEXT WEEK'S SERMON

Preacher **Raymond Raj**

02 February 2025
(1 Service Only at 8.45am)

God's Greatest Plan, In Life's Worst Pain

Jeremiah 29:11

GIVING

Business ID: **BT76**

First Baptist Church

Announcement Subscription

SAVE **+6010-2206701**
AS FBCA IN YOUR CONTACT LIST TO GET OUR LATEST ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS BY **WHATSAPP**

FBC

RENOVATION & UPGRADE

HOW TO CONTRIBUTE

BT76 cheques / cash

Payment reference: **'BUILDING'**

Then there were natural disasters such as the unexpected flood in Spain that killed hundreds. Lastly, the ongoing wars in Ukraine and the Middle East have continued to receive world attention even as many grow weary and become desensitized to the daily images of war-torn tragedies!

Political upheaval, environmental disasters, war, and violence seem to have dominated the headlines. Against such a backdrop, it's hard to imagine that there's much for people to rejoice or to give thanks for. And yet, in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Paul tells us to do something that's completely against the grain of our culture today:

"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus"

What about you in the past 12 months? As you reflect and review your own world in the last year, can you say you have truly lived up to these commandments? Paul doesn't provide them as suggestions. There are no qualifiers or exceptions given. Instead, we are commanded to Rejoice **always**, pray **continually**, and give thanks in **all** circumstances, for it is **God's will** for us **in Christ Jesus**. Now if Paul were to say Rejoice a lot, pray often, and try to be thankful, we may be able to say, yes. 2024 has been a moderate success. But it seems to me that what Paul is asking us to do the impossible!

Indeed, it would be impossible for us to obey them if we were to rely on our own strength. True, lasting obedience is only possible if we are **abiding in Christ**, drawing from His strength and power!

Rejoicing, praying, and being thankful are the hallmarks of true spirituality. If you want to know the spiritual condition of a person, do not judge for example by looking at church attendance, ministry activities, or how much money a person gives to the church, as important as these outward activities may be.

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW YOUR TRUE SPIRITUAL CONDITION, ASK YOURSELF IF YOU ARE REJOICING ALWAYS, PRAYING UNCEASINGLY, AND BEING THANKFUL IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES.



These are natural outflows from a worshipping heart that reveals a close relationship with God. If we're not joyful, prayerful, or thankful, then we are struggling with the flesh. If we want to know how well we have done in the past year, these are the criteria that we should judge ourselves by. Let's look a little deeper:

REJOICE ALWAYS.

Rejoicing does not mean that we are always smiling or denying any suffering. Unlike Happiness which depends on our external circumstances, joy is something that we can have no matter if our present circumstances are good or bad. Why? Because Joy is rooted in the hope or expectation of a good eventual outcome. James 1:2 says: "*Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*" Believers can have joy when the outcome of suffering is strength and maturity in the Faith. When we're suffering, we can look beyond our circumstances, comforted by the knowledge that our Lord understands and identifies with our suffering. Jesus himself endured the cross, and it brought him joy and satisfaction knowing he was doing his Father's will, bringing salvation to many (Hebrews 12:2)

PRAY CONTINUALLY.

This means that we are **regularly** and **consistently** in touch with our Heavenly Father, confident that He is accessible all the time and desires to hear from us. A good illustration is that of a young couple who first fall in love. It's not hard to imagine that they would often want to talk to each other and share their thoughts with one another. Jesus used a parable in Luke 11:5-8 to illustrate the importance of persistent prayer. In this parable, a man knocks on his friend's door to ask for three loaves of bread at midnight, an inopportune time when the friend is already asleep. After persistent knocking, the friend eventually gives in and grants the man his request just to stop the intrusion and get some sleep. The point of the story is this: if a reluctant and unsympathetic man would answer the request of his neighbor for his own sake, how much more would our Heavenly Father who never sleeps and is not reluctant give to the legitimate requests of His children whom He loves?



GIVE THANKS IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES.

In Hebrews 1:3, we are told that *"The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word."* Our physical world is not only created but is continually sustained by our Lord Jesus. That is to say, the very fact that we are alive is cause for being thankful. If you think about it, we could never run out of things to thank God for (both big and small things). We should be giving thanks because of our salvation, because of God's outpouring of gifts and blessings for the necessities of our physical and spiritual life.

PAUL SAYS, "BE ANXIOUS FOR NOTHING, BUT IN EVERYTHING BY PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION, WITH THANKSGIVING, LET YOUR REQUESTS BE MADE KNOWN TO GOD."

Even in times of great anxiety, fear, and stress, we're to be characterised as thankful.

These commands feel impossible to obey... unless you are a Christian. So how do we grow in obedience to them? The answers are in the remaining few verses of our text. Firstly, we must not quench the Spirit. That is telling us not to suppress or ignore the influence of the Holy Spirit. In Eph 5:18, Paul writes: *"Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms,*

and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." If we are controlled by the Spirit, our lives will be characterized by a joyful and thankful heart.

Secondly, *"we do not treat prophecies with contempt but rather test them and hold on to what is good"* What are prophecies? Simply put, they are the inspired word of God. Believers are to discern the word of God with the help of the Holy Spirit. *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. (2 Timothy 3:16).* In other words, we can find within the pages of the Bible all the knowledge that's necessary to live out our faith. The church has always understood the Spirit to work and speak through the Scripture. Being fully God, the Spirit is the divine Author of all Scripture and is responsible for the work of illumination in the believer (1 Cor 2:6-16; 2 Tim 3:15-17; 2 Pet 1:20-21). In fact, the Bible makes it clear that to be filled with the Spirit is synonymous with being filled with the Word (compare Eph 5:18-20 and Col 3:16).

As we start life in 2025, let us aspire to better do the "impossible" commands of rejoicing always, praying continually, and giving thanks in all circumstances.



By Leong Yew Lum
FBC (E) Chairman



PRAYERSPOTLIGHT

Almighty God, Father of all mercies
I give You my humble thanks
for all Your goodness and loving-kindness
to me and all who You have made.

I bless You for all the blessings You have showered on me
but above all for Your immeasurable love
in the redemption of the world by the Lord Jesus Christ,
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.

And, I pray, give me such an awareness of Your mercies
that with truly thankful heart I may show forth Your praise,
not only with my lips, but in my life,
by giving up myself to your service.
Reshape me until in generosity, in faith,
and in expectation that the best is yet to come

I am truly Christlike.
Make me a passionate follower of Jesus
rather than a passive supporter.
May I walk before You
in holiness and righteousness all my days
through Jesus Christ, my Lord,
to whom, with You and the Holy Spirit,
be honour and glory throughout all ages. Amen.