

More than Meets the Eye

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Philippians 4:4, REJOICE in the Lord ALWAYS and again I say REJOICE.

Rejoice in the Lord always and I repeat Rejoice...

The message Bible says something along the lines - Enjoy God, marvel at His presence. Celebrate God...

You know, at surface level, this scripture sounds so good right? Like we use it in our Sunday mornings before worship or when we want to celebrate something...

Do you know where Paul is writing this from? This is one of the prison letters, including Colossians, Ephesians and Philemon. Interestingly enough, The book of Philippians has the Word "Joy" about 16 times mentioned. However, at this time, Paul is in a prison in Rome under the leadership of Nero. He will write four of these letters and guess what all of these are full of Joy and wisdom. Some of these letters are also called the "jewels of theology". What is it that enables Paul to write and experience this kind of language when his physical condition is that of a prison.

That must mean one thing - The God we serve is a God that meets more than the physical eye can see.

The Christian journey is usually more than meets the eye!

Now, Rewind with me to a **well-known story** and we're going to draw four observations

Acts 16:25-34:

Context: Paul is going to pray every day with his buddies and there's this fortune teller girl, full of spirits and she's annoying. After many days, Paul has had enough with this girl and he casts the spirits out of her in Jesus name. Now the people who used this girl were unhappy and complain about Paul and Silas. The people in charge then come to pick them, beat up and throw them into a dungeon.

Here are four observations we can learn from this passage:

1. Friendship/Fellowship is more than meet the eye:

Silas is a true friend. You know we're called to do life together. However, sometimes we sink in our own lives. In essence however, we don't even know our neighbor, the struggle that's happening to those of around us, do we? This is so important in fellowships, we need to celebrate with the people around us and also be with them when they sink...

I love Silas, he didn't just hang out with Paul only when his ministry days were good, he was right there when they got caught, when they got whipped and when they were in prison. Isn't that amazing? WE NEED MORE TEAMMATES!

Mark 2:1-5, no matter what it takes, let's be like these men

FRIENDSHIP IS MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

True friendship (Proverbs 17:17 & Proverbs 18:24)

2. Joy is a choice:

Paul and Silas made a choice here to pray and sing hymns to the Lord. You gotta activate the spirit of God that's inside you! God didn't do anything until then. They made a choice to sing, to stir things up within them.

Psalms 34:3, the psalmist says to MAGNIFY the Lord with me.

- When I come into trouble, I don't magnify the trouble, I magnify the Lord.
- When I come against the enemy, I don't magnify the enemy, I magnify the Lord.
- When I'm facing a mountain, I don't magnify the mountain, I magnify the Lord!
- Daniel 3, Shadrach Meshach and Abednego...

You can choose to MAGNIFY the Lord! You are in charge of what you magnify! God does NOT change, He is the same YESTERDAY, TODAY & FOREVER! (Hebrews 13:8)

3. Always Remember who is listening to you:

First, we need to know deep inside that God is listening. Always know that he cares and hears our cry. (**John 9:31, 1 John 5:14, Jeremiah 29:12, James 5:13**)

Also remember there are people watching you. Your close friends, family, they're listening and watching. What's your response to God going to be during tough times? Even the enemy is listening to your response. May our response be one like Paul and Silas and the people around us would know how we Worshiped God during the storm.

4. Remember there is a purpose in the “Suddenly”: The Bible says “Suddenly!”, and things are going amazing for Paul and Silas! They are finally free.

Everyone has a “Suddenly”, here's a question, why didn't Paul & Silas run off? Paul says “we're all here” to the Jailer. You know sometimes we're so individualized aren't we? We're only about ourselves. But Paul & Silas, they realised that they're “Suddenly” is a blessing to their environment.

Always remember, your suddenly is never just for you. You praise God and do your thing! But remember, it's not just for you. You've gotta release your blessing to people.

The Psalmist says in **Ps. 23:5- Your Cup will OVERFLOW!** What are we going to do with God's Blessing? Let's be a good and responsible steward God's blessing.

Wherever you are in this story, God is Faithful...

Our God is MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE!

There is a greater purpose for you through the storm, let's not get caught up in the moment. It may seem overwhelming but let God work through this. You may be a student or you may be working, let me encourage you today, to keep the Faith, no matter what!

Romans 8:28, God works ALL things for good....

Look at Paul's condition, **2 Corinthians 11:23-28... YET... Philippians 3:14...**

2 Corinthians 4:17-18, focus on the things unseen...

What God starts, He will bring it to pass (Hebrews 13:8)

Things to pray for: (5 Mins)

- That we would have true Friendships and fellowship with the people in our circle.
No matter what, we would point them to Jesus!
- We would truly Worship God through the tough times, no matter what...
- That we would be good stewards of God's blessings