

Rejoice Christian – You are God’s People

Isa 49:13-18 ¹³ Sing, O heavens! Be joyful, O earth! And break out in singing, O mountains! For the Lord has comforted His people, and will have mercy on His afflicted. ¹⁴ But Zion said, "The Lord has forsaken me, and my Lord has forgotten me." ¹⁵ "Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you. ¹⁶ See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; your walls are continually before Me.

In this passage, the whole of creation is called upon to sing praises to God. And the reason given? Because God promises to love and care for His people. God will exhort us to faith and confidence in His love and care for us. When conditions caused the people of Israel to be oppressed by fear, anxiety and grief, God wanted them to know that He is ever present to give aid and comfort. And because as we have thus far noted that throughout this prophecy of Isaiah this hope and comfort is no longer limited to Israel alone but to the church including both Old and New Testament believers we too may learn of the comfort that is our in Christ Jesus our Lord. We shall learn that all believers who trust in Him, even though they may behold nothing around them but trials and even ruin, they are encouraged to be of good cheer and to be filled with this assurance sustaining their hearts by the hope of a better condition as Paul wrote in Romans 8 verses 18 and 19, *“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.”* Be mindful, Isaiah wrote these words to God’s people who were about to be carried away into captivity and although at that time they would see nothing but grief and sorrow yet they were, by these words, to be fully convinced that they have the most abundant cause for rejoicing, let us also know that we too have great cause for rejoicing in the love, care and protection of our God and Savior.

A. God calls upon the whole of creation to give praise to Him

1. I do not understand how inanimate objects can break out into singing
 - a. But we know that the heavens declare the glory of God – (cf. Ps. 19:1,2)
 - b. And that that praise is heard in every heart and in every language of man
 - c. We also know that had the people of Israel, in Jesus day, not burst forth into praise, or had our Lord silenced them the very rocks would have cried out (cf. Luke 19:14)
 - d. How often do the Psalms call the whole of creation to worship our God

Ps 96:11-13 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; Let the sea roar, and all its fullness; Let the field be joyful, and all that is in it. Then all the trees of the woods will rejoice before the Lord. For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with His truth.

2. Creation itself looks forward to that day when it too will be delivered from the bondage of the fall

Rom 8:19-21 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

3. The reason for this praise is this, *“The Lord has comforted His people and will have mercy on His afflicted.*
 - a. We may know conflict and tribulation but we are His people and He will comfort us
 - b. We are His people and He will have mercy on us
 - c. Take great joy in knowing that you belong to Him
 - d. We are the very temple of God and He dwells in our very midst

2 Cor 6:16 For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

4. This was a call to those who had hung up their harps
5. It is a call to us even when we may be surrounded by trials
 - a. God calls us to praise as we think on what God has done for us
 - b. Do not let trials keep you from praise; God tells us that even if heaven and earth be removed He is a present help in trouble

Ps 46:1-7 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling. There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, just at the break of dawn. The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved; He uttered His voice, the earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

6. God Himself has said, *“I will never leave you nor forsake you”.*
 - a. Whenever God promises anything let us always respond with praise
 - b. Heaven and earth may pass away, but God’s Word cannot fail
 - c. This is our joy and our comfort may this always affect our hearts and minds
7. This was a call to those who hung up their harps but let us never be of that number
8. Every trial in our life is for our benefit and His glory

*Rom 5:3-4 We also glory in tribulations, knowing that **tribulation produces perseverance**; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.*

2 Cor 4:17-18 For our **light affliction, which is but for a moment**, is working for us **a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory**, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the **things which are not seen are eternal**.

B. *But Zion said, Jehovah has forsaken me.*

1. Here we see the longsuffering of our Lord
2. Too often we find ourselves discouraged and tempted to say, "Jehovah has forsaken us"
 - a. We become fearful and distress when hardships affect us or when God delays His assistance we think He has forsaken us
 - b. But the truth is He has a greater purpose and a greater victory
 - c. Think of the example of Joseph
3. Our Lord is glorified in our weakness
 - a. Paul prayed 3 times
 - b. Three times he was told – My grace is sufficient for **My strength is made perfect in weakness (cf. 2 Cor 12:90)**
4. Always be ready to submit to God's best, regardless of the path in which He leads knowing it is for our strengthening and for the glory of God

1 Peter 1:6-7 *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, **may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ***

5. Three thoughts I want you to consider
 - a. If some trial in your life is chastening be assured it is evidence of God's love not His wrath

Heb 12:6 For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives."

- b. If it is the trying of your faith it is for your strengthening

*James 1:2-4 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that **the testing of your faith produces patience.***

- c. If it to humble you it is for your good and God's glory

2 Cor 12:7 *And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, **lest I be exalted above measure.***

- d. And how is God glorified? His power is seen in His ability to keep us from falling and present us faultless on that great day

C. Closes with these words of comfort to Israel in their despair "*Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you.*

1. The love of a mother for her child upon her breast is used as an example of God's love for His people
2. As a mother will willingly sacrifice for her children our Lord left the glories of heaven above that He might offer Himself as a sweet smelling sacrifice

Eph 5:2 As Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma

3. But then we are reminded that God's love is even a greater love, surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you.
 - a. Some mothers do lack natural affection
 - b. But God assures us He will never forget us
4. Let us bring to mind the words of our Lord:

"If you, being evil, know how to give good things to your children, how much more your heavenly Father?" Matt 7:11.)

5. Then our God proclaims; See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands;
 - a. This of course speaks of God who cannot nor will not forget His people
 - b. Cannot help but bring to mind, His nail pierced hands

Conclusion – God then says "your walls are continually before Me." The walls speak of His protection surrounding us and we have this promise, Ps 102:16 For the Lord shall build up Zion; He shall appear in His glory.

Eph 2:19-22 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Be assured dear ones He has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you".