

# So That You Surely Rejoice

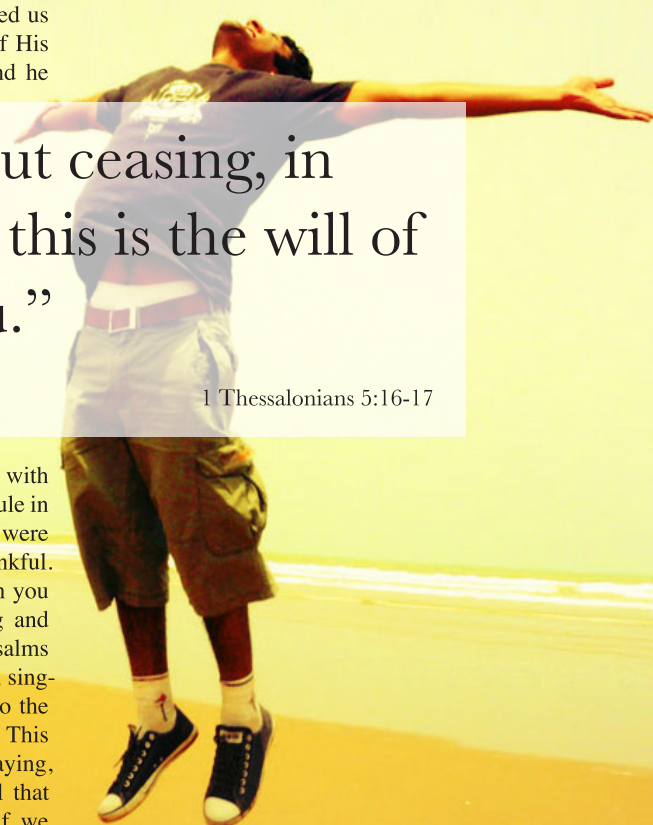
We read in the Word of God: “Seven days you shall keep a sacred feast to the LORD your God in the place which the LORD chooses, because the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you surely rejoice.” (Deuteronomy 16:15) This verse appears in the fifth book of the law in the course of mentioning the three major feasts of the Jews: the Passover Feast, the Feast of Tabernacles and the Feast of Weeks.

During Old Testament times, devout Jews knew the book of Deuteronomy, which summarizes the whole Law, by heart. Even our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ quoted this book in His temptation by the devil (Deuteronomy 6:13-16 and 8:3). When the Lord our God said, “so that you surely rejoice,” He really meant that He wants us rejoicing. Therefore, when St. Paul commanded us in his epistle to “Rejoice in the Lord always” (Philippians 4:4), he was not giving us a new commandment but one that was established long before his time. Also, in the Chapter of

but from thankfulness: “Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.” (1 Timothy 6:17-19) St. Athanasius said that the Christian is a Eucharistic person, meaning that a Christian is a grateful person. When we celebrate the Eucharist (i.e. thanksgiving) in the Liturgy, the priest tells the people “let us give thanks to the Lord” and the believers respond by saying “it is meet and right.” We are a Eucharistic people thanking Him in every condition and for everything. The apostle Paul notes that joy is linked to love, “giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love” (Colossians 1:12-13), and he

the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19) for the Holy Spirit is the dynamo that encourages us to lead a joyful, prayerful and thankful life. St. Isaac said “No gift is without increase except the one without thanksgiving.” One of the signs of spiritual growth is thanksgiving, “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.” (Colossians 2:6-7)

May the Lord our God make His Word dwell richly in us, so that we will be able to praise Him as the apostle James admonishes us (James 5), as Hannah, Samuel’s mother, praised the Lord (1 Samuel 2), and as David worshipped and praised our Lord (2 Samuel 6:13, Psalms 100 and 137).



“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

1 Thessalonians 5:16-17

Blessings and Curses (Deuteronomy 28), after the Lord explained that blessings will result from obedience to Him and curses will result from disobedience of His Law, He said “Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything.” (Deuteronomy 28:47)

St. Paul admonishes us to rejoice always, to pray without ceasing, and to give thanks because that is the will of God for us (1 Thessalonians 5:16-17). We need to rejoice because joy will not come from riches

teaches that joy is associated with praising “let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” (Colossians 3:15-17) This triune command, rejoicing, praying, giving thanks, is so wonderful that our life cannot be the same if we heed it.

St. Paul then tells us not to quench