

**LOOKING THROUGH TO THANKSGIVING**

## Looking Through To Thanksgiving

- **“It Is Well With My Soul”**

When peace like a river, attendeth my way  
When sorrows like sea billows roll  
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say

It is well, it is well, with my soul

It is well  
With my soul  
It is well, it is well with my soul

## Looking Through To Thanksgiving

- In spite of all the advances of civilization, the world today is still consumed with a desire for peace and a fear of war and harm
  - When we observe the conflicts and the rumors of wars and the hardships life can bring us, a gloom and despair can engulf us like a thick darkness
  - Peace movements and peace negotiations proceed all over the world and you find yourself needing peace within
  - Stronger countries believe that peace must be negotiated from a position of power; radical groups believe that terror will force the issue and you discover a new list of five things guaranteed to bring you peace that fail to work
  - And we are left with a more dangerous and more frightening world than ever before and no answers within

## Looking Through To Thanksgiving

- The problem is still the presence of evil
  - **1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:8 NIV**, “Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone (*or some nation*) to devour.”
    - The word "devour" is the Greek word *pino*, which means to drink, to lick, or to slurp up, as a lion might lick the blood of his prey off the ground
    - The devil wants to turn you into a mess of liquid emotions and then lick you up until there's nothing left of your life

## Looking Through To Thanksgiving

- This Evil sets brother against brother, and nation against nation, you against the world
  - Ultimately, the world's gloom and despair and yours is linked to spiritual darkness
  - Yet in this darkness God commands His children to be joyous and full of thanksgiving
    - **Philippians 4:4 NIV**, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!"
    - **1st Thessalonians 5:16-18 NIV**, "16 Rejoice always, 17 pray continually, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

## Looking Through To Thanksgiving

- What could I possibly be thankful for in the darkness of our world, in my personal darkness
  - The answer is found in a single person
  - Why can I rejoice and be thankful?

## Because there is a light is shining in our darkness

- **Genesis 1:2 AMP**, “2 The earth was formless and void or a waste and emptiness, and darkness was upon the face of the deep [primeval ocean that covered the unformed earth].”
  - Chaos is the word I would put here, without meaning or purpose
  - Into this chaos, God created His “very good” universe
  - **Psalm 19:1 NIV**, “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.”

## Because there is a light is shining in our darkness

- Mankind brought darkness (*chaos*) back into God's very good creation when they rebelled against His loving command
  - At first it was hard to see because the glorious light of creation overtook the darkness
  - But in time, **Genesis 6:5-6 NIV**, "5 The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. 6 The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled."
    - Regret in Hebrew - Is exclusively about emotions: a feeling of pain, sadness, or unhappiness



## Because there is a light is shining in our darkness

- God allowed mankind to try again through Noah and the Nation of Israel, but darkness still overshadows God's "very good" even to today
- But God has an answer to man's darkness
  - **Isaiah 9:1-2 NIV**, "1 Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—2 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned."

## Because there is a light is shining in our darkness

- A light has arisen in our darkness in Galilee
  - It is not a light philosophy, religion, enlightenment
  - It is the promised Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth
  - **Isaiah 9:6 NIV**, “6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

## Because there is a light is shining in our darkness

- Hear the words about and from this “Prince of Peace”
  - **John 8:12 NIV**, “When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”
  - **John 1:4-5 NIV**, “4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”
  - **John 16:33 NIV**, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”
    - “I have overcome the darkness of this present world to give you forgiveness, peace, joy, hope, and a future” (*Jer. 29:11*)

## Because there is a light is shining in our darkness

- Why can I rejoice today? Why can I be thankful today?
  - Because the light of Jesus Christ lives in me
  - Like a ship longs to see the lights of the port leading it home safely, we have the light of Jesus Christ

## Because there is an answer to our darkness

- The light of God being in the world gives us hope and direction, but does not answer the question of our own person darkness
  - **John 3:19-20 NIV**, “19 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. 20 Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed.”
  - We see the light, might even agree with the light, but see no hope for the darkness in ourselves
  - It takes more than information for us to be able to rejoice and be thankful in our darkness

## Because there is an answer to our darkness

- Another darkness came into God's "very good" creation one day
  - **Mark 15:33 NIV**, "At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon." – Why?
  - **Isaiah 53:4-6 NIV**, "4 Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.
    - 6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." – Why?
- **Romans 6:23 NIV**, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

## **Because there is an answer to our darkness**

- Why can I rejoice today? Why can I be thankful today?
  - Because there is an answer to my darkness today
  - It is Jesus and Him crucified for me

**Because, as a child of God, I will never hear the darkest words, “Depart from me for I never knew you.”**

- **Matthew 7:21 NIV**, 21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”
  - What is the will of the Father?”
    - **John 6:40 NIV**, “For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.”



**Because, as a child of God, I will never hear the darkest words, “Depart from me for I never knew you.”**

- **Matthew 7:21 NIV**, 21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.
  - **Matthew 7:22-23 NIV**, 22 Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ 23 Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”
    - How horrible to hear these words from the one who holds your eternity in the palm of His hand
    - They played in the light, did works that looked like light, even proclaimed to be in the light
    - But they never received the light

**Because, as a child of God, I will never hear the darkest words, “Depart from me for I never knew you.”**

- There was another great time of darkness in God’s creation
  - The voice of light, hanging on a cross for you and me, cried
  - **Mark 15:34 NIV**, “And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”).”
  - Listen, as a born-again child of God we will never have to cry, “Why have you forsaken me God?”
  - Does it really matter?

**Because, as a child of God, I will never hear the darkest words, “Depart from me for I never knew you.”**

- **Revelation 20:11-15 NIV**, “11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. 15 Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.”
  - Is the reason you refuse to accept the salvation of Jesus worth what this day will bring to your eternity?

**Because, as a child of God, I will never hear the darkest words, “Depart from me for I never knew you.”**

- **John 6:44 NIV**, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day.”
  - **Hebrews 6:7 NIV**, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts”
  - **2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 6:2 NIV**, For he says, “In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.” I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.

**Because, as a child of God, I will never hear the darkest words, “Depart from me for I never knew you.”**

- Why can I rejoice today? Why can I be thankful today?
  - Because I do not have to fear this day of judgement because my name is written in the Lamb’s Book of Life
  - The greatest of all joy is knowing my eternity is secure because Christ Jesus holds it
  - **John 10:27-30 NIV**, “27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand. 30 I and the Father are one.”

**Because, as a child of God, I will never hear the darkest words, “Depart from me for I never knew you.”**

- Why can I rejoice today? Why can I be thankful today?
  - I do not have anything to fear in the darkness
  - I do not have anything to fear in death
  - I do not have anything to fear in eternity
  - I am blessed beyond measure
- **Psalm 31:19 NCV**, “How great is your goodness that you have stored up for those who fear you, that you have given to those who trust you. You do this for all to see.”

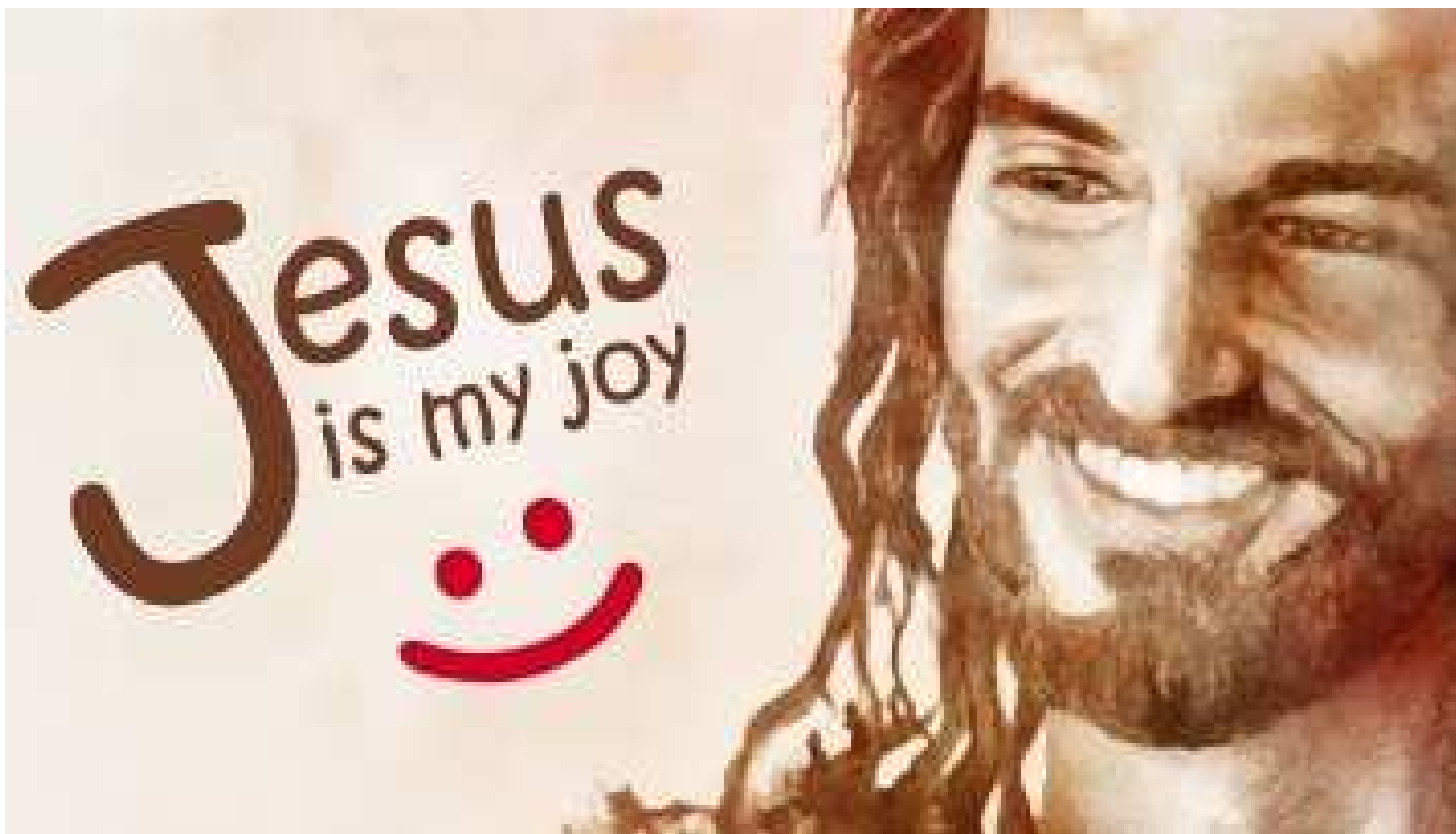
## Looking Through To Thanksgiving

- I'm not going to tell you that dark days will never come into your lives
  - There will be times where fear knocks on the door of our heart
  - When the darkness seems so very dark, and answers are elusive
  - **1st John 4:18 NIV**, "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear"
- We can step into the love of Christ just as Noah stepped into the ark
  - And let His love carry us all the way through to our last breath which can be the ultimate fear
  - Instead of focusing on the fearful things of life, focus instead on the love Jesus has for you personally
  - He is our transport through, He is our light, He is our Savior, He is our source of joy

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- Why can I rejoice today? Why can I be thankful today?
  - Only one word - Jesus





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