

**Romans 12:12** *“rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer”* In our text, Paul is continuing to give us commands to follow as Christians. These commands all flow from Romans 12 verse one. Remember, a command from the Lord to a born-again Christian is a promise, for His commands are laced with grace. This morning we shall look at the spiritually healthy Christian who is: I. Rejoicing in hope, II. Patiently enduring tribulation, and III. Continuing steadfastly in prayer.

**I. REJOICING IN HOPE** *rejoicing in hope*

**A. First, look at what this command is not telling us to do:**

(1) It is not commanding us to develop a general disposition of slap-happy cheerfulness. This happened for awhile in reaction to a misunderstanding of the Puritans who always dressed in black.

(2) It is not commanding us to join the local optimist club and expect that things in this world are going to get better!

**B. Second, look at what this command is telling us to do:**

(1) Rejoice in hope: Notice the connection between hope, tribulation and prayer:

**Romans 8:18-26** *“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. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. 23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. 24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. 26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”*

“ We see this same connection between rejoicing in hope, patiently enduring in tribulation and steadfastness in prayer in **1 Peter 1:1-17**; and **James 1:1-18** and **Romans 5:1-11**.

(2) Rejoicing in hope means you have God’s perspective regarding this present world. Things are getting worse, not better! **2 Timothy 3:13** *“evil men...shall wax worse and worse.”* Jesus said, *“we shall hear of wars and rumors of wars”* **Matt.24:6** . Jesus said this world would give us tribulation and that it is a thing to be overcome: **John 16:33** *“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”*

(3) Paul paints a good description of the Christian’s Journey through this world: **2**

**Corinthians 4:7-12,16-18** *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. 8 We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed - 10 always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So then death is working in us, but life in you... 16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 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.”*

(4) What is the hope we are to rejoice in? **2 Peter 1:13** *“Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”* **Ephesians 1:10** *That in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth – in Him.”* **Romans 8:23** *And not only they, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope...”*

**II. PATIENTLY ENDURING TRIBULATION** , *patient in tribulation*. The Greek word translated into tribulation carries the idea of being crushed. It comes from the Greek word for a machine that crushed the corn to make flour. Trials, tribulations, temptations can come from circumstances, consequences for sins, temptations to sin, persecutions, sickness, death, heartache, depression, loneliness, rejection, slander. Tribulation comes in like a flood: slow rising with no escape, or a flash flood with no warning.

**A. How then are Christians commanded to react to tribulation?** With patient endurance. How are we to do this: by rejoicing in hope and continuing steadfastly in prayer! That is why these three commands come together!

**B. How are we to keep this command?**

(1) Don't be surprised when hard time hit **John 16:33** *“In the world you will have tribulation”* **1 Peter 4:12** *“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you”*

(2) Accept it as chastisement from a loving Father that results in the peaceable fruit of righteousness: **Hebrews 12**

(3) Allow tribulation to teach you things that only it can do as God works all things out for your good. It teaches you that nothing good dwells in your flesh. It teaches you that you are totally dependent upon the Holy Spirit to live the supernatural life, thus you need continuous prayer. It teaches you to store up treasures in heaven and to loosen your hold on this earth. It teaches you to set your affection on things above. It teaches you the message of the book of Ecclesiastes – that all is vanity. It teaches you to have compassion on others who suffer

**Psalms 119:65-67** *65 “You have dealt well with Your servant, O Lord, according to Your word. 66 Teach me good judgment and knowledge, For I believe Your commandments. 67 Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Your word.”*

**III. CONTINUOUS PRAYER**

**A. It is not: praying through long lists; It is not vain repetitions.**

**B. It is: James 4:8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.** It is boldly approaching the throne of grace. We have not because we ask not!

**C. It is the only way to keep from fainting, losing heart, or giving up, or getting burned out! Luke 18:1 “Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart”**