

# REJOICE

## ★ DEAD OR ALIVE ★

2020-11-15 by Ben Deaver at Tallgrass Church on Philippians 1:18b-30

### Don't forget:

- Get Soul Care-ish (per Maris' recommendation)
- Give the Spirit space (per Maris' recommendation)
- Encourage folks to sit closer.
- Pray together at 9:30am!
- Figure out how to get 3-5 minutes alone w/ God before preaching, possibly in that storage closet.

### Facebook Live Description:

Join us in person or online for week five of Church in the Club! 10am at the Boys & Girls Club of Manhattan or right here!

"Rejoice: Dead or Alive"

Philippians 1:18b-30

November 15, 2020

Ben Deaver

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WEB: <http://tallgrass.church>

INSTAGRAM: <https://www.instagram.com/tallgrasschurch/>

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*Because God first loved us, we exist to love God and love our neighbors!*

### Intro Elisha Hillegeist as an Elder!

- We introduced Elisha Hillegeist as an Elder Candidate on Sunday, October 25.
- Thanks to all who gave us feedback!
- We're excited to welcome Elisha onto the Tallgrass Church Elder Team TODAY!!!
- You can go back and listen or watch her nomination to learn more about our process for determining Elder Candidates and getting feedback from the church body.
- The long and short of it today, is that we are thrilled to add Elisha, with all of her character strengths and spiritual gifts, to our current team of five.
- We are always open to and welcome future Elder Candidates so please keep those coming.

## Pray & dismiss to Sprouts & intro Mingle

## Dave & Paxton rock 2021 Budget Vision

## Thanks to Ron and Dave for preaching the last two Sundays!

We loved our time in Steamboat Springs, CO! The mountains are still calling and one day I'll hike all the 14ers plus Olympus Mons on Mars. It'll probably not be until Jesus returns and makes all things new but that's ok.

There are two types of people in the world: 1) Those who begin listening to Christmas music after Thanksgiving, and 2) those who begin listening to Christmas music as soon as Starbucks transitions to their holiday cups. I suppose there's a third type of person, those who don't listen to Christmas music. Bah humbug!

By show of hands:

- Who's waiting until after Thanksgiving to listen to Christmas music?
- Who's already rockin' that Christmas music?
- I don't even wanna know who doesn't like Christmas music. But I will pray for you!

I love hearing people's favorite versions of their favorite Christmas songs. So please share with me. I'll give you a few of my quick recommendations:

- Boyz II Men version of *Silent Night*
- Bing Crosby and David Bowie version of *The Little Drummer Boy (Peace On Earth)*
- Harry Connick Jr., everything holiday

As they say, "Christmas is coming, the goose is getting fat..." and I'm excited about it! Of course, at Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, and our Older Brother and our Friend. We also celebrate His life, His life of others-centered, sacrificial love. He demonstrated that love for just over 30 years before most clearly showing His love at that first Easter, when Jesus died a brutal physical death on our behalf. With the birth, life, and death of Jesus on our hearts and minds we also celebrate Advent, which begins the first Sunday after Thanksgiving this year. Advent simply means Arrival. Yes, Advent is about the initial Arrival of Jesus as a baby boy in Bethlehem. But more than that, we look ahead to Jesus' Second Arrival as King!

So here we are, November 15, 2020, with Christmas just around the corner, in the midst of this deadly pandemic, feeling all the feels, looking for hope to cling to, rejoicing with those who rejoice—like those who've recently welcomed a new child into the world—and mourning with those who mourn—like the Chitwoods who are mourning the loss of Stephanie's father, Steve Wilson, today.

It's in this very real context of death and life that we turn to Philippians 1:18b-30 this morning. I'd encourage you to have a hard copy of the Scriptures this morning. The way I find Philippians is knowing that it's one of four letters right after 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians—Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians. GEPC. Go Eat Pop Corn! That's how I find it.

**Philippians 1:18b-20a** <sup>18b</sup> Yes, and I will rejoice, <sup>19</sup> for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, <sup>20a</sup> as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body...

**Philippians 1:20b-24** <sup>20b</sup> ...whether by life or by death. <sup>21</sup> For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. <sup>22</sup> If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. <sup>23</sup> I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. <sup>24</sup> But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.

**Philippians 1:25-26** <sup>25</sup> Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, <sup>26</sup> so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

**Philippians 1:27-28a** <sup>27</sup> Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, <sup>28a</sup> and not frightened in anything by your opponents.

**Philippians 1:28b-30** <sup>28b</sup> This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. <sup>29</sup> For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, <sup>30</sup> engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

## PRAY!

**Philippians 1:18b-20a** <sup>18b</sup> Yes, and I will rejoice, <sup>19</sup> for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance (*salvation*), <sup>20a</sup> as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body...

- Paul will rejoice! But in the midst of what? In the midst of imprisonment and in the midst of people preaching the gospel but with ill intent.
- Paul prays for them constantly. Just checkout verses 3-5.
- Here Paul is comforted by their prayers for him. What a beautiful reciprocal relationship of mutual edification.
- Paul is convinced that their prayers and Jesus answering those prayers will turn out for his deliverance, or salvation. Same word for salvation is used here. Salvation from what? From his current imprisonment. BTW, you have to pay attention to how words are used. Salvation in the Bible isn't always about eternal life but is often about deliverance from our current circumstances as it is here.
- Paul has full courage that now as always, read whether physical life or physical death, Christ will be honored in his body...

Here's our BIG IDEA this morning...

# REJOICE: DEAD OR ALIVE

<sup>18b</sup> Yes, and I will **REJOICE**... <sup>20b</sup> ...whether by **LIFE** or by **DEATH**. <sup>21</sup> For to me to **LIVE** is Christ, and to **DIE** is gain. <sup>22</sup> If I am to **LIVE** in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. <sup>23</sup> I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to **DEPART** and be with Christ, for that is far better. <sup>24</sup> But to **REMAIN** in the flesh is more necessary on your account.

*“hard pressed between the two (physical death or physical life)” “in a strait between the two” (KJV)*

1. Paul’s longing to be with Jesus—Paul’s desire to depart is a desire to be with a good friend...in person. Not just on Zoom or on the phone or in case of Jesus, through prayer, but with Jesus...in person.
  - There have been a handful of times that I’ve been so enamored with creation that I would be so content to go home and meet my Creator face to face.
    - One quick story: I spent the summer after my junior year at K-State at the Snow Mountain Ranch YMCA near Winterpark, CO. The first 14er I hiked was Mount Bierstadt. Our group tried to cross over to Mount Evans through an unmarked sawtooth when a blizzard opened up before our eyes and I thought I may die on this mountainside and go meet Jesus...and that would be totally awesome.
  - But Paul had also been beaten up pretty good by this tragic world too. I’m sure part of his desire to depart through physical death was to rest and heal, both physically and emotionally.
2. Paul’s physical and emotional pain—Part of the reason Paul was so broken down physically and emotionally is because he ran pretty hard for the Kingdom of God.
  - **2 Corinthians 11:23b-28** <sup>23b</sup> ...with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. <sup>24</sup> Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. <sup>25</sup> Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; <sup>26</sup> on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; <sup>27</sup> in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. <sup>28</sup> And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.
  - Paul had been physically hurt by others but possibly more than that, he had been emotionally hurt by others.
3. Paul’s pre-existing physical condition—He also probably had a pre-existing condition that put him a state of pain. He called it the thorn in his flesh.
  - I know many in our church who have physical ailments that they can do nothing about, or at least very about, but is an affect of the fall of this world and that is a valid reason to long to depart and experience the healing Jesus offers in our abundant afterlife.
4. Paul’s sin—Paul was also in touch with the pain of his own sin.
  - **1 Timothy 1:15** The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.

*Death at work in us, but life in you—2 Corinthians 4:7-12* <sup>7</sup> But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. <sup>8</sup> We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; <sup>9</sup> persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; <sup>10</sup> always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. <sup>11</sup> For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. <sup>12</sup> So death is at work in us, but life in you.

Let's dig into what Paul means by *fruitful labor* that would cause him to want to continue to live despite all this hardship and pain and his longing to be present with Jesus.

**Philippians 1:25-26** <sup>25</sup> Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your **PROGRESS AND JOY** in the faith, <sup>26</sup> so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

*fruitful labor* for Paul = their progress and joy in the faith

- Objectively speaking, for those who have a relationship with Jesus, your joy will increase exponentially when you breathe your last here on earth. Our task at hand, for however long we have breath, is to work for the progress and joy *OF OTHERS!!!* Others-centered livin', sacrificial lovin', that's the key to REJOICE, whether DEAD OR ALIVE!
- It's really difficult to resonate with Paul's commitment to sacrificial living here. Here are a couple areas in my life that help me get at Paul's eternal perspective.
  - Our neighborhood: Sometime Maris and I talk about moving into a different house, a bigger and better house in a different neighborhood but often our conversation turns towards the relationships in our neighborhood and the impact we can have on others for good right there.
  - My gym:
- Remember? Philippians is the joy letter? Noun "joy" used 5 times; Verb form "rejoice" used 7 times
- Did Paul write this from somewhere idyllic, like a Colorado retreat spot, drinking hot chocolate while watching the beautiful sunrise and seeing moose out in the distance caring for her young, with a fire crackling in the background? No, he wrote it from prison or on house arrest but definitely chained to a Roman guard 24-7 while facing possible imminent execution.

**Philippians 1:27-28a** <sup>27</sup> Only let your manner of life be worthy (Greek *Only behave as CITIZENS worthy*) of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind **S'TRIVING SIDE BY SIDE** for the faith of the gospel, <sup>28a</sup> and not frightened in anything by your opponents.

*citizens—Philippians 3:20-4:1* <sup>20</sup> But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. <sup>1</sup> Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

- The Bible's teaching on our heavenly citizenship is always important, but especially so in the midst of this terribly polarized political climate in which we live in the U.S. today.
- Remember, friends, whether you're American or not, your primary citizenship is in heaven...and that's GREAT NEWS!

*striving side by side* = *sunathleó* (συναθλέω, 4866)—to wrestle in company with; to seek jointly; labor with; strive together for

- We've already dealt with the fear of death (at least here in our passage). That takes out all the fear of the opposition, whether it's earthly opposition or our spiritual enemy, Satan.

The Phalanx—Does anyone know what the Phalanx is? It's the Greek military formation where soldiers are lined up shoulder to shoulder advancing against the opposing force.

- I want to have everyone STAND, and imagine being shoulder to shoulder, in the phalanx.
- **Ephesians 6:10-13** <sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. <sup>13</sup> Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

## Homework:

1. Keep going or get started on Discipleship 101 to help one another in your *progress and joy in the faith*.
2. Cultivate Paul's eternal perspective.
  - a. Memorize Philippians 1:21—For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.
  - b. Hear from others who are trying to cultivate Paul's eternal perspective in their lives.
  - c. Let's start NOW!!!

## Invite Barb Goodman up!

Barb's text to me on Thursday, November 12, 2020: "I'm wrestling with what to say. I'm so not like Paul. That is, I know it is better to leave (by faith), but my emotions want to stay here with people I love. Paul says he prefers to leave, but conceded the 'need' to stay. I can't say that now. But yes, Jesus became a lot closer during transplant time. And I made major gains over my fear of dying."

**Philippians 1:28b-30** <sup>28b</sup> This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation (*deliverance*), and that from God. <sup>29</sup> For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, <sup>30</sup> engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

They were in it together with Paul. We're in it together now too!

Tallgrass family, we can REJOICE together, DEAD OR ALIVE!

**PRAY!**

# The Chopping Block:

## CG Flow:

- Rejoice (5 min.)
- Raise a Hallelujah (5 min.)
- Intro Elisha as an Elder candidate (5 min.)
- Dismiss to Sprouts & Mingle (5 min.)
- Dave & Paxton give 2021 Budget Vision (5 min.)
- Preach (30 min.)
- Barb Goodman Testimony (5 min.)
- Graves Into Gardens (5 min.)
- How Deep the Father's Love (5 min.)
- Amazing Grace (5 min.)

## Fear:

- **Matthew 10:26-33** <sup>26</sup>“So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. <sup>27</sup>What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. <sup>28</sup>And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. <sup>29</sup>Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. <sup>30</sup>But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. <sup>31</sup>Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. <sup>32</sup>So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, <sup>33</sup>but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

## Paul:

- **1 Corinthians 4:9-13** <sup>9</sup>For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. <sup>10</sup>We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. <sup>11</sup>To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, <sup>12</sup>and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; <sup>13</sup>when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.

## Homework:

- SWORD Drill
- The Bible Project—<https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Training/Post/View/231123>
- Phil Vischer—<https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Content/KidsSeries/293649?episode=1>

## Discipleship Resources:

- *The Chopping Block #13: 13 Misconceptions about Discipleship*—<https://tallgrass.church/news/2019/06/20/tcb-13-13-misconceptions-about-discipleship>
- *Personal Discipleship—Practical Tips* by Gary DeLashmutt—<https://www.xenos.org/teachings/?teaching=2213>

- *Organic Discipleship: Mentoring Others Into Spiritual Maturity and Leadership* by Dennis McCallum and Jessica Lowery—[https://smile.amazon.com/Organic-Discipleship-Mentoring-Spiritual-Leadership/dp/0983668108/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?crid=2CW66U2J9P4U7&keywords=organic+discipleship&qid=1560185383&s=gateway&sprefix=organic+disc%2Caps%2C321&sr=8-1](https://smile.amazon.com/Organic-Discipleship-Mentoring-Spiritual-Leadership/dp/0983668108/ref=sr_1_1?crid=2CW66U2J9P4U7&keywords=organic+discipleship&qid=1560185383&s=gateway&sprefix=organic+disc%2Caps%2C321&sr=8-1)

## Intro to Philippians

- Location of Philippi
- Paul planted this church 10 years earlier
- There were frequent interactions between Paul and these folks.
- Key People:
  - Paul
  - Timothy
  - Epaphroditus
  - Imperial Guard
  - Euodia & Synteché
  - Clement
- The Philippians saints and money
  - This letter is a response, a thank you for the money gift.
  - Epaphroditus was the courier who delivered the funds.
  - See 2 Corinthians 8-9 to see Paul hold up the Philippian church as a model for gracious, sacrificial generosity.
- Paul's letters
  - Prison letters—Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon
  - None of Nero's literary output remains and it appears he wrote a lot. Whereas we, along with everyone else in the world who owns a Bible, have 13 letters that Paul wrote to individuals and churches.
  - One commentator joked that we call our dogs Nero and our sons Paul.

## Church in the Club Ideas:

- Focus on how the NT church was "outside the four walls" of traditional church buildings. Out in secular space (the club). Cast vision for us to engage secular space of our neighborhoods, etc. with church and Gospel living
- Highlight a NT example and a historical example each week
- Belong, Believe, Become—Club membership analogy

## Date & Passage

10/18 1:1-2  
 10/25 1:3-6  
 11/1 1:7-11  
 11/8 1:12-18a  
 11/15 1:18b-30  
 11/22 Gratitude in Philippians  
 11/29 2:1-4  
 12/6 2:5-8  
 12/13 2:9-11  
 12/20 2:5-11  
 12/27 2:12-18

|      |         |
|------|---------|
| 1/3  | 2:19-30 |
| 1/10 | 3:1-16  |
| 1/17 | 3:17-21 |
| 1/24 | 4:1-3   |
| 1/31 | 4:4-7   |
| 2/7  | 4:8-9   |
| 2/14 | 4:10-18 |
| 2/21 | 4:19-20 |
| 2/28 | 4:21-23 |

## Philippians

### 10/18

**1** Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:

**2** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

### 10/25

**3** I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, **4** always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, **5** because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. **6** And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

### 11/1

**7** It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. **8** For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. **9** And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, **10** so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, **11** filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

### 11/8

**12** I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, **13** so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. **14** And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. **15** Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. **16** The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. **17** The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. **18a** What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.

### 11/15

**18b** Yes, and I will rejoice, **19** for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, **20** as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. **21** For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. **22** If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. **23** I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. **24** But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. **25** Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, **26** so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again. **27** Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, **28** and not frightened in anything by your

opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. <sup>29</sup> For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, <sup>30</sup> engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

### **11/22 Geldart riffs on gratitude in Philippians**

#### **11/29 (5<sup>th</sup> Sunday)**

<sup>2</sup> So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, <sup>2</sup> complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. <sup>3</sup> Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

#### **12/6 (12/20?)**

<sup>5</sup> Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

#### **12/13 (12/20?)**

<sup>9</sup> Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

#### **12/27**

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

<sup>14</sup> Do all things without grumbling or disputing, <sup>15</sup> that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, <sup>16</sup> holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. <sup>17</sup> Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. <sup>18</sup> Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

#### **1/3**

<sup>19</sup> I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you. <sup>20</sup> For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. <sup>21</sup> For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. <sup>22</sup> But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel. <sup>23</sup> I hope therefore to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me, <sup>24</sup> and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also.

<sup>25</sup> I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need, <sup>26</sup> for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. <sup>27</sup> Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. <sup>28</sup> I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious. <sup>29</sup> So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and honor such men, <sup>30</sup> for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me.

#### **1/10**

<sup>3</sup> Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.

<sup>2</sup> Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. <sup>3</sup> For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the

flesh— <sup>4</sup> though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: <sup>5</sup> circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup> as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. <sup>7</sup> But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup> Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— <sup>10</sup> that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup> that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

<sup>12</sup> Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. <sup>13</sup> Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, <sup>14</sup> I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup> Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. <sup>16</sup> Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

### **1/17**

<sup>17</sup> Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. <sup>18</sup> For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. <sup>19</sup> Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. <sup>20</sup> But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

### **1/24**

**4** Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

<sup>2</sup> I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. <sup>3</sup> Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

### **1/31 (5<sup>th</sup> Sunday)**

<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. <sup>5</sup> Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; <sup>6</sup> do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

### **2/7**

<sup>8</sup> Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. <sup>9</sup> What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

### **2/14 (Valentine's Day!)**

<sup>10</sup> I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. <sup>11</sup> Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. <sup>12</sup> I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. <sup>13</sup> I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

<sup>14</sup> Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. <sup>15</sup> And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving

and receiving, except you only. <sup>16</sup> Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. <sup>17</sup> Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. <sup>18</sup> I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.

**2/21**

<sup>19</sup> And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. <sup>20</sup> To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

**2/28**

<sup>21</sup> Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. <sup>22</sup> All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.

<sup>23</sup> The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

## in Christ

1. [Philippians 1:1](#) Paul and Timothy, servants of **Christ** Jesus, To all the saints **in Christ** Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:
2. [Philippians 1:26](#) so that in me you may have ample cause to glory **in Christ** Jesus, because of my coming to you again.
3. [Philippians 1:29](#) For it has been granted to you that for the sake of **Christ** you should not only believe **in** him but also suffer for his sake,
4. [Philippians 2:1](#) So if there is any encouragement **in Christ**, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy,
5. [Philippians 2:5](#) Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours **in Christ** Jesus,
6. [Philippians 3:3](#) For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory **in Christ** Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh—
7. [Philippians 3:9](#) and be found **in him**, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith **in Christ**, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—
8. [Philippians 3:14](#) I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God **in Christ** Jesus.
9. [Philippians 4:7](#) And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds **in Christ** Jesus.
10. [Philippians 4:19](#) And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory **in Christ** Jesus.
11. [Philippians 4:21](#) Greet every saint **in Christ** Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you.

## Timothy

1. [Acts 16:1](#)  
**Timothy** Joins Paul and Silas  
Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named **Timothy**, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek.  
[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)
2. [Acts 16:3](#)  
Paul wanted **Timothy** to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.  
[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)
3. [Acts 17:14](#)

Then the brothers immediately sent Paul off on his way to the sea, but Silas and **Timothy** remained there.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

4. [Acts 17:15](#)

Those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens, and after receiving a command for Silas and **Timothy** to come to him as soon as possible, they departed.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

5. [Acts 18:5](#)

When Silas and **Timothy** arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with the word, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

6. [Acts 19:22](#)

And having sent into Macedonia two of his helpers, **Timothy** and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

7. [Acts 20:4](#)

Sopater the Berean, son of Pyrrhus, accompanied him; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and **Timothy**; and the Asians, Tychicus and Trophimus.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

8. [Romans 16:21](#)

**Timothy**, my fellow worker, greets you; so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

9. [1 Corinthians 4:17](#)

That is why I sent you **Timothy**, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

10. [1 Corinthians 16:10](#)

When **Timothy** comes, see that you put him at ease among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord, as I am.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

11. [2 Corinthians 1:1](#)

Greeting

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and **Timothy** our brother, To the church of God that is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia:

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

12. [2 Corinthians 1:19](#)

For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and **Timothy** and I, was not Yes and No, but in him it is always Yes.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

13. [Philippians 1:1](#)

Greeting

Paul and **Timothy**, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

14. [Philippians 2:19](#)

**Timothy** and Epaphroditus

I hope in the Lord Jesus to send **Timothy** to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

15. [Philippians 2:22](#)

But you know **Timothy**'s proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

16. [Colossians 1:1](#)

Greeting

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and **Timothy** our brother,

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

17. [1 Thessalonians 1:1](#)

Greeting

Paul, Silvanus, and **Timothy**, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

18. [1 Thessalonians 3:2](#)

and we sent **Timothy**, our brother and God's coworker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and exhort you in your faith,

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

19. [1 Thessalonians 3:6](#)

**Timothy**'s Encouraging Report

But now that **Timothy** has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, as we long to see you—

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

20. [2 Thessalonians 1:1](#)

Greeting

Paul, Silvanus, and **Timothy**, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

21. [1 Timothy 1:2](#)

To **Timothy**, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

22. [1 Timothy 1:18](#)

This charge I entrust to you, **Timothy**, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare,

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

23. [1 Timothy 6:20](#)

O **Timothy**, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called “knowledge,”

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

24. [2 Timothy 1:2](#)

To **Timothy**, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

25. [Philemon 1:1](#)

Greeting

Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus, and **Timothy** our brother, To Philemon our beloved fellow worker

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

26. [Hebrews 13:23](#)

You should know that our brother **Timothy** has been released, with whom I shall see you if he comes soon.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

## Rejoice

1. [Nehemiah 12:43](#)

And they offered great sacrifices that day and **rejoiced**, for God had made them **rejoice** with great joy; the women and children also **rejoiced**. And the joy of Jerusalem was heard far away.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

2. [Nehemiah 12:44](#)

### Service at the Temple

On that day men were appointed over the storerooms, the contributions, the firstfruits, and the tithes, to gather into them the portions required by the Law for the priests and for the Levites according to the fields of the towns, for Judah **rejoiced** over the priests and the Levites who ministered.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

3. [Esther 8:15](#)

Then Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal robes of blue and white, with a great golden crown and a robe of fine linen and purple, and the city of Susa shouted and **rejoiced**.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

4. [Job 3:6](#)

That night—let thick darkness seize it! Let it not **rejoice** among the days of the year; let it not come into the number of the months.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

5. [Job 3:22](#)

who **rejoice** exceedingly and are glad when they find the grave?

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

6. [Job 21:12](#)

They sing to the tambourine and the lyre and **rejoice** to the sound of the pipe.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

7. [Job 31:25](#)

if I have **rejoiced** because my wealth was abundant or because my hand had found much,

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

8. [Job 31:29](#)

"If I have **rejoiced** at the ruin of him who hated me, or exulted when evil overtook him

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

9. [Psalm 2:11](#)

Serve the LORD with fear, and **rejoice** with trembling.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

10. [Psalm 5:11](#)

But let all who take refuge in you **rejoice**; let them ever sing for joy, and spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may exult in you.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

11. [Psalm 9:14](#)

that I may recount all your praises, that in the gates of the daughter of Zion I may **rejoice** in your salvation.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

12. [Psalm 13:4](#)

lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed over him," lest my foes **rejoice** because I am shaken.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

13. [Psalm 13:5](#)

But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall **rejoice** in your salvation.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

14. [Psalm 14:7](#)

Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion! When the LORD restores the fortunes of his people, let Jacob **rejoice**, let Israel be glad.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

15. [Psalm 16:9](#)

Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being **rejoices**; my flesh also dwells secure.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

16. [Psalm 21:1](#)

The King **Rejoices** in the LORD's Strength

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

O LORD, in your strength the king **rejoices**, and in your salvation how greatly he exults!

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

17. [Psalm 30:1](#)

Joy Comes with the Morning

A Psalm of David. A song at the dedication of the temple.

I will extol you, O LORD, for you have drawn me up and have not let my foes **rejoice** over me.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

18. [Psalm 31:7](#)

I will **rejoice** and be glad in your steadfast love, because you have seen my affliction; you have known the distress of my soul,

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

19. [Psalm 32:11](#)

Be glad in the LORD, and **rejoice**, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

20. [Psalm 35:9](#)

Then my soul will **rejoice** in the LORD, exulting in his salvation.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

21. [Psalm 35:15](#)

But at my stumbling they **rejoiced** and gathered; they gathered together against me; wretches whom I did not know tore at me without ceasing;

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

22. [Psalm 35:19](#)

Let not those **rejoice** over me who are wrongfully my foes, and let not those wink the eye who hate me without cause.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

23. [Psalm 35:24](#)

Vindicate me, O LORD, my God, according to your righteousness, and let them not **rejoice** over me!

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

24. [Psalm 35:26](#)

Let them be put to shame and disappointed altogether who **rejoice** at my calamity! Let them be clothed with shame and dishonor who magnify themselves against me!

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

25. [Psalm 38:16](#)

For I said, "Only let them not **rejoice** over me, who boast against me when my foot slips!"

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

26. [Psalm 40:16](#)

But may all who seek you **rejoice** and be glad in you; may those who love your salvation say continually, "Great is the LORD!"

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

27. [Psalm 48:11](#)

Let Mount Zion be glad! Let the daughters of Judah **rejoice** because of your judgments!

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

28. [Psalm 51:8](#)

Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken **rejoice**.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

29. [Psalm 53:6](#)

Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion! When God restores the fortunes of his people, let Jacob **rejoice**, let Israel be glad.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

30. [Psalm 58:10](#)

The righteous will **rejoice** when he sees the vengeance; he will bathe his feet in the blood of the wicked.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

31. [Psalm 63:11](#)

But the king shall **rejoice** in God; all who swear by him shall exult, for the mouths of liars will be stopped.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

32. [Psalm 64:10](#)

Let the righteous one **rejoice** in the LORD and take refuge in him! Let all the upright in heart exult!

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

33. [Psalm 66:6](#)

He turned the sea into dry land; they passed through the river on foot. There did we **rejoice** in him,

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

34. [Psalm 70:4](#)

May all who seek you **rejoice** and be glad in you! May those who love your salvation say evermore, "God is great!"

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

35. [Psalm 85:6](#)

Will you not revive us again, that your people may **rejoice** in you?

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

36. [Psalm 89:42](#)

You have exalted the right hand of his foes; you have made all his enemies **rejoice**.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

37. [Psalm 90:14](#)

Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may **rejoice** and be glad all our days.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

38. [Psalm 96:11](#)

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth **rejoice**; let the sea roar, and all that fills it;

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

39. [Psalm 97:1](#)

### The LORD Reigns

The LORD reigns, let the earth **rejoice**; let the many coastlands be glad!

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

40. [Psalm 97:8](#)

Zion hears and is glad, and the daughters of Judah **rejoice**, because of your judgments, O LORD.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

41. [Psalm 97:12](#)

**Rejoice** in the LORD, O you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name!

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

42. [Psalm 104:31](#)

May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD **rejoice** in his works,

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

43. [Psalm 104:34](#)

May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I **rejoice** in the LORD.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

44. [Psalm 105:3](#)

Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD **rejoice**!

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

45. [Psalm 106:5](#)

that I may look upon the prosperity of your chosen ones, that I may **rejoice** in the gladness of your nation, that I may glory with your inheritance.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

46. [Psalm 118:24](#)

This is the day that the LORD has made; let us **rejoice** and be glad in it.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

47. [Psalm 119:74](#)

Those who fear you shall see me and **rejoice**, because I have hoped in your word.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

48. [Psalm 119:162](#)

I **rejoice** at your word like one who finds great spoil.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

49. [Psalm 149:2](#)

Let Israel be glad in his Maker; let the children of Zion **rejoice** in their King!

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

50. [Proverbs 2:14](#)

who **rejoice** in doing evil and delight in the perverseness of evil,

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

51. [Proverbs 5:18](#)

Let your fountain be blessed, and **rejoice** in the wife of your youth,

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

52. [Proverbs 11:10](#)

When it goes well with the righteous, the city **rejoices**, and when the wicked perish there are shouts of gladness.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

53. [Proverbs 13:9](#)

The light of the righteous **rejoices**, but the lamp of the wicked will be put out.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

54. [Proverbs 15:30](#)

The light of the eyes **rejoices** the heart, and good news refreshes the bones.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

55. [Proverbs 23:24](#)

The father of the righteous will greatly **rejoice**; he who fathers a wise son will be glad in him.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

56. [Proverbs 23:25](#)

Let your father and mother be glad; let her who bore you **rejoice**.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

57. [Proverbs 24:17](#)

Do not **rejoice** when your enemy falls, and let not your heart be glad when he stumbles,

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

58. [Proverbs 29:2](#)

When the righteous increase, the people **rejoice**, but when the wicked rule, the people groan.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

59. [Proverbs 29:6](#)

An evil man is ensnared in his transgression, but a righteous man sings and **rejoices**.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

60. [Ecclesiastes 3:22](#)

So I saw that there is nothing better than that a man should **rejoice** in his work, for that is his lot. Who can bring him to see what will be after him?

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

61. [Ecclesiastes 4:16](#)

There was no end of all the people, all of whom he led. Yet those who come later will not **rejoice** in him. Surely this also is vanity and a striving after wind.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

62. [Ecclesiastes 5:19](#)

Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and **rejoice** in his toil—this is the gift of God.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

63. [Ecclesiastes 11:8](#)

So if a person lives many years, let him **rejoice** in them all; but let him remember that the days of darkness will be many. All that comes is vanity.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

64. [Ecclesiastes 11:9](#)

**Rejoice**, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

65. [Song of Solomon 1:4](#)

Draw me after you; let us run. The king has brought me into his chambers.

Others

We will exult and **rejoice** in you; we will extol your love more than wine; rightly do they love you.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

66. [Isaiah 8:6](#)

"Because this people has refused the waters of Shiloah that flow gently, and **rejoice** over Rezin and the son of Remaliah,

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

67. [Isaiah 9:3](#)

You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they **rejoice** before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

68. [Isaiah 9:17](#)

Therefore the Lord does not **rejoice** over their young men, and has no compassion on their fatherless and widows; for everyone is godless and an evildoer, and every mouth speaks folly. For all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

69. [Isaiah 14:8](#)

The cypresses **rejoice** at you, the cedars of Lebanon, saying, 'Since you were laid low, no woodcutter comes up against us.'

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

70. [Isaiah 14:29](#)

**Rejoice** not, O Philistia, all of you, that the rod that struck you is broken, for from the serpent's root will come forth an adder, and its fruit will be a flying fiery serpent.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

71. [Isaiah 25:9](#)

It will be said on that day, "Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and **rejoice** in his salvation."

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

72. [Isaiah 35:1](#)

### The Ransomed Shall Return

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall **rejoice** and blossom like the crocus;

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

73. [Isaiah 35:2](#)

it shall blossom abundantly and **rejoice** with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

74. [Isaiah 41:16](#)

you shall winnow them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the tempest shall scatter them. And you shall **rejoice** in the LORD; in the Holy One of Israel you shall glory.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

75. [Isaiah 43:14](#)

Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "For your sake I send to Babylon and bring them all down as fugitives, even the Chaldeans, in the ships in which they **rejoice**."

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

76. [Isaiah 61:7](#)

Instead of your shame there shall be a double portion; instead of dishonor they shall **rejoice** in their lot; therefore in their land they shall possess a double portion; they shall have everlasting joy.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

77. [Isaiah 61:10](#)

I will greatly **rejoice** in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

78. [Isaiah 62:5](#)

For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom **rejoices** over the bride, so shall your God **rejoice** over you.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

79. [Isaiah 65:13](#)

Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, my servants shall eat, but you shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty; behold, my servants shall **rejoice**, but you shall be put to shame;

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

80. [Isaiah 65:18](#)

But be glad and **rejoice** forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

81. [Isaiah 65:19](#)

I will **rejoice** in Jerusalem and be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

82. [Isaiah 66:7](#)

### **Rejoice** with Jerusalem

"Before she was in labor she gave birth; before her pain came upon her she delivered a son.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

83. [Isaiah 66:10](#)

"**Rejoice** with Jerusalem, and be glad for her, all you who love her; **rejoice** with her in joy, all you who mourn over her;

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

84. [Isaiah 66:14](#)

You shall see, and your heart shall **rejoice**; your bones shall flourish like the grass; and the hand of the LORD shall be known to his servants, and he shall show his indignation against his enemies.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

1. [Zephaniah 3:14](#)

## Israel's Joy and Restoration

Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! **Rejoice** and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

### 2. [Zephaniah 3:17](#)

The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will **rejoice** over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

### 3. [Zechariah 2:10](#)

Sing and **rejoice**, O daughter of Zion, for behold, I come and I will dwell in your midst, declares the LORD.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

### 4. [Zechariah 4:10](#)

For whoever has despised the day of small things shall **rejoice**, and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. "These seven are the eyes of the LORD, which range through the whole earth."

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

### 5. [Zechariah 9:9](#)

## The Coming King of Zion

**Rejoice** greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

### 6. [Zechariah 10:7](#)

Then Ephraim shall become like a mighty warrior, and their hearts shall be glad as with wine. Their children shall see it and be glad; their hearts shall **rejoice** in the LORD.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

### 7. [Matthew 2:10](#)

When they saw the star, they **rejoiced** exceedingly with great joy.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

### 8. [Matthew 5:12](#)

**Rejoice** and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

### 9. [Matthew 18:13](#)

And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he **rejoices** over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

### 10. [Luke 1:14](#)

And you will have joy and gladness, and many will **rejoice** at his birth,

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

### 11. [Luke 1:47](#)

and my spirit **rejoices** in God my Savior,  
[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

12. [Luke 1:58](#)

And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they **rejoiced** with her.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

13. [Luke 6:23](#)

**Rejoice** in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

14. [Luke 10:20](#)

Nevertheless, do not **rejoice** in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but **rejoice** that your names are written in heaven."

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

15. [Luke 10:21](#)

### Jesus **Rejoices** in the Father's Will

In that same hour he **rejoiced** in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

16. [Luke 13:17](#)

As he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame, and all the people **rejoiced** at all the glorious things that were done by him.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

17. [Luke 15:6](#)

And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, '**Rejoice** with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.'

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

18. [Luke 15:9](#)

And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, '**Rejoice** with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.'

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

19. [Luke 19:37](#)

As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to **rejoice** and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen,

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

20. [John 3:29](#)

The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, **rejoices** greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

21. [John 4:36](#)

Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may **rejoice** together.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

22. [John 5:35](#)

He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to **rejoice** for a while in his light.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

23. [John 8:56](#)

Your father Abraham **rejoiced** that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad."

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

24. [John 14:28](#)

You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have **rejoiced**, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

25. [John 16:20](#)

Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will **rejoice**. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

26. [John 16:22](#)

So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will **rejoice**, and no one will take your joy from you.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

27. [Acts 2:26](#)

therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue **rejoiced**; my flesh also will dwell in hope.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

28. [Acts 15:31](#)

And when they had read it, they **rejoiced** because of its encouragement.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

29. [Acts 16:34](#)

Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he **rejoiced** along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

30. [Romans 5:2](#)

Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we **rejoice** in hope of the glory of God.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

31. [Romans 5:3](#)

Not only that, but we **rejoice** in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

32. [Romans 5:11](#)

More than that, we also **rejoice** in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

33. [Romans 12:12](#)

**Rejoice** in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

34. [Romans 12:15](#)

**Rejoice** with those who **rejoice**, weep with those who weep.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

35. [Romans 15:10](#)

And again it is said, "**Rejoice**, O Gentiles, with his people."

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

36. [Romans 16:19](#)

For your obedience is known to all, so that I **rejoice** over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

37. [1 Corinthians 7:30](#)

and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who **rejoice** as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods,

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

38. [1 Corinthians 12:26](#)

If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all **rejoice** together.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

39. [1 Corinthians 13:6](#)

it does not **rejoice** at wrongdoing, but **rejoices** with the truth.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

40. [1 Corinthians 16:17](#)

I **rejoice** at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have made up for your absence,

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

41. [2 Corinthians 2:3](#)

And I wrote as I did, so that when I came I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me **rejoice**, for I felt sure of all of you, that my joy would be the joy of you all.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

42. [2 Corinthians 7:7](#)

and not only by his coming but also by the comfort with which he was comforted by you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I **rejoiced** still more.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

43. [2 Corinthians 7:9](#)

As it is, I **rejoice**, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

44. [2 Corinthians 7:13](#)

Therefore we are comforted. And besides our own comfort, we **rejoiced** still more at the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

45. [2 Corinthians 7:16](#)

I **rejoice**, because I have complete confidence in you.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

46. [2 Corinthians 13:11](#)

### Final Greetings

Finally, brothers, **rejoice**. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

47. [Galatians 4:27](#)

For it is written, “**Rejoice**, O barren one who does not bear; break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor! For the children of the desolate one will be more than those of the one who has a husband.”

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

48. [Philippians 1:18](#)

What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I **rejoice**.

### To Live Is Christ

Yes, and I will **rejoice**,

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

49. [Philippians 2:17](#)

Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and **rejoice** with you all.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

50. [Philippians 2:18](#)

Likewise you also should be glad and **rejoice** with me.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

51. [Philippians 2:28](#)

I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may **rejoice** at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

52. [Philippians 3:1](#)

### Righteousness Through Faith in Christ

Finally, my brothers, **rejoice** in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

53. [Philippians 4:4](#)

**Rejoice** in the Lord always; again I will say, **rejoice**.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

54. [Philippians 4:10](#)

## God's Provision

I **rejoiced** in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

### 55. [Colossians 1:24](#)

#### Paul's Ministry to the Church

Now I **rejoice** in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church,

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

### 56. [1 Thessalonians 5:16](#)

**Rejoice** always,

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

### 57. [1 Peter 1:6](#)

In this you **rejoice**, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

### 58. [1 Peter 1:8](#)

Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and **rejoice** with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

### 59. [1 Peter 4:13](#)

But **rejoice** insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also **rejoice** and be glad when his glory is revealed.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

### 60. [2 John 1:4](#)

#### Walking in Truth and Love

I **rejoiced** greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we were commanded by the Father.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

### 61. [3 John 1:3](#)

For I **rejoiced** greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

### 62. [Revelation 11:10](#)

and those who dwell on the earth will **rejoice** over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

### 63. [Revelation 12:12](#)

Therefore, **rejoice**, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

64. [Revelation 18:20](#)

**Rejoice** over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, for God has given judgment for you against her!"

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

65. [Revelation 19:7](#)

Let us **rejoice** and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

## One Anothers in the New Testament:

**LOVE** one another—John 13:34-35; 15:12, 17; Romans 12:10; 13:8; 14:13; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; 4:9; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11-12; 2 John 1:5

**SERVE** one another—Gal. 5:13, 22; Philippians 2:3; 1 Peter 4:9; 5:5

**ACCEPT** one another—Romans 15:7, 14

**STRENGTHEN** one another—Romans 14:19

**HELP** one another—Hebrews 3:13; 10:24

**ENCOURAGE** one another—Romans 14:19; 15:14; Colossians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 3:13; 10:24-25

**CARE** for one another—Galatians 6:2

**FORGIVE** one another—Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13

**SUBMIT** to one another—Ephesians 5:21; 1 Peter 5:5

**COMMIT** to one another—1 John 3:16

**BUILD TRUST** with one another—1 John 1:7

**BE DEVOTED** to one another—Romans 12:10

**BE PATIENT** with one another—Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13

**BE INTERESTED** in one another—Philippians 2:4

**BE ACCOUNTABLE** to one another—Ephesians 5:21

**CONFESS** to one another—James 5:16

**LIVE IN HARMONY** with one another—Romans 12:16

**DO NOT BE CONCEITED** with one another—Romans 13:10

**DO NOT PASS JUDGMENT** on one another—Romans 14:13; 15:7

**DO NOT SLANDER** one another—James 4:11

**INSTRUCT** one another—Romans 15:14

**GREET** one another—Romans 16:16; 2 Corinthians 13:12

**ADMONISH** one another—1 Thessalonians 5:14; Colossians 3:16

**SPUR** one another toward love & good deeds—Hebrews 10:24

**MEET** with one another—Hebrews 10:25

**AGREE** with one another—1 Corinthians 1:10

**BE CONCERNED** for one another—Hebrews 10:24

**BE HUMBLE** to one another—Ephesians 4:2

**BE COMPASSIONATE** to one another—Ephesians 4:32

**DO NOT BE CONSUMED** by one another—Galatians 5:14-15

**DO NOT ANGER** one another—Galatians 5:26

**DO NOT LIE** to one another—Colossians 3:9

**DO NOT GRUMBLE** against one another—James 5:9

**GIVE PREFERENCE** to one another—Romans 12:10

**BE AT PEACE** with one another—Romans 12:18

**SING** with one another—Ephesians 5:19

**BE OF THE SAME MIND** with one another—Romans 12:16; 15:5

**COMFORT** one another—1 Thessalonians 4:18; 5:11

**BE KIND** to one another—Ephesians 4:32

**LIVE IN PEACE** with one another—1 Thessalonians 5:13

**CARRY** one another's burdens—Galatians 6:2

# Philippians Teachings by Gary DeLashmutt

## Joy & Christ-Centered Relationship (Philippians 1:1-8)

### Introduction

This morning we begin a study of Philippians. Let's dive right in (read 1:1,2). This is a letter from Paul (a key leader in the early Christian movement) to the Christians in Philippi (MAP). Paul started this church 10 years earlier (see Acts 16), and has maintained an ongoing relationship with them. They have recently sent Paul a money gift that helps him carry on his ministry to Christians and seekers. This letter is a "thank you" note and much more, as we will see.

This letter is known as the "joy letter." Paul uses the noun ("joy") 5 times and the verb ("rejoice") 8 times, and the entire letter exudes an attitude of joy. We would expect that Paul must be vacationing on some Greek island, playing great golf every day, etc. But no! He is imprisoned in Rome, chained to Roman guards and awaiting trial and possible execution for a crime he didn't commit! Paul's joy is very different from American happiness.

"Happiness" derives from the word "happen" or "happenstance," and refers to the pleasant feelings that come from favorable circumstances. I usually feel happy on vacation because I am where I want to be, with the people I like being with, doing what I like to do. There is nothing wrong with this – happiness is a blessing from God. But since happiness is dependent on favorable circumstances, it is extremely fragile. And those who build their lives around it get caught in a futile attempt to control their circumstances or a continual search for better circumstances. Pursuing it is therefore not a wise goal for your life.

"Joy," as it is used in this letter, is not just a feeling, although it involves your feelings. It is related to peace and hope – deep-seated sense of well-being that God grants us as we trust in Him (read Rom. 15:13). Therefore, it is independent of your circumstances, and you can have it even when you are unhappy (2 Cor. 6:10a).

So as we study this letter, let's keep an eye out for keys to joy. The next paragraph introduces us to one of these keys (read 1:3-8).

### Joy & Christ-centered relationships

Notice the connection between Paul's joy (1:4) and his relationship with the Philippians (1:3,7,8). His Christ-centered relationship with them is a reason for his joy (read 4:1a).

Paul would not have been surprised at the findings of the Harvard Study of Adult Development.<sup>[1]</sup> It has studied 724 men over the past 75 years – by far the longest study of its kind. The men came from widely different backgrounds (Harvard students; inner-city poor). The study has interviewed them every 2 years (personal information; family members; medical tests & records). They are seeking to identify factors that correlate with happiness (defined more like “joy” above). The fourth director of the study, Robert Waldinger, summarized their findings this way: “Wealth, fame and career success do *not* correlate with true happiness . . . Good relationships keep us happier and healthier – period.” Having many social connections (vs. isolation), warm and affectionate relationships (vs. alienation; bitterness), and securely-attached relationships (vs. moving on) were the key relational factors that predict significantly greater happiness. Waldinger says that Americans want to be happy as much as anyone, but they look for it in the wrong places (i.e. wealth, fame and career success), and they want quick-fixes for their unhappiness. Does this sound familiar? Harvard could have saved a lot of money by studying Philippians!

Christians have a unique resource for building relationships that contribute to joy. Paul calls it “the affection of Christ” (1:8) or “the affection that comes from Christ.” When you receive Christ, you gain access to His deep love for you, and His love can flow out through you to others (quote and explain Jn. 7:37). As we continue to receive His love and give His love to others, we experience deepening joy (quote Jn. 15:10-12).

Let's take a closer look at what characterized Paul's Christ-centered relationship with the Philippians that resulted in joy. I see three features in this passage (more to come), that apply to all of our key relationships with other Christians (e.g., spouse; children; home church members; people we're discipling, etc.) . . .

### **Partnering in sharing Christ's love with others**

Re-read 1:3-5. His joy is connected to (“in view of”) their “participation in the gospel from the first day until now.” “Participation” is *koinonia*, which means “to share in common” or “to be in partnership.”

Re-read 1:7 – “partakers” is *sugkoinonos*, which means “joint partners.” Ever since the Philippians received Christ they have partnered with Paul in spreading the good news about God's grace to other people. They did this by sharing Christ with people in Philippi, and by contributing financially to Paul's church-planting ministry. This ten-year joint partnership gave Paul great joy!

It's not rocket science that serving a greater cause together is a key ingredient of relational bonding that leads to joy (“BAND OF BROTHERS”). Conversely, ingrown relationships, relationships that focus primarily on enjoying one another eventually sour and implode. But when a key part of our relationship is being a team to serve others (family, friends, church, community), this brings an added dimension that we were designed to have and enjoy.

What is true in general (above) is true especially of Christ-centered friendships. When we have a consumer attitude about Christian fellowship (“Am I getting my needs met? Is this meeting my expectations?”), we will inevitably be disappointed and wrongly conclude that we need to “move on” (church-shopping). But when we relate as team-members to give Christ's love to others (e.g., build

others up at meetings; reach out to non-Christian friends; pray for others; serve practically together; etc.), God's Spirit fills us – and one of His fruits is joy (Gal. 5:22). Over time, this joy deepens as we accumulate a backlog of experiences of serving together, seeing God work through us to impact others for Christ, and (sometimes) seeing people respond to Him.

Do you make serving others a priority in your key Christian relationships? If you have unsatisfying relationships, this omission is likely a key reason. How much joy do you want?

### **Believing in God's commitment to transform our lives**

Re-read 1:4,6 (NLT). Paul's joy is also connected to his confidence in God's commitment to transform their lives into increasing Christ-likeness. This is "the good work" in 1:6, and Paul will describe it in more detail in 1:9-11 (NEXT WEEK).

God begins this good work when we receive Christ. At that moment, God permanently unites us with Christ, so that we receive both His righteous standing before God and His Spirit.

God continues this good work throughout our Christian lives. His Spirit constantly imparts both the motivation and power to please God (2:13) and transform our characters (Gal. 5:22,23). We can block God's transformation, but we cannot stop Him from initiating it. This is why there is always hope for the rest of our lives, no matter how big our problems are or how much we have messed up.

God will complete this good work when Christ returns. The moment we see Him, we will be transformed to be fully like Him in character and body (Col. 3:4; 1 Jn. 3:2).

So a key to Christian relationships that result in joy is focusing on and believing in God's commitment to grow our friends. We don't naively "believe in them" because they (like we) are deeply broken and sinful; we believe in the God who is at work in them (CHILCOTE TO BEV). We don't take responsibility to change them; we cooperate with the God who takes responsibility to change them (and us). When we have this focus, we can be realistic and yet hopeful – and therefore patient and persistent with one another over the long haul. Such relationships often ripen into mutual joy.

"Paul had learned the discipline of looking at people through the lens of God's grace . . . (For many Christians) the dominant approach to life (is) that . . . 'people are bad.' And because of that they see bad in people. That's not the biblical lifestyle. The biblical lifestyle is that where sin abounds, grace super-abounds. If you are . . . thrilled by grace, you recognize (His) grace (at work) in another person. And this recognizing of grace in others is one of the keys to joy in our lives."[2]

Do you cultivate this focus in your relationships – or do you focus on their flaws and short-comings and disappointments? Do you pray for them along these lines (first affirming this and then thanking God for evidence of it) – or do you mainly angst and complain about them to God? Do you remind them of this promise, recount evidence of it in them, counter their discouragement with this – or do you tolerate or agree with their-self-negativity?

### **Expressing appreciation to God & the other person**

Paul begins by telling the Philippians how often he thanks God for them (1:3), and he ends by telling them that God knows the affection he has for them (1:8). Imagine how it affected the Philippians to hear Paul say: “You are an important – and positive – part of my relationship with God!” Talking to God about them in this way gave Paul joy (1:4), and telling them that he talked to God about them this way gave him more joy!

Paul begins all but two of his letters this way (Galatians & 2 Corinthians). He isn’t engaging in flattery in order to manipulate the recipients. He isn’t being Pollyanna, because he is willing to address problems and challenge. He does this because it is true – he really has found evidence of God’s work in their lives, he really has thanked God for this evidence, and he so completes the circle by telling them about the evidence for which he thanks God.

Here is a powerful habit that helps to build healthy Christ-centered friendships and leads to increasing joy. This is not complicated; you don’t need to be a relational Ninja to do this. You can express your appreciation directly and simply (“I appreciate the way you . . .”). You can tell them, like Paul does, that you thank God for them. You can express appreciation to God as you pray with them. You can “gossip” your appreciation to others.

What hinders us from practicing this and modeling it others? Do any of these answers sound familiar?

“I didn’t know this.” Well, you are ignorant no longer – God has enlightened you!

“I don’t see anything I appreciate.” Is it possible that you take the relationship for granted? How about thinking about this and asking God to help you see?

“He already knows that I appreciate him.” How does he know? How long ago did you tell him? How often do you tell him? Does God take this position with you?

“It feels awkward to express this.” Does that make it fake? Sincerity matters more to God than naturalness! As you practice this, it will become more natural and enjoyable.”

“I don’t want her to expect this from me.” Isn’t that issue between her and God? Isn’t this issue between you and God?

“This sounds like work.” It is – Christ-centered friendships involve intentionality and practice. But it is good work, if you can get it!

## Conclusion

SUMMARIZE: Don’t specialize! These are like the legs of a stool – each is necessary if you want to sit on it. Which leg is the Holy Spirit showing you needs attention? What step is He asking you to take to do this? He will empower you, bless others, and increase your joy as you do this!

**[1]** For a summary, see Robert Waldinger: “What makes a good life? Lessons from the longest study on happiness” on TED.com.

[2] Ajith Fernando, *The Fullness of Christ* (London: Keswick Ministries, 2007), pp. 88,89.

## Paul's Prayer (Philippians 1:9-11) by Mike Sullivan

### God's Sovereignty & Joy (Philippians 1:12-18)

#### Introduction

Briefly review author and audience (MAP). We noted two weeks ago that Philippians is often called the "joy letter." Paul uses the noun ("joy") 5 times and the verb ("rejoice") 8 times, and the entire letter exudes an attitude of joy. We would expect that Paul must be vacationing on some Greek island, playing great golf every day, etc. Instead, he is imprisoned in Rome, chained to Roman guards and awaiting trial and possible execution for a crime he didn't commit! This highlights the profound difference between Christian joy and American happiness.

"Happiness" derives from the word "happen" or "happenstance," and refers to the pleasant feelings that come from favorable circumstances. I usually feel happy on vacation because I am where I want to be, with the people I like being with, doing what I like to do. There is nothing wrong with this – happiness is a blessing from God. But since happiness is dependent on favorable circumstances, it is extremely fragile in a fallen world. Pursuing it is therefore not a wise goal for your life.

"Joy," as it is used in this letter, is not just a feeling, although it involves your feelings. It is related to peace and hope – deep-seated sense of well-being that God grants us as we trust in Him (read Rom. 15:13). Therefore, it is entirely independent of your circumstances, and you can have it even when you are unhappy (2 Cor. 6:10a).

What does it look like to "trust God" in this way? We get one answer to this question in 1:12-18a (read). Before we look at the details of this passage, it is important to understand the theological truth implied: God is sovereign over our adverse circumstances – namely, He is able to advance His purpose (Eph. 1:11,12) and our good through them (Rom. 8:28). Because Paul trusted God sovereignty, he looked for His sovereign activity in his wrongful imprisonment. And when he saw glimpses of this, it gave him joy.

#### God's sovereignty & the progress of the gospel

Re-read 1:12. Paul knew that God's purpose involves "the greater progress of the gospel" – spreading His message of salvation through Jesus' followers to people who don't yet understand or believe it. This is not about arrogant people coercing others to submit to their opinion; it is about humble people sharing God's good news to others ("One beggar telling another beggar where to find bread"). This is heart of biblical Christianity: Humanity is infected with a lethal disease (sin). God, because He loves us, has provided the antidote through Jesus (His death for our sins), and He is offering this antidote through people who have already received it and can testify to its effectiveness.

Because God is sovereign, He can create opportunities to spread His message in even terrible circumstances. Note how Paul saw this in his circumstances:

God gave him unique opportunities to share this message through his imprisonment (1:13). The Roman imperial guards to whom he was chained became his captive audience, and they spread the message to other guards. “Everyone else” includes the many people who visited him as he was under house arrest (Acts 28:30), and the people at his legal hearings.

God also used the news of Paul’s example to strengthen the Roman Christians to share this message (1:14,15b,16). Whereas before they may have been especially fearful (“If I can get arrested like Paul for sharing, I’d better keep quiet”), Paul’s example gave them courage (“If God can strengthen Paul to share in his situation, He can certainly strengthen me”). Their love for Paul motivated them to share in his sufferings in this way.

God even used the carnal motives of some of the Roman Christians to spread this message (1:15a,17). Certain Roman church leaders evidently felt jealous of and threatened by Paul’s presence in Rome. When they heard that Paul had been sharing the gospel with so many people, they evidently stepped up their own outreach in order to compete with Paul’s popularity. This motivation is messed up, which is why Paul critiques it. But before you throw a self-righteous snit, look in the mirror. Am I the only one who has shared Christ with people so I could boast about it to other Christians? Am I the only one who (as a single) has invited girls to Bible studies in the hope that they would come to Christ and date me? God doesn’t justify this behavior, but He graciously works even through our mixed motives to get the message of His love to others! Isn’t this a better problem than fearful, silent Christians?

So Paul’s imprisonment, which was meant by his captors to *prevent* the spread of the gospel, has actually been used by God to *increase* its progress. As he sees how God is confirming his trust in His sovereignty, he rejoices (1:18a).**[1]**

There is obvious application for all of us who belong to Christ. We have the same message Paul had. We have the same privilege of sharing it with others. We have the same God who is sovereign over our adverse circumstances, and is working through them to forge opportunities to share the message. And we have the same opportunity to experience joy as we see God doing this through us.

A Russian Jewish doctor was imprisoned in the Soviet prison-camp system during the 1950’s. Somehow in this hell-hole (through other Christians who had Paul’s perspective), he came to faith in Jesus as the Messiah. Forced to serve in the prison infirmary, he began to protest the mistreatment of his patients – arousing the ill will of the guards. One day, as a fellow-prisoner was regaining consciousness after surgery, he felt prompted to talk to him about his new-found faith in Jesus. The next morning, the doctor was killed by the guards – but what he shared made a deep impression on his patient. A short time later, he came to faith in Christ and shook the world through his books which exposed the evils of Soviet communism. His name was Alexander Solzhenitsyn (BOOKS). He also knew the joy that comes from trusting God’s sovereignty in this way, which is expressed in this poem:

How easy for me to live with You, O Lord! . . .

You grant me the serene certitude

that You exist and that You will take care  
that not all the paths of good be closed.  
Atop the ridge of earthly fame,  
I look back in wonder at the path  
which I alone could never have found,  
a wondrous path through despair to this point  
from which I, too, could transmit to mankind  
a reflection of Your rays.  
And as much as I must still reflect  
You will give me.  
But as much as I cannot take up  
You will have already assigned to others.

What about you? You are not imprisoned, but you have adverse circumstances. How might God be working through your adverse circumstances to give you opportunities to share your faith? Some of you have serious health problems, but you've seen how this has created opportunities to share your faith with medical people and fellow-patients. Some of you don't like your current job, you've seen how this has given you opportunities to share your faith with certain employees. Some of you have painful family difficulties, but you've seen how God is giving you an opportunity to reach out to them in love. Some of you have suffered a personal tragedy, but you've seen how God is giving you an opportunity to share your hope in Christ with others who have suffered a similar tragedy. This doesn't take away the adverse circumstances or the pain, but it does produce real joy! Ask God to open your eyes to see how He is working in this way in your life!

### **God's sovereignty & our personal welfare**

The Bible has a lot more to say about God's sovereignty over our adverse circumstances. God never pits His purpose against our personal welfare (Rom. 8:28).

God works through our adverse circumstances to persuade us of our need for Christ. We naturally trust ourselves and other idols we think we can control to make life work. Left to ourselves, we would stubbornly live our entire lives this way, and then sail off to hell when we die. But God pursues us through His "severe mercy" – He works especially through adverse circumstances to show us that we need to come to Him (LEWIS: "God whispers to us in our pleasures, but shouts to us in our pain. Pain is God's megaphone to rouse a deaf world"). Read and explain Hos. 2:6,7.

You may think: “So you’re saying that Christianity is a crutch for weak people.” Yes! We are all finite, contingent beings. We all need a crutch and we all use crutches to get through life (EXAMPLES). The question is not: Will I use a crutch? It is: Which crutch is strong enough to bear the weight of life in this broken world? Only the God of the Bible and His Son Jesus Christ. Will you lean on Him?

Once you come to faith in Christ, God works through our adverse circumstances to transform our character to be more Christ-like. Read Rom. 5:3,4.

God knows the length and difficulty of the race He has set before you. He knows how much perseverance you need, and He is working through your adverse circumstances to develop that perseverance.

God knows the ways your pride has twisted your heart and life. He works especially through your adverse circumstances to burn away your pride and work genuine humility into you, which is profoundly healing to your soul.

God knows your misplaced hopes for the future. He works especially through your adverse circumstances to expose these false hopes so that you place your hope in Him alone (in this life and the next life).

God sovereignly advances our personal welfare through adverse circumstances in many other ways: “We should not be . . . too taken aback when unexpected and upsetting and discouraging things happen to us now. What do they mean? Why, simply that God in His wisdom means to make something of us which we have not attained yet, and is dealing with us accordingly. Perhaps He means to strengthen us in patience, good humor, compassion, humility, or meekness, by giving us some extra practice in exercising these graces under specially difficult conditions. Perhaps He has new lessons in self-denial and self-distrust to teach us. Perhaps He wishes to break us of complacency, or unreality, or undetected forms of pride and conceit . . . Perhaps His purpose is to draw us closer to Himself in conscious communion with Him; for it is often the case . . . that fellowship with (God) is most vivid and sweet, and Christian joy is greatest, when the cross is heaviest. Or perhaps God is preparing us for forms of service of which at present we have no inkling.”<sup>[2]</sup>

## Conclusion

This profound and mysterious truth challenges us to look at our adverse circumstances in a different way. No longer do we have to live as victims. No longer do we have to react to them with bitterness and hate (Gen. 50:15-21). No longer do we have to be cynical. Because God is sovereign, no person or circumstance can prevent God from accomplishing His good purpose for our lives. Because God is sovereign, our one great enemy is our own unwillingness to trust His sovereign wisdom and goodness. The more we trust God in this way, the more God will show us glimpses of how He is doing this. And the more glimpses we see, the more joy we will have!

## Joy Rooted in Hope (Philippians 1:18-26)

### Introduction

Briefly review author and audience (MAP). We've noted that Philippians is often called the "joy letter." Paul uses the noun ("joy") 5 times and the verb ("rejoice") 8 times, and the entire letter exudes an attitude of joy. We would expect that Paul has just won the lottery and retired to his new home on some Greek island. Instead, he is imprisoned in Rome, chained to Roman guards and awaiting trial for a crime he didn't commit! This highlights the profound difference between Christian joy and American happiness.

"Happiness" derives from the word "happen" or "happenstance," and refers to the pleasant feelings that come from favorable circumstances. I usually feel happy on vacation because I am where I want to be, with the people I like being with, doing what I like to do. There is nothing wrong with this – happiness is a blessing from God. But since happiness is dependent on favorable circumstances, it is extremely fragile in a fallen world. Pursuing it is therefore not a wise goal for your life.

"Joy," as it is used in this letter, is not just a feeling, although it involves your feelings. It is a deep-seated sense of well-being that God grants us as we trust in Him. Therefore, it is entirely independent of your circumstances, and you can have it even when you feel sorrow (2 Cor. 6:10a).

Read Rom. 15:13. Notice how joy is closely connected to hope, which is confidence about a good future. "Joy is the settled assurance that God is in control of all the details of my life, *the quiet confidence that ultimately everything is going to be all right*, and the determined choice to praise God in all things." (Kay Warren, *Choosing Joy*).

In our passage (1:18b-26), Paul rejoices because of his hope regarding his future. Let's try to understand this in detail, and then apply it to our lives . . .

### **Paul's hope regarding his future**

Paul is about to go on trial for sedition before emperor Nero, who was corrupt and a few years later (64 AD) slaughtered Christians (including Paul & Peter). Nero will either execute Paul or acquit and release him. How would you view this situation? Would you be freaking out? Would you be worrying about how your lawyer will perform? Would you be worrying about what kind of mood Nero will be in?

In 1:18b-26, Paul tells us how he views his future. He begins by saying "I will rejoice" (read 1:18b). Why?

Read 1:19. Because Paul knows that he will ultimately be delivered. He may be referring to acquittal, but more may be involved (see below).

Read 1:20. Because he knows that God's Spirit (in response to their prayers) will enable him to speak boldly about Jesus at his trial, regardless of the verdict.

Read 1:21-26. Paul's life is bound up with Jesus, who is sovereign over life and death. Therefore, the future is a "win-win" situation:

If he is executed, he gets to be Christ's full presence forever (1:21,23). This is "very much better" than any aspect of this life (read 2 Cor. 5:6-8; ALSO: resurrected body; no sin nature or demons; reunion with believing loved ones; reward for service; etc.). This is why "to die is gain."

If he is released, he gets to continue in meaningful service for Christ (1:22,24,25). This “fruitful labor” isn’t a well-paying job. It is spiritual labor, influencing people toward Jesus – sharing the good news about Jesus to people who don’t know Him (1:13) and helping Christians grow in their faith in Jesus (1:25).

How different Paul’s attitude is from our secular culture!

Most Americans want to pursue happiness in this life at all costs (SCHLITZ COMMERCIAL), and they view death as the end of life, to be avoided at all costs (OPDIVO COMMERCIAL<sup>[1]</sup>).

Paul prefers to go to the next life, but he is willing to stay longer in this life to serve others for Christ’s sake. Far from feeling like a victim of Nero, or of fate, he playfully ruminates over what he should “choose” (1:22)! He is not asserting his control of the situation. He is expressing confidence in Jesus’ sovereignty over life and death, and therefore the “win-win” “dilemma” it poses for him.

Is Paul’s hope regarding his future relevant to us? Is it possible for us to view our futures as a “win-win” situation? It is easy to read this passage and admire Paul’s perspective – and yet discount its relevance to us (“Paul was a spiritual super-hero;” “My situation is different from Paul’s”). Yet the very reason Paul explains his perspective is to help the Philippians in their uncertain situation (1:30). God is willing and able to give each of us the same hope about our futures that Paul has.

A year and a half ago, I was returning from Ireland and praying on the plane. As I was praying, I sensed the Lord summoning me to give Him my body and my health. This was strange to me; I had never prayed this way before – but it was certainly biblical, so I did what I felt He was asking me to do. One day later I found myself in the critical care unit because of a hypertension emergency. I don’t think I was actually in danger of death – but there were a couple of times over those five days when I wondered. I certainly realized in a new way how fragile my physical life is. Since no cause was found, the thought lingered even after I was released: “Will this happen again? Is my health failing?” As I wrestled with these questions, this very passage came alive to me like never before. I realized that, like Paul, that this would turn out for my deliverance. If I died, I would be with Christ and all that this entails. And until that time, Christ would give me fruitful labor for Him, even if my health declined (EXAMPLES). So my situation was a “win-win,” just like Paul’s! Now, I have to admit that my attitude was a little different than Paul’s. His was: “I prefer to go, but I’m willing to stay.” Mine was: “I prefer to stay, but I’m willing to go.” Yet even that less-than-perfect attitude resulted in genuine hope and peace (and even a little joy) about my future!

### **Hope for the future requires trust in the God of the Bible**

What enables us to have this hope and joy? Re-read Rom. 15:13 – the Holy Spirit mediates hope and joy to us “as you trust in Him.” What does this trust look like?

It is *informed* trust, not blind faith or wishful thinking.

It is grounded in the unique historical evidence for Jesus’ bodily resurrection. Jesus’ resurrection is one of the best attested facts of ancient history. There are many lines of evidence for Jesus’ resurrection, including Paul’s conversion. How can we explain why this man who was Christianity’s foremost enemy suddenly became its foremost advocate, a decision which cost him his position, family, earthly security,

and ultimately his life? Paul's consistent answer was that the risen Jesus appeared to him when he was on his way to Damascus to persecute Christians. Other explanations for Paul's conversion (e.g., guilt-complex; epilepsy; hallucination) ironically require more faith than Paul's explanation. It is on this basis that the Bible says that those who belong to Jesus will also be resurrected (2 Cor. 4:14).

It is grounded in the unique track-record of biblical predictive prophecy. No other "scripture" has anything like the Bible's hundreds of specific predictions of future events (e.g., the formation of the Jewish nation, the rise and fall of named empires, the First Coming of the Messiah, and the exile and return of the Jews to Israel [twice]). Since at least 75% of the Bible's predictions have been fulfilled, we have reasonable trust that the other 25% (which includes the Second Coming of Christ and God's eternal kingdom) will also be fulfilled.

It is also grounded in the testimony of millions of other Christians.

It is *personal* trust, not mere intellectual assent or 100% certainty.

Trust in Jesus is based on evidence (see above), but it is a decision to entrust yourself to Jesus as your Savior (read Jn. 1:12). You may have a reasonable basis to trust the competency of a surgeon to operate on you – but until you personally entrust yourself to him, you cannot benefit from his competence. In the same way, you may have a reasonable basis to trust that Jesus is the Messiah who has the power to reconcile you to God – but until you personally entrust yourself to Him, you cannot benefit from His death, and you cannot experience His Spirit who begins to impart His hope to your soul.

Trust in Jesus is based on evidence, but it is not 100% certainty. You can trust Jesus personally without having 100%/perfect faith, just as you can trust that surgeon while still having some doubts – and still benefit from his competence.

If you don't entrust yourself to Jesus, no other world-view provides a solid hope for life after death. If you are an atheist, you have no hope for an afterlife, and no basis for any ultimate meaning to your life.<sup>[2]</sup> If you are a pantheist, you are sentenced to keep coming back in different life forms until you are finally dissolved into the impersonal all.<sup>[3]</sup> If you are a non-Christian theist, you can have no assurance that God will grant you eternal life because of your sinfulness.<sup>[4]</sup> Only in biblical Christianity can we be sure that God will give us eternal life despite our sinfulness – because God's acceptance is based not on our works for Him, but on Jesus' perfect and completed work for us. This is why Paul has assurance about being with Christ after he dies (not because he lived a good enough life). This is why many of us have assurance of eternal life, and you can have this assurance by receiving Jesus' gift of forgiveness.

Once you have received Jesus, trusting God involves *responsive* trust – embracing His priorities for our lives. Notice how Paul's hope is connected to his alignment with God's priority for his life (re-read 1:19,20) – making Christ known to others (1:13) and helping Christians to grow in their faith (1:25).

Many true Christians are not hopeful about their futures because they are seeking temporal happiness rather than His priorities. Often, we do not even realize this until these hopes are dashed – and we become not just sad, but despondent and/or angry at God (e.g., NO SPOUSE; DIFFICULT MARRIAGE; REBELLIOUS CHILD; MINISTRY DISAPPOINTMENT; DECLINING HEALTH; FINANCIAL REVERSAL; CAREER FRUSTRATION).

God loves us too much to facilitate our recipes for temporal happiness (like a Genie). He knows better than we do how easily we tend to love the gifts more than the Giver. He knows better than we do that temporal happiness is fragile, and that it never results in true fulfillment. He knows better than we do that we have been made for a much higher purpose – to grow in our relationship with Him, and to play our unique roles in influencing others toward Him. He exercises His sovereignty to advance *these* priorities. When you seek temporal happiness more than these priorities, you will feel frustrated with your relationship with Jesus – like He isn’t “coming through for you” (which He isn’t!). But when you abandon yourself to His priorities, you will discover a new awareness of present opportunities and an increasingly positive anticipation of the future. Do you have Paul’s hope? If not, maybe it is because you need to embrace/re-embrace His priorities for your life.

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[1] Opdivo is for large cell lung cancer patients, for whom other treatments have been ineffective. It may result in increased survival of 3-6 *months*, if the patient doesn’t die from the treatment or side-effects. It costs \$150,000 for the initial treatment, and \$14,000 per month for additional treatments.

[2] “Human destiny (is) an episode between two oblivions.” Ernst Nagel, “Naturalism Reconsidered” in *Essays in Philosophy*, ed. Houston Peterson (NY: Pocket Library, 1959), p. 496.

[3] “A real merging of the limited in the ocean of universal life involves complete surrender of separative existence in all its forms. Maher Baba, *Discourses* (Sufism Reoriented, Inc., 1967), 1, p. 23.

[4] Islam teaches that there is no assurance of eternal life for Muslims until after the day of judgment: “(On the Day of Reckoning) we shall . . . recount (their deeds) to them with knowledge . . . And the weighing will be just on that Day. Then those whose (deeds) are heavier in the balance will find fulfillment, and those whose (deeds) are lighter in the scale shall perish . . .” (*Quran*, Surah 7:6-9). Rabbinic Judaism likewise denies assurance of eternal life: “Two paths now lie before me, one leading to Paradise and the other to Gehinnom (hell), and I know not which I am destined to take. Should I not then weep?” (*Berachoth*, 28b. R. Alexander Feinsilver, *The Talmud for Today* [New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1980], pp. 214-216). Extra-biblical Christianity also denies assurance of eternal life: “Church teaching is that I don’t know, at any given moment, what my eternal future will be. I can hope, pray, do my very best—but I still don’t know. Pope John Paul II doesn’t absolutely know that he will go to heaven, nor does Mother Theresa of Calcutta . . .” (Cardinal O’Connor, *The New York Times*, February 1, 1990, p. B4).

## Two Insights Into Christian Unity (Philippians 1:27-22)

### Introduction

Briefly review the setting of this letter (MAP). We learn more about the Philippians’ situation in 1:27-30 (read). Like Paul, the Philippians are experiencing persecution for their faith in Christ. They also have enemies who are mistreating and even imprisoning some of them. Philippi was a Roman colony, and at

least some of the people in the Philippian church were probably Roman citizens. You might expect Paul to urge them to demand their civil rights, or to use their political clout to protest. But Paul urges a different priority (read 1:27; 2:1-2) – that they conduct themselves “worthy of the gospel” (1:27) – i.e., respond in a way that demonstrates that Christianity is true, and that attracts people to Jesus Christ.

And what is that response? That they maintain their unity with one another (1:27b; 2:2). Paul is echoing what Jesus prayed for His followers in Jn. 17 (read Jn. 17:21,23). This unity that Jesus and Paul emphasize is not an organizational unity. It is a relational unity, which is why I prefer the term “community.” Let’s look more closely at Paul’s insights into this unity – namely, its key elements and its spiritual source.

### Its key elements

In 1:27 and 2:2, Paul describes three key elements of Christian unity. What are these elements? Why are they essential for real community? How do they contrast with our culture?

One element of Christian unity is a *common source of truth*. Twice, Paul calls on the Philippians to be “of one/the same mind” (1:27; 2:2). This “one mind” has nothing to do with submitting your mind to the control of a human leader (CULTS) or to some super-human power that destroys all legitimate diversity and turns people into robots (‘THE BORG’). Rather, it is recognizing that we have a common source of objective truth and learning to relate to one another on that basis.

In another passage (1 Cor. 2:16b,13), Paul defines the “mind of Christ” as God’s perspective on every major area of life as revealed through scripture. On this basis, Paul calls the Corinthian Christians to be united (1:10).

This has titanic relevance for our culture! Many Americans complain of loneliness and alienation, and express a desire for close relationships. But most also insist on the freedom to define truth and morality for themselves – not realizing that this radical individualism is incompatible with close relationships and community. In order to have real closeness, there must be trust. And trust comes (in part) from submitting to “the truth.” When each person insists on operating by “my truth,” there is no basis for healthy closeness (DIAGRAM). Instead, there is irresolvable conflict, intimidation and unhealthy compliance, and “moving on.” “The (postmodernist defines) a person as ‘something that can be humiliated.’ (Our) sense of human solidarity is based on a sense of common danger, not on . . . a shared (truth).”<sup>[1]</sup>

How tragic! And how different the Christian position is! As people who have received absolute truth, we can agree to live under God’s truth (DIAGRAM). This is not some abstract ideal; it is very practical. We agree to *learn* biblical truth together (Col. 3:16a). We also agree to *apply* biblical truth by “speaking the truth to one another in love” (Eph. 4:15) – encouraging one another (reminding one another of God’s love, forgiveness, faithfulness, etc.) and admonishing (calling on one another to submit to God’s moral guidance in both behavior and attitude). This leads to resolvable conflict, healthy closeness, and lasting unity

Do you regularly relate to other Christians on this level? This is one of the big differences between “going to church” and “being in fellowship.” This is non-optional if you want real unity!

Another element of Christian unity is a *common outward focus*. In 2:2, Paul says that unity involves being “intent on one purpose.” In 1:27, he defines this purpose as “striving together for the faith of the gospel.” “Striving together” (*sunathleo*) means “competing as a team.” In other words, Paul is urging them to work together to both defend and spread the message of God’s love to those who don’t know Christ. Relationships must have a purpose/goal beyond just themselves. Christian community exists also to reach out to others beyond us, to help them come to Christ and grow in Him. Paul will talk more about this in 2:14-16 (2 WEEKS). This common outward focus is an essential ingredient in successful community.

Christian community/relationships that are inward-focused (DIAGRAM: tribalism; fortress; self-healing only, etc.) will inevitably deteriorate in quality. Things get boring, and then sooner or later conflict breaks out as people find things they don’t like about each other, the leadership, the ways things are being done, etc.

But when we band together to reach out beyond ourselves to others (DIAGRAM) – engaging them, praying for them, discussing how we can help them, thanking God when they come to faith in Christ and have their lives changed, willing to multiply home groups to facilitate this, etc. – the result is a teamwork unity that is both productive and personally transformative!

Are you already a Christian and considering making Xenos your church? Please consider not only what services we have to offer you, but also whether you are ready to join in with the rest of us to serve and reach out to people outside our church. If you are only interested in how we can serve you, you’re going to be like all consumers in our consumer culture - disappointed. But if you are also ready to serve as teammates, you’re going to be enriched in our community!

A third element of Christian unity is a *common understanding of love*. Paul speaks of “maintaining the same love” (2:2). The word for “love” here is *agape*. The early Christians used this little-used Greek word to emphasize that this love was different from the kinds of love that were popular in their culture (briefly define *eros* and *philia*). This love is also very different than the superficial niceness that passes for love in our culture. Paul describes this love in the next paragraph.

Read 2:3,4. This kind of love is radically other-centered. It isn’t self-absorbed (“Will he help me get what I want? Does she praise and admire me enough?”). It is self-forgetful – looking for and thinking about other people’s best interests and needs.

Read 2:5-8. This kind of love is radically sacrificial. It doesn’t insist on its rights; it willingly surrenders its rights to Christ in order to meet the needs of the loved one.<sup>[2]</sup> It doesn’t subject relationships to a cost-benefit analysis (“What have you done for me lately?”); it gives itself away for the good of the loved one.

If you want a closer look at this kind of love, notice the nouns in 2:2 – encouragement (strengthen; come alongside one who is embattled and afraid), consolation (empathize; comfort one who is sorrowful), affection (cherish; show delight for one who is small and needy), and compassion (show mercy to one who is undeserving). Yes, this kind of love is also willing to discipline and set boundaries – but as an act of sacrifice for the person’s good, not as rejection or a pay-back.

Imagine the unity between people who are animated by this kind of love! But if we base our relationships on how attractive and stimulating the other people are, or on how well they treat us, or on whether we have common cultural tastes, we won't get very far! The loss of community in American society (e.g., marriages, families, neighborhoods, etc.) is tragic. Even more tragic is the lack of community in American Christian churches, because they should demonstrate the reality of Jesus and His unique power to unify people who follow Him.

Ask yourself: "Which do I focus on more – how well others are serving me, or how well am I sacrificially loving them?" Your answer will go a long way toward explaining how successful your relationships are and how fulfilling Christian community is to you.

Review these three elements. This is a tall order – especially the third one! Who has within himself the resources to practice this kind of love? Not me! "The Christian life (including Christian community) is not just humanly difficult – it is humanly impossible." This is why 2:1 is so important (re-read) . . .

Its spiritual source

This verse is easy to misunderstand because it is poorly translated. Paul is not saying: "If these expressions of love exist;" "if" (*ei*) means "Since they do exist."<sup>13</sup> Neither is he saying: "Since you possess this kind of love in yourselves." This kind of love comes only from "Christ" and through "the (God's) Spirit." So Paul is saying: "God's Spirit personally communicates His love to you. Therefore you have a basis for giving this same love to others (2:2)."

God promises to personally *encourage* us when we are embattled – and therefore we can pass His encouragement on to others (2 Cor. 1:3-5).

God promises to personally *console* us when we are sorrowful – and therefore we can pass His consolation on to others.

God promises to personally *communicate His delight in* us though we are small and needy – and therefore we can communicate His delight to one another.

God promises to personally *communicate His mercy for* us despite our many failings – and therefore we can communicate His mercy to others who have many failings.

This is exactly what Jesus said in Jn. 7:37b-39a (read). The universal thirst of humanity (whether we realize it or not) is to experience God's perfect and inexhaustible love. Jesus is the only Person who makes God's love personally accessible to us, because only Jesus died for our sins which separate us from God. Jesus gives His Spirit to everyone who believes in Him, and His Spirit enables us to become a channel of His love to others. What does it mean to believe in Jesus? He implies a two-fold answer, which other New Testament passages make explicit:

First, you need to "come to" (middle mood) Jesus – decide to receive Him as your Savior. This is a one-time decision, and the moment you make this decision, His Spirit comes to live in your heart so you can begin to experience His love for you (Jn. 4:14). If you haven't ever experienced 2:1, you probably have never received Jesus. But you can do this today – you don't need to clean your life up first, and you

don't need to have doubt-free faith. You just need to open the door of your heart and ask Him to come (Rev. 3:20). Why not decide today?

Then, you need to “keep drinking” (present tense) – keep receiving Jesus’ love from His Spirit day by day and situation by situation. This is an ongoing decision to keep filled up with Jesus’ love so that you can give His love to other people in your life. Jude 1:20,21 (read) provides a snap-shot of what this looks like: building yourself up with His Word, praying personally to Him, and looking forward to His return.

If you can't relate to 2:1 except as a past and/or very irregular reality, you probably aren't “drinking” on a regular basis. But you can begin doing this today – you don't need to undergo some spiritual catharsis. You just need to begin relating to Him like Jude describes/like you have in the past. Why not re-start today?

NEXT WEEK: Phil. 2:12,13 – “Work out because God works in”

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[1] Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 91.

[2] “The only right Christians have is the right to give up our rights.” Oswald Chambers, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount* (Discovery House), p. 37.

[3] “When Paul introduced each of these clauses with εἰ, “if,” he did not intend by this to cast doubt at all on what he was saying. Just the opposite. The construction of these clauses in Greek, introduced by εἰ, is such that it becomes equivalent in meaning to an affirmative statement: ‘Since there is . . .’” Hawthorne, G. F. (2004). *Philippians* (Vol. 43, p. 82). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

## Work Out What God Works In (Philippians 2:12-13)

### Introduction

Brief review of setting (MAP). We come now to a brief but crucial and rich passage in Philippians. It is perhaps the most concise explanation in the New Testament of the dynamics of Christian spirituality – especially what God does and what we do. Read 2:12,13. The distillation of this concise passage is: “Work out what God works in.” Let's see how Paul describes what God “works in,” and then let's see what he says about what and how we “work out.”

### What God “works in”

Re-read 2:13. Almost every single word and phrase in this verse is important. Note especially:

The “you” does not refer to all people; Paul is not teaching that God is in every human being (e.g., pantheism). The “you” refers to people who belong to Christ (1:1 – “saints in Christ”) because they have

personally received Him as their Messiah. The Bible teaches that all humans possess the image of God (e.g., personality; spiritual awareness), but that being indwelt by God requires the forgiveness of our sins – and this forgiveness comes only through faith in Christ as Savior.

“God” here refers specifically to the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity whom Jesus promised would personally and permanently indwell those who receive Him as Savior (read Jn. 14:16,17). The Holy Spirit indwells all who belong to Christ to make His life-transforming presence personally real to them.

“Is at work in you” is in the present tense and indicative mood, which means that God’s Spirit is at work in all Christians at all times. This is true of all Christians, whether beginners or veterans. This is true at all times, whether we sense His work or not, whether we have been “spiritual” lately or not, etc. You can resist God working in you (“do not grieve/quench the Spirit”), but you cannot stop Him from constantly initiating His work in you (ELECTRICAL POWER & LIGHT SWITCH).

“For His good pleasure” (eudokia) refers to the purpose toward which God’s Spirit is at work in us. He is at work in us to fashion our lives into what delights Him, just as a sculptor fashions a block of marble into a sculpture what delights him. God is well-pleased with His Son (Matt. 3:17- eudokeo), and His Spirit is constantly at work in us to fashion us into the likeness/character of His Son (2 Cor. 3:18). We will learn more specifically what this looks like when we examine 2:12.

“Both to will and to work” explains two keys ways in which the Holy Spirit is constantly at work in all Christians.

“To will” (thelo) here means not “to make your decisions for you,” but “to impart desire and motivation” for God’s purpose. All new Christians notice this new desire (EXAMPLES: to relate to God as Father; to learn His Word; to tell others that you believe in Jesus; to share with other Christians; to admire and pursue godly character; etc.) Spiritual motivation is not something that we must self-generate; it is something that God supernaturally generates in us.

“To work” (energo) means literally “to energize,” or “to empower.” God’s Spirit not only imparts motivation for God’s purpose; He also imparts power to accomplish His purpose. All true Christians have experienced this (EXAMPLES: ability to pour heart out to God in prayer; enlightenment of His Word; courage to tell others about Jesus; power to resist temptation; ability to build up another Christian; etc.) Spiritual power is not something that we screw up by our own moral will-power; it is something that God constantly makes available to us (Eph. 1:19,20a; Col. 1:11,29).

Think of the effect of the sun on a flower (PICTURE) – it exerts a power that causes the flower to bend toward it, and its rays cause the flower to grow and mature. God’s exerts a similar influence on all the people He indwells.

SUMMARIZE: What an amazing and encouraging promise! No matter how big and/or deep our sin problems are, God is at work to overcome them. No matter how naturally slothful we may be, God is at work to motivate us. No matter how much damage we may have incurred from others, God is at work to heal this damage. No matter how reluctant other people have been to help us with our needs, God is at work to help us become like Christ. Ask yourself: “What difference would it make to view my problems in light of this promise?” (vs. fatalism; vs. comparison to other people) “What difference

would it make to view other Christians problems in light of this promise?" (vs. defining them by their weaknesses; vs. cynical negativity)

"If God does this, do I need to do anything?" The answer is "Yes," because humans are not flowers. A flower responds to the sun unconsciously and automatically, but it is the glory and dignity of humans to respond to God's influence consciously and willingly. This is why some Christians grow, while others do not. This is why some Christians grow during some periods of their lives, but not during other periods. This is why some Christians progress more or less consistently, while others tend to stagnate and/or regress. God is always at work in all of us, but we need to respond properly to His working. Paul describes how to respond in 2:12 (read).

How we "work out"

The main command here (our part in spiritual growth) is: "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling." As with 2:13, every word and phrase in 2:12b is important.

"Work out your salvation" – not "work for your salvation." This would contradict the core of Paul's teaching about how we receive salvation (read and explain Eph. 2:8,9). We do not earn our salvation by our works; we receive salvation as a free gift apart from our works, by simply putting our faith in Jesus to give it to us.

"Work out" doesn't mean simply "work hard at something," as when we do a physical workout. *Katergazomai* here means something like "bring forth" or "bring out into view" what is already within.

The Roman scholar Strabo, in his discourse on geography (60 BC), uses *katergazomai* when describing mining operations. "*Katergazomai* . . . describe(d) the working of a silver mine with the goal of extracting all of the precious ore. By analogy, we are commanded to 'mine out' of our lives all the richness of salvation God has (already) so graciously deposited in us."<sup>[1]</sup> Paul presumes that we already have our salvation within us; he is calling us to actively bring it out into external reality, into our actual lifestyle.

What is this lifestyle that we are to work out, that God is constantly working in us? The passages immediately preceding and immediately following 2:12,13 answer this question. It is not embracing a lifestyle of religious observances, or of sterile, self-righteous moralism. It is embracing a lifestyle of love – toward the other Christians God has put in your life (read 2:3-5; LAST WEEK) and toward the non-Christians God has put in your life (read 2:14-16; 2 WEEKS). This lifestyle was not Paul's idea or command; it was Jesus' mandate to all of His followers (Jn. 13:34,35; Matt. 5:14-16). The Holy Spirit has poured God's love into our hearts so that we may pour His love out to others (Rom. 5:5).

Paul calls us to embrace this lifestyle with a certain heart-attitude – "in fear and trembling." This does not mean "cringing in terror by the prospect of God's condemnation." We have already seen that through Christ our salvation is in us and secure. It is a figure of speech that Paul uses elsewhere, and by referring to these usages we get two insights into its meaning.<sup>[2]</sup>

Read Eph. 6:5,6. "With fear and trembling" is paired with "with sincerity of heart." "Sincerity" (*haplotes*) means "one who is free from pretence and hypocrisy." You know the difference between doing something out of peer pressure, or just to get a favor, versus doing something out of sincere

respect for a person. Many Christians make no spiritual progress because they are man-pleasers (trying to fit in with Christians when they are around Christians) and/or mercenaries (trying to put God and others in their debt). This attitude blocks God's work in our lives. But we can choose to live before God, "as unto Christ" ("the Audience of One") because we are convinced that His will is right and good (Rom. 12:2).

Read 1 Cor. 2:3-5. Here, "with fear and trembling" is paired with "in weakness." Paul is describing his heart-attitude when he spoke about Christ to the Corinthians for the first time. He was not a self-confident word-smith, relying on his human intelligence and finely-honed oratory skills. He was acutely aware of his inadequacy and impotence to do what God wanted – to bring them to faith in Christ. In other words, he spoke with humble dependence on the power of God's Spirit to do through him what he could not do. Many Christians make no spiritual progress because they try to serve God by their own power. This attitude likewise blocks God's work in our lives. But we can choose to accept our complete spiritual impotence (2 Cor. 3:5,6a) and learn to humbly depend on Him to work through us as a branch (Jn. 15), an instrument (Rom. 6:13), an impotent would-be parent (Rom. 4:19-21).

"Fear and trembling," then, is simply a synonym for "faith in God." Since katergazomai is in the present tense, this is an attitude we are to choose day by day, situation by situation, rather than a one-time crisis event (why "embrace a lifestyle").

SUMMARIZE: What a simple yet searching challenge this! Ask yourself: "Am I choosing to give myself to God for His purpose?" Or are you still living for some form of living for self (e.g., MATERIALISM; HEDONISM; CLIMBING A SOCIAL LADDER)? If so, you are swimming upstream against God's constant influence, nullifying His motivation and power. But you can change this at any time, including right now!

If you have given yourself to God for His purpose, ask yourself: "Am I choosing to relying on God to empower me to live for His purpose?" It is easy to drift into relying on your own will-power, personality, natural talents, etc., instead of humbly admitting your impotence and asking Him to work through you. This also is swimming upstream against God's constant influence, nullifying His motivation and power.

Here's the good news. If you simply embrace this lifestyle day by day with humble sincerity and dependence on Him, He will supply day by day all the motivation and power you need to live a fruitful life (quote Jn. 15:4,5). The only one who can stop you is you. Once you choose to walk down this path, no one and nothing else can stop you from being gradually transformed! God doesn't want to stop you, and others (including Satan) can't stop you.

Conclusion

NEXT WEEK: Philippians 2:14-18 – "Being Lights in a Dark World"

[2] “An attitude of ‘(sincere) obedience’ or ‘holding oneself in weakness’ toward the will of God according to the pattern of Jesus Christ (Pedersen, ST 32 [1978] 1–31). This last meaning excellently fits the present context.” Hawthorne, G. F. (2004). *Philippians* (Vol. 43, p. 142). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

## Standing Out (Philippians 2:14-18) by Mike Sullivan

### Spiritual Maturity & Modeling (Philippians 2:19-20)

#### Introduction

Concise summary of setting (MAP). We come now to a passage that seems to interrupt Paul’s spiritual instruction in order to introduce two men who will visit the Philippians shortly. But they already know both of these men (as we will soon see), so Paul is not introducing them. Rather, he is recommending them as models to imitate. This is a specific example of what he exhorts them to do more generally in 3:17 (read).<sup>[1]</sup> These passages imply a relationship between spiritual maturity and modeling.

Imitating competent models is an essential form of learning any complex skill or quality. When my father was teaching me to drive, he not only verbally instructed me before and while I was driving. He also made me watch him closely while he drove and tell me what I noticed. The latter was at least as important as the former.

Of course you can misapply this principle.

You can select unworthy skills (e.g., how to manipulate). You can imitate character weaknesses (e.g., parents’ conflict avoidance). You can imitate strengths that don’t fit who you are (e.g., extroversion for introverts; spiritual gifts). The Bible urges us to observe and imitate people who are Christ-like (read 1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 2:5) – who have godly character.

You can also practice godliness imitation humanistically – by simply applying your moral will-power. It is God who transforms our characters through His Spirit (2:13), and our part is primarily to depend on and cooperate with His Spirit’s transforming initiative. But God provides us with to access human models of godliness, and His Spirit transforms us as we practice Phil. 3:17.

Timothy and Epaphroditus are godly models, whom Paul urges the Philippians (and us) to observe and follow, and to model to others in four specific features of godly character . . .

#### Timothy

Read 2:19-24. Timothy was a member of Paul’s church-planting team. He was from south-central Turkey, and he was with Paul when he first came to Philippi and started this church. He was much younger than Paul (“like a son serving his father”). Yet Timothy had become a godly man (“you know his

proven worth”) – in part by imitating Paul (2 Tim. 3:10,12a). Now they can become more godly by imitating Timothy in two ways:

Genuine concern for other Christians’ spiritual welfare (2:20). He is Paul’s “kindred spirit” in this regard. When Paul describes this character quality elsewhere, he likens it to the concern good parents have for their own children’s welfare (read 1 Thess. 2:7-12). Good parents don’t hover over or spoil their children, but they are deeply concerned for their safety and nourishment and character development – and they make sacrifices to provide for these needs. This is Jesus’ attitude toward all of His children (2:21b), this is the attitude Paul modeled to the Philippians, this is the attitude Timothy has toward them, and this is the attitude he wants all of them to learn from Timothy.

What is implicit Paul makes explicit in 2:21 – many true Christians do not have this attitude. The rest of the Christians Paul was with were preoccupied with their own interests. It is not clear who the “all” is – maybe he had already sent the other members of his band elsewhere on other tasks. If so, it was a big sacrifice for Paul to send Timothy, but he made it because of his own concern for their welfare. I wonder what “their own interests” were. Probably interests that were legitimate in themselves (e.g., family; job; recreation, maybe even Bible study!) – but their orientation was self-centered, leaving no room for intentional, consistent and creative other-centered concern (read 2:3,4).

Tragically, much American Christianity actually promotes self-serving spirituality. By this, I mean a form of spirituality that focuses inordinately on personal well-being but leaves out this kind of other-centered concern. Paul says that this is the goal of Christian spirituality (read 1 Tim. 1:5). Years ago, a girl who was raised in this kind of Christianity got involved in our home church. She seemed perplexed for many months about our church culture. One day, she remarked to me: “Now I see what you’re trying to do. You’re trying to teach people to live a lifestyle of love. I never understood that this was the goal of being a Christian. I thought it was to have good clean fun, to have good manners, to have a productive career, to have a good family.” Do you see how subtle this is? Is your spirituality a means to polite and socially acceptable self-advancement, or is it a supernatural way of life that develops you to be genuinely concerned for one another’s welfare?

By God’s grace, we have scores of “Timothy’s” in our home churches – people who work at full-time jobs, raise families, care for aged parents, etc. – and also genuinely care for the spiritual welfare of the brothers and sisters in their home churches (and beyond). They are by far our most precious human resource! Do you know any of these people? Do you observe them and allow God to motivate you through them (they are much more joyous than people who care mainly about “their own interests”). Do you ask God to enable you to model this to others – or do you say: “I’m glad you do this for us, but I don’t want to learn to live this way?”

Service in furthering the gospel (2:22). This means that Timothy not only cares about Christians’ spiritual welfare. He also cares about non-Christians’ spiritual welfare, and he demonstrates this concern by communicating the “gospel” to them.

“Gospel” means good news. It is good news that God loves us and wants to have a love relationship with us. It is good news that He sent Jesus to pay for the penalty all of our sins that separate us from God. It is good news that we need only receive Jesus in order to be permanently forgiven and be reconciled to God. Have you responded to this good news? No wonder God wants us to further this good news to others!

This is the fourth time Paul has emphasized this priority so far – first by commending them (1:5), then by sharing his example (1:12-18), then by exhorting them (2:14-18), and now by pointing out Timothy's example.

Which is more important – a few gifted preachers and extroverts who like talking to strangers, or many models who share Christ in their small spheres of influence?

Paul was one of the former, but not Timothy. He was not an extrovert – he evidently wrestled with fear and timidity (1 Cor. 16:10; 2 Tim. 1:7), like many of us. Yet he allowed God to work His concern for lost people into his heart, and he shared his faith with people in keeping with his own personality and abilities and opportunities. He was a model that most of the Philippians could imitate.

By God's grace, we have scores of these models in our home churches. Many of you reach out in love to your neighbors and work-associates, pray regularly for open doors, share about Jesus when you get an opportunity, and express your excitement about this to your Christian brothers and sisters (EXAMPLE).

How do you respond to these models? Do you try to ice them down because your hearts toward the lost have cooled, and you feel uncomfortable about their zeal? Or do you observe them closely, and let God motivate you through them, and ask God to enable you to model this to others?

#### Epaphroditus

Read 2:25-30. Epaphroditus was from the church in Philippi. He was the courier of their money gift to Paul, and he is now the courier of this letter to them. Paul says we should "hold people like him in high regard" (2:29). What is it about him that we should imitate?

Serving *with* other teammates (2:25a – "*fellow-worker* and *fellow-soldier*"). Epaphroditus probably learned this from Paul's example. Paul was super-gifted and very tough. But he always worked with a team. He would only be left solo as a last resort – if others' spiritual welfare required it (here sending Timothy; 1 Thess. 3:1).

Teamwork takes a lot of work. It requires mutual submission, healthy accountability, taking time to build trust and resolve conflict – and lots of ego-subordination. Maybe that's why many sincerely committed Christian workers are "Lone Rangers" in conformity to our culture's radical individualism. Part of my heart loves this and rationalizes that it is more efficient. But it has a high price – needless burnout, inferior ministry fruit, and sometimes terrible scandals that disgrace Jesus (EXAMPLES).

One of the great strengths of this church is that (by God's grace) we have this ethic of team-ministry. Our elders work as a team. So do our sphere leaders, and home church leaders, and ministry team leaders. We value effectiveness over efficiency – and effectiveness comes through teamwork. Many leaders here could go off on their own, and many of us (including myself) have been sorely tempted to do just this. But we realize we are far stronger and safer when we work as teammates.

If you are involved in a home church, you have access to models of this attitude/lifestyle. Do you value them? Do you observe them? Do you ask them why they are committed to this? Do you ask them for feedback on how you can become a better teammate?

Sacrifice to help other Christian workers and ministries (2:29,30). Epaphroditus volunteered to take a long and dangerous trip so that Paul could afford rented quarters (house-arrest) and carry on his ministry while he awaited trial (Acts 28:30,31). Epaphroditus evidently got sick during this trip, and almost died before he recovered.<sup>[2]</sup> Paul calls this “the work of Christ,” and he calls Epaphroditus’ willingness to risk his life in this work something they should hold in high regard (and emulate).

Genuine concern for other Christians should extend beyond our immediate circles to sacrificially help other Christians to advance in their ministries – financially supporting them, praying for them, encouraging them, advising them, etc. In our church, we emphasize this in many ways: prayer concerts to pray for other home churches, ministry teams and mission work, financial support of our missionaries and global partners, serving on short-term mission trips, hosting student Bible studies, etc. These all involve sacrifice – but Paul says 2 Tim. 2:3 (read). When English citizens complained about sacrifices during the Nazi blitz, the common response was: “There’s a war on.” These sacrifices must be made so that other workers get the support they need to carry on. And it is worth it because the Lord provides for us, and will take us home forever when the war is over, and will more than make up for whatever sacrifices we made in this life!

We have many great models of this way of life. People who work full-time jobs, raise their families, reach out to their neighbors, serve in their home churches – and make many sacrifices to help other Christian workers and ministries stay in the battle. How do you respond to them? Do you observe them and allow God to motivate you – or do you constantly worry about “doing too much” when you are not really tempted to that extreme? Do you ask God to enable you to model this to others (like your children) – or do urge your children to follow our culture’s model of sacrificing for worldly goals?

## Conclusion

SUMMARIZE four attitudes/values. Remember: This is not the path to misery – this is the path to real joy (2:19,20)!

NEXT WEEK: Phil. 3:1-11 – “Our Identity: Christ-based or Dung-based?”

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<sup>[1]</sup> “Example” is *summi-metes*, from which we get “imitate” – to imitate others. “Observe” is *skopeo*, from which we get “scope” – to gaze intently at.)

<sup>[2]</sup> What does this passage tell us about Paul being able to heal people whenever he wanted to do so? We cannot be certain, but he seems to imply that he was unable to heal Epaphroditus – at least to do so quickly. See also Paul’s statement in 2 Tim. 4:20 that he left Trophimus sick in Miletus.

## Identity (Philippians 3:1-9)

### Introduction

Briefly review setting (MAP). Paul seems to be concluding his letter in 3:1 (read) – we will defer this until he comes back to it in 4:4ff.

Warning!

Perhaps because of news that just came to him, Paul suddenly warns (“Beware!”) the Philippian Christians of some bad dudes (read 3:2). Who are these guys – gang leaders? Drug-dealers? Serial killers? No, they were Jewish Bible teachers who claimed to believe in Jesus. But Paul scathingly denounces them and their teaching as antithetical to Christianity.

They are “dogs.” Jewish religionists often called Gentiles “dogs.” Paul turns the tables on them.

They are “evil workers.” Jewish religionists often called pagan witches/priests “workers of evil.” Paul turns the tables on them.

They are the “false circumcision.” This is literally “the castration.” These men insisted that Gentile Christians become Jewish (including physical circumcision) to belong to God. Paul sarcastically calls them “castrators” to emphasize the harm they are inflicting on those who follow them. In another passage, he says that they should castrate themselves (Gal. 5:12)!

Paul not only emphatically rejects them and their teaching; he also emphatically affirms that he and the Philippians do genuinely belong to God (read 3:3).

Circumcision in the Old Testament was a symbolic act that marked Jewish males as members of God’s people (the nation of Israel). It also reminded them of their need for a deeper circumcision – to have heart transplants so that they could love and serve God from their hearts by the power His Spirit (Deut. 30:6; Ezek. 36:26,27) – which God promised to provide through His Messiah.

Paul says that he and the Philippian Christians are the “true circumcision” – because they glory/boast in Jesus as the Messiah, and because they serve God by His Spirit, rather than putting “confidence in the flesh” (boasting in their national descent).

Identity & its basis

These terms (“we are . . .,” “boast,” “confidence in”) all relate to the issue of identity – specifically, to the basis of our identity. Circumcision was not a hygiene practice; it was an identity-marker for these false teachers. Paul is saying: “They are *taking their identity from* their national descent, religious observances, moral performance, etc.” To take your identity from something (or someone) means that you define yourself by it, that you derive your validation, worth, status from it (“I am somebody because . . .”).

Humans are insatiable identity-seekers. For humans, life is an identity project. Other animals (even the high primates) don’t seem to suffer from identity angst or crises like humans do. But this is one of the great themes of human history and art and literature: “Who am I?” “Do I matter?” “Is my existence justified?”

And (except for psychopaths), we are unable to self-generate identity. We need to be validated by someone or something outside of ourselves. That's why we talk about "taking our identity *from* . . ."

According to the Bible, there are ultimately only two bases for your identity:

PLAN A: You can you seek God's or people's validation through your comparative accomplishments and affiliations. Paul calls this "putting confidence in the flesh." "Flesh" here doesn't mean physical body; it refers to fallen humans' inclination toward PLAN A. The Old Testament calls it "making a name for yourself."

Many cultures seek *God's* validation through *religious* affiliation or performance (see Lk. 18:9-12 for an example of this). That's what like these false teachers were doing and advocating. EXAMPLES: grew up in church; family members as pastors, etc.; baptism, confirmation, church membership; don't smoke, curse, steal, womanize, etc.; have a growing church/ministry. All other world religions advocate identity through PLAN A.

In our culture, most people seek *people's* validation through *secular* affiliations and accomplishments. In the movie "Chariots of Fire," Harold Abrahamson (an Olympic sprinter) describes to his girlfriend what the upcoming race is: "I'll raise my eyes and look down that corridor . . . with ten lonely seconds to justify my whole existence" (SLIDE). You can see how his athletic performance is more than recreation or even a job – it is the basis of his identity. You might think: "How sad!" – but maybe this is the way you view your degrees, your job title, your salary, your children's performance, your social standing, your physical appearance, the fact that you are a vegan, or are an American, or a Democrat or a Republican or a Libertarian. Maybe this is the significance of your gender or race or sexual orientation, or certain cultural preferences, or that you are a recovering addict or cancer survivor. Most of these are legitimate in their (smaller) places – but when they become your resume for your identity, and when you advocate this to others, you are doing what these false teachers did.

The only alternative is to let God bestow His validation on you through Christ. Paul calls this "boasting in Christ." The Old Testament calls it "being called by the name of the Lord." We will look at this radical alternative more closely in a few minutes, but first let's look at how Paul refutes the first identity-base . . .

Paul's refutation

Read 3:4-6. Paul refutes the false teachers' identity deception autobiographically. They could not accuse Paul of "sour grapes." He was not a Jewish religionist wanna-be; he was a greater success than any of them. Check out his resume:

He had an impeccable PEDIGREE:

"Circumcised the 8th day" – He had been circumcised on the right day (Lev. 12:3).

"Of the nation of Israel" – He was a pure-bred Jew, a member of the chosen nation.

“Of the tribe of Benjamin” – He knew his tribal origin, which many Jews by this time had lost knowledge of. Benjamin was one of the two southern tribes which had been more faithful than the other ten of the northern kingdom.

“A Hebrew of Hebrews” – This probably means that he was a “Hebraic” Jew – he grew up in a strictly orthodox home where Hebrew was spoken and the Old Testament Law was strictly observed, unlike most Diaspora Jewish homes. It may also mean that he was fluent in the Hebrew language (the original language of the Old Testament), though it was largely a dead language by Paul’s day.

He also had impeccable PERFORMANCE RECORD:

“As to the Law, a Pharisee” – This was the strictest sect of Judaism, only 6000+ being rigorous enough to make their ranks. In addition, Paul tells us elsewhere that he was educated by Gamaliel, the greatest religious scholar of his day (Acts 22:3), and that he was one of the most zealous of all Pharisees (Gal. 1:14).

“As to zeal, a persecutor of the church” – He was consistent with his religious convictions. If Pharisaism was true, then Christianity must be false and dangerous, so he moved to eliminate it in accordance with his religion.

“As to the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless” – Paul measured up to the external standards of ethical righteousness demanded by Pharisaism; no human could reproach him for his ethical life.

In other words, Paul was the “golden boy” of first-century Judaism. He was at the top of the heap for this identity-base. It is difficult to explain why he gave all of this up unless he found another identity-base that was way better . . .

Read 3:7-9a. Paul says that his new identity (“in Christ” – spiritually identified with Christ) completely outclasses his old identity. He emphasizes this in several different ways:

His new identity has “surpassing value” compared to his old identity (*huperecho* – see Phil. 4:7 for same word).

Using an accounting analogy, although his resume was previously reckoned as “gain” (*kerdos* – wealth), now in comparison to his new identity he reckons it as “loss” (*zemia* – as in “damages written off as a loss”).

He claims that his new identity has exposed all the items of his former resume as “dung” (*skubalon* – animal excrement; things worthless and detestable). This doesn’t mean that all of the items on his resume were evil; it means that their value as an identity is dung compared to his new identity.

And this wasn’t just a passing perception at his conversion; it has stood the test of time. He has both already given it up (perfect tense in 3:7), and he continues to do this (present tense in 3:8). If anything, this perspective has *grown* over the years.

What makes this new identity so superior? Two facets form the heart of Christianity:

It bestows upon him total and permanent right standing before God, completely apart from any religious or secular performance. Imagine starting each day knowing that God Himself regards you as His beloved son or daughter, with the very same approval with which He regards His Son Jesus (Matt. 3:17). That no success or failure today can alter this standing in the slightest. That you can move through the day not *for* people's or your own approval, but *from* God's approval. This produces a psychological poise and stability that is just the opposite of the angst that comes from "being on trial" for your identity every day.

It gives him personal access to Jesus as the Messiah, so that he can know Him relationally (3:8). Paul is not referring just to the personal encounter that he had with the risen Jesus when he was converted. He is referring to ongoing and increasing relational intimacy with Jesus through His Spirit. Imagine experiencing ongoing affirmation of Jesus' love (Rom. 5:5; 8:15), increasing intimacy of communication with Him (Rom. 8:26,27), and increasing personal empowerment by Him (3:10a). This produces a confidence to face life's difficulties and challenges and disappointments that is just the opposite of living by your own or other people's resources.

Best of all, it is a free gift that he received by simply putting his faith in Jesus as Messiah (3:9). All this is available to everyone who receives Christ (Jn. 1:12)! Are you weary of your old identity? Instead of just pursuing a different version of the same old identity, why not receive Christ and have God bestow on you this new identity? Like Paul, you will never regret this decision!

A one-time gift to receive – but a daily decision to affirm

Do you have this new identity – but still live largely out of your old identity? That's what Paul is trying to prevent the Philippians from reverting to. This is the foundational ongoing decision in your Christian life, requiring a virtually daily affirmation because:

We are all daily susceptible to identity amnesia. Like Leonard Shelby, the main character in the 2000 movie "Memento," we tend to awake each day forgetting who we are. So like him, we need to "tattoo" ourselves with the truth about who God says we are and begin each day by affirming this before Him to ourselves.

We all live in a world that daily seduces us back to PLAN A. It will keep presenting us with new and different PLAN A projects. It will use our memories, people's statements to us, family and peer pressure, etc. to keep us deceived and imprisoned. So we need to ask God daily to help us discern these seductions, and to affirm in faith (like Paul) that they are dung compared to our new identity in Christ.

Conclusion

NEXT WEEK: Phil. 3:10b-17 – "Growing in Our New Identity in Christ"

**Knowing Christ (Philippians 3:8-17) by Mike Sullivan**

## Another Spiritual Danger (Philippians 3:17-4:3)

### Introduction

Brief review of setting (MAP). Earlier in chapter 3, Paul warned the Philippian Christians of some dangerous people headed their way (read 3:2). They were Jewish Bible teachers who claimed to believe in Jesus as God's Messiah – but insisted that non-Jews had to get circumcised and observe the Law in order to be accepted by God. Paul refuted their teaching (3:8; GOSPEL). Now at the end of chapter 3, Paul warns of another spiritual danger (read 3:17-20a) . . .

What is this danger?

At first glance, this sounds like rank hedonism (e.g., alcoholism; heroin addiction; PICTURES). Looking at his description in reverse order:

“Who set their minds on earthly things” – their biggest interest is their next drink or fix.

“Whose glory is in their shame” – they boast about how much alcohol they can hold, how excited they are about their latest score, etc.

“Whose god is their belly” – they are driven by their addiction – talking about it all the time, fantasizing about it, missing bills and selling necessities to get it, etc.

“Whose end is destruction” – their life is unraveling; they are headed for an early death.

“They are enemies of the cross” – they scoff at the Bible's message that they need God's forgiveness and reconciliation with God.

This all fits – but it is unlikely that Paul thought the Philippian Christians were seriously in danger of being seduced into something like mass alcoholism.

When we consider the historical background of Philippi, we get a different slant. Philippi was a wealthy Roman colony. Many Roman military officers retired here on large landed estates. Many were Roman citizens, which was a high social honor (ROMAN SLIDES). Paul implies by his contrast in 3:20a that this mentality was part of the problem (“citizenship” is *politeuma*; see also 1:27 – “conduct yourselves”). Paul seems to be warning them against materialism and nationalism (PICTURES). Consider:

“Who set their minds on earthly things” – they are focused on Roman citizenship as their primary identity; they are preoccupied with a wealthy lifestyle.

“Whose glory is in their shame” – they are socially snobbish about their Roman citizenship, about how much bigger their houses are, etc.

“Whose god is their belly” – they talk and fantasize obsessively about owning and enjoying more things, having more political influence, etc.

“Whose end is destruction” – all their “stuff” will end up in the dump; all their political power will end up being impotent and insignificant in eternity.

“They are enemies of the cross” – they scoff at those who radically follow Jesus (Lk. 9:23) as “fanatics.”

This profile fits the background and language much better than rank hedonism. It is also much more dangerous because while rank hedonism is usually socially unacceptable (e.g., heroin addiction), materialism, nationalism and political partisanship are usually socially approved and rewarded.

Are we in danger?

This passage is certainly an apt warning for western Christians. Western Christianity has been infected and terribly weakened by materialism and nationalistic/political entanglements.

*Participating in the political process vs. identifying Christianity with political parties or causes.* Christians can (and I would say should) participate in the political process. But American evangelicals have often linked Christianity with political conservatism (“the Religious Right”). A smaller segment, in reaction, has linked Christianity with political liberalism (e.g., Sojourners). This has needlessly divided Christians (SLIDE), and both groups have been (and are being) used by political leaders to fulfill their own agendas.

*Being a good citizen vs. connecting Christianity with one’s country.* Christians should be good citizens of whatever nation they are part (Titus 3:1,2). But insisting on the American flag in church buildings, or insisting that America is (or was) a “Christian nation” (SLIDE) breaks down the distinction between Jesus’ kingdom (which He said was not of this world) and our nation (which has never been truly Christian and has always opposed establishment of any religion).

*Thanking God for material blessing vs. promoting wealth pursuit in the name of Jesus.* I am very grateful for the many material blessings God has given me. But to approve of aspiration to material wealth (instead of warning against it like Paul did in 1 Tim. 6:9,10), and to tolerate and promote of preachers who preach health and wealth (instead of warn against them like Paul did in 1 Tim. 6:5) is a disgrace and has devastated our presence as “salt” and “light.” There is no statistically significant difference between Christians’ consumer spending or charitable giving and that of their non-Christian neighbors<sup>[1]</sup> (instead of distinguishing themselves by their simple living and generosity). How often do you hear evangelical leaders teaching that allegiance to these things is just as spiritually lethal as heretical religious cults (which is exactly what Paul is saying in this chapter)?

Our church is not immune from this danger. We live in this same culture, and we desperately need this warning. We have had many long-time members wander into all three of these problems (EXAMPLES). I agree that these matters are complicated. I also know that they are insidious, and that we are probably way more vulnerable to this problem than to theological works-righteousness. How can we combat this danger?

How can we combat this danger?

Read 4:1. This is an unfortunate chapter break, because the “therefore” refers back to 3:17-21. “Stand firm” (*steko*) here presumes the ongoing pressure of adversity (the temporal mind-set) and connotes ongoing resistance against it (see Gal. 5:1). But this resistance is not just moral will-power and self-

denial; “in (by) the Lord” means that God has provided resources for us that are more than adequate. We need to appropriate these resources consistently. This passage speaks of three such ways to stand firm.

*Build deep convictions about the Bible’s eternal perspective.* The “therefore” in 4:1 refers first of all to 3:20,21 (read). Think about how these truths not only contradict materialism, civic pride and political idolatry, but also replace them with real hope.

It doesn’t ultimately matter which country you’re from or how much or little political power you have. If you receive Christ (Jn. 1:12), your citizenship is in heaven – you are a member of God’s eternal kingdom.

Our ultimate hope is not in the fate of our country or in any political agenda. Our hope is in the personal return of Jesus to establish God’s kingdom.

Our ultimate hope is not in how much money we have or in the perks or security that money brings. Our hope is in the transformed bodies (like Jesus’ resurrected body) that Jesus will give us when He returns.

Our ultimate hope is not in world peace or social order in this age (Jesus has already told us that things will get worse). Our hope is in a transformed universe when Jesus returns to rule.

Paul was relatively immune to this danger because Jesus’ eternal kingdom was a living reality and in the forefront of his thinking. He refers to it at least 14 times in this little letter!**[2]** You can hardly read a single chapter in any New Testament letter without seeing multiple references to Jesus’ return.

Is life in God’s eternal kingdom a growing reality in your life? Has your understanding of Jesus’ return and kingdom increased this past year? Do you think about this with increasing frequency? Do you “eagerly await” Jesus’ return? What is the relationship between your answer and temporalism’s influence on you?

*Observe and imitate other Christians who live out this eternal perspective* (read 3:17,18a). The contrast here is between the “many” who live out a temporal perspective and “those” (always the minority) who live out an eternal perspective. We are molded largely by the voices we listen to, and by the models we imitate.

Our culture constantly bombarding us with sophisticated temporal messages from attractive temporal models (STOCK-MARKET; NEWS; CELEBRITIES; HOUSE & FOOD SHOWS; RADIO TALK-SHOWS; CONSPIRACY THEORISTS; etc.). Unless we deliberately seek out godly models and closely observe their way of life, we *will* be carried along the current of temporalism (Rom. 12:2a).

What does it look like to manage your finances with an eternal perspective? To relate to your career with an eternal perspective? To use your home and possessions in ways that have eternal impact? To raise your children with eternal values? Teachings and books are helpful – but they are not enough. We need interaction with flesh-and-blood people who are living this out daily in the trenches of real life.

By God’s grace, we have many people in this church who live this way. And like Paul, they have joy (not regret) from living this way (2:17,18). You have access to them, if you want it. But you have to get next

to them by getting involved in home church with them. You have to watch closely how they live. You have to ask them why they live this way. You have to ask the Lord how to imitate their values (not just ape their actions). Are you taking advantage of this precious resource – or are you (by default) being molded by our culture’s models?

*Work with other Christians to advance the gospel – don’t fight over what doesn’t really matter.* Read 4:2,3. Euodia and Syntyche were probably embroiled in a dispute about some temporal issue – possibly a political dispute. By referring to Christians as having their “names being written in the book of life,” Paul reminds them that their common citizenship in God’s eternal kingdom outweighs whatever other differences they have.<sup>[1]</sup> He thus urges them on that basis to live in harmony “in the Lord.”

What we argue about (especially when we argue passionately) is often an indicator of what we really value. I like early 70’s folk music, but I’m unwilling to argue with those who like rap. I am a terminal Browns fan, but I don’t want to argue with Bengals fans. I like raised-bed gardening, but it’s not worth the effort to argue with people who hate yard-work. I have my own opinions about which presidential candidate will do the best job, but I am unwilling to fight about this. I am willing to argue over how best to grow spiritually, or how to move our church forward in leading people to faith and maturity in Christ. But I am ready to work and be good friends with other Christians despite these other disagreements.

What do you argue passionately about? How much difference will these things make 1000 years from now? Does it ultimately matter whose sports team is best, which political candidate is best/worst, why your latest purchase is better than someone else’s? These arguments both divide and reinforce your temporal mind-set. Do disagreements like these overshadow your view of other Christians, and affect whether you are willing to relate to them? Why not think about how you can work together toward what will last forever – God, His Word, and people?

Conclusion

NEXT WEEK: Phil. 4:4-9 – “The Peace of God & the God of Peace”

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**[1]** “The amount of American giving to charitable organizations of all kinds remains relatively constant at somewhere between 1.6% and 2.16% of a family’s income. American Christians do only slightly better, averaging somewhere around 2.4% of the national per capita . . . In most . . . suburban Western communities, it is impossible to detect any outward differences between the expenditures of professing Christians and the religiously unaffiliated who surround them in their neighborhoods.” Craig L. Blomberg, *Neither Riches Nor Poverty: A Biblical Theology of Possessions* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999), pp. 19,20. “American consumers are simultaneously earning record income while accumulating record debt. And there is little difference between the amounts that Christians and non-Christians earn, spend, save, charge, or donate to charities.” *Christianity Today*, “The Debt Slayers,” May 1, 2006 (<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2006/may/23.40.html>).

**[2]** See 1:6,10,21,23; 2:10,11,16; 3:11,12,14,20,21; 4:3,5.

▣ “Just as Philippi and other cities like it must have had a civic register that included all the names of their citizens, so the heavenly commonwealth (cf. Phil 3:20) has its own roll, where God inscribes the names of those to whom he promises life.” Hawthorne, G. F. (2004). *Philippians* (Vol. 43, p. 243). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

## The Peace of God & The God of Peace (Philippians 4:8-9)

### Introduction

Brief setting (MAP). Paul now states a tremendous promise (read 4:7,9b). No matter what my circumstances are, no matter whether I can understand how it happens or not – the God of peace can be with me, and His peace can guard by heart and mind. What an attractive, tantalizing promise! And this is not some superficial, sentimental slogan (e.g., “Don’t worry – be happy!”) uttered by a wealthy man living a cushy life. Paul is imprisoned and facing possible execution when he says this! His theology is not some ivory-tower abstraction; it is sustaining him where the rubber meets the road.

This morning we will look at this passage and other biblical passages to answer two key questions about God’s peace: What is it? and How can we access it?

### What is God’s peace?

Jesus helps to answer this question during His last conversation with His disciples before He went to the cross. He told them that they would soon receive His Spirit, and this His Spirit would provide them with all of the resources they needed to carry out His will (Jn. 14:16,17a,18a). One of those resources was what Jesus called “My peace.”

Read Jn. 14:27. His peace is not like the world’s peace – merely an external absence of war or hostility, something very fragile and superficial. The Roman world was experiencing that kind of peace under the “Pax Romana” – but it was wholly inadequate.<sup>[1]</sup> Instead, Jesus’ peace supernaturally replaces panic and dread regardless of adverse circumstances. (This sounds a lot like Phil. 4:7.)

Read Jn. 16:33. Again, Jesus’ peace is not the absence of tribulation (very broad word – affliction, adversity, difficulty, etc.). Instead, His peace provides supernatural courage to face tribulation victoriously.

SUMMARIZE: God’s peace is His Spirit imparting a deep assurance that He is with you and will see you through even when your world is being rocked. This peace is both supernatural and experiential. Who would not want this? This claim leads to our second question . . .

### How can we access God’s peace?

Another passage about God’s peace that gives us the basic answer to this question (read Rom. 15:13). On the one hand, this passage repeats what we have already learned – that God’s peace is experiential (like hope and joy), and that God’s peace comes by the power of the Holy Spirit. But it also teaches that God’s peace is given to those who trust in Him. So ultimately, our lack of peace signals a lack of or an

inadequate trust in the God of the Bible. What does this “trust in God” look like? The rest of our passage provides several practical answers . . .

Read 4:4. Paul said something like this earlier (read 3:1). “Rejoice” is in the present tense (“keep rejoicing”) and “always” – this is to become a habit, practiced by choice (imperative mood) each day. It is a “safeguard” to be reminded to do this because we naturally neglect and/or wander away from doing this.

“Rejoice in the Lord” is an Old Testament technical term that means to recall and ponder how God has saved me, and to praise and thank Him for this.<sup>[2]</sup> This salvation includes not only rescue from God’s judgment and lostness, but also the many other spiritual blessings God has showered on us through Christ. Ajith Fernando summarizes some of these blessings: “We can describe the joy that the gospel brings as ‘the joy of the Lord’ (Neh. 8:10) or as ‘rejoicing in the Lord’ (Phil. 4:4). This joy has as its base some great truths that undergird our lives:

- We believe in God.
- We believe that He loves us and that in love He gave us His Son to die for us.
- We believe that He has made us His children and looks after us and that He's for us so that no one can stand against us.
- He lives in us, banishing loneliness.
- He turns the bad things that happen to us into good things.
- He loves us more than the unkindness that we experience in life, and He is able to comfort and to heal us when we are wounded.
- He has prepared an inheritance that we will receive after this life that is more wonderful than anything we could ever imagine.

These wonderful truths and many, many others are the basis upon which we have built our lives. They open the way for a love relationship with God. While (this) relationship is essentially an experiential love relationship, the basis of our relationship is this list of objective, unchanging truths. We can cling to them when everything about us seems gloomy . . . The almighty God loves us and looks after us . . . We have something more reliable than fickle (circumstantial) experiences. Our life is founded on unchanging truths that open us to a love relationship with an unchanging God . . . What good news this is in a world characterized by so much uncertainty!”<sup>[3]</sup>

Of course, it’s impossible to rejoice in the Lord for your salvation unless you have actually received this salvation! The Bible teaches that you can be saved only through Jesus (Acts 4:12) because only Jesus has paid the penalty for your sins. The Bible also teaches that you will be saved if you simply call upon Jesus to save you (Rom. 10:9). One of the first things you will notice when you do this is the ability to do what seemed strange before – to personally appreciate and thank Him for saving you!

Unfortunately, Christians often do not continue to rejoice in the Lord. Instead, they take their salvation for granted – and as a result, lose the peace of God. But Paul, whose heart was guarded by God’s peace although imprisoned, did this regularly and proactively. Read Eph. 1:3 and summarize 1:4-14. In fact, rejoicing in the Lord was so central to him that he even interrupted his letters to do this (read Rom. 5:1-5 and explain it). Passages like this are great to memorize and meditate on! It is also great to summarize these salvation-blessings in your own words, like Fernando did (EXAMPLES).

How often do you rejoice in the Lord? Is there a connection between your answer and how much you experience God’s peace?

Next, Paul gives us two important reactive ways to trust in God so we can have His peace.

Read 4:5. This is about how to reactively trust God when people annoy us (EXAMPLES). What’s your natural response to annoying people? Mine is to try to get them to stop being annoying or to get away from them as soon as possible. But these responses are pursuing external peace, and they will prevent you from securing God’s peace.

There is another response for those who know Christ. When we notice that someone is bugging us, we can remind myself that they are small (unable to define, control, ruin me), and that God (who is very big and utterly for me) is “near” (right here with me; will soon come to rule). Then, on that basis, we can choose to express forbearance/gentleness (*epieikes*) to them.<sup>[4]</sup> This will result in God’s peace replacing your annoyance.

4:6 is about how to reactively trust God when we have anxious thoughts and feelings. What’s your natural response to anxious thoughts and feelings? Mine is to ignore/suppress them or, if that doesn’t work, to obsess on them and (sometimes) medicate myself through drink, distraction, etc. But, again, these responses are pursuing external peace, and they will prevent you from securing God’s peace.

There is another response for those who know Christ. The moment we notice our anxious thoughts, we can take them personally to God by: pouring them out to Him (supplication: “Father I feel so anxious about X!”), recalling promises that connect to them and thanking God for His promised faithfulness, and then asking Him for what is needed. I can say from much experience that this requires determination – but that it will result in God’s peace replacing our anxieties. (This is how to “cast all your anxieties on to Him” – 1 Pet. 5:7).

To be honest, there are times when I find myself unable to respond with this kind of trust in God. In these cases, I share this with another Christian friend, pray with them about, and listen to any counsel they may have. This almost always helps me to trust in God and begin to experience His peace.

In 4:8, Paul gives us yet another proactive way to trust in God (read). This is much more general than rejoicing in the Lord (4:4). “Whatever” and “if there is any,” and the long list of adjectives (“true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, of good repute, excellence, worthy of praise”) refer to all of the good things in our lives. This world is fallen and broken and has some terrible and ugly things in it. But it also has much goodness – from a tasty cup of coffee, to a beautiful sunrise, to a pleasant greeting from your work associate, to a polite driver, to the good qualities in your spouse/child/friend, to the health to walk, to a bed to sleep in, etc. The key issue is whether you will take these blessings for granted, or develop an increasing appreciation of them.

G. K. Chesterton, a huge influence on C. S. Lewis, became suicidally depressed in college. He later said that “I hung on to (my sanity) by one thin thread of thanks. I (had discovered a) way of looking at things, with a sort of mystical minimum of gratitude.”<sup>[5]</sup> This gratitude for his existence eventually led him to faith in Christ. He practiced Phil. 4:8 like few others besides Paul. Here is an example:

Here dies another day  
During which I have had eyes, ears, hands  
And the great world round me;  
And with tomorrow begins another!  
Why am I allowed two?<sup>[6]</sup>

“Dwell on” (logizomai) is an accounting term – to count, to enter into a ledger. This may be where the maxim “count your blessings” comes from. What are you going to keep careful track of – the bad things or the good things in your life? Most of us (myself included) naturally feel entitled to good things, so we keep track of the bad things. This produces a sour disposition, discontent, anger, self-pity, etc. – all of which are antitheses of peace, and are highly toxic to our souls and others. Instead, Paul says, we need to actively look for every good thing that God freely pours into my life, ponder these things, and consciously give thanks to God for them. This focus is a form of trust in God’s goodness (Jas. 1:17) – and it unleashes the Holy Spirit to mediate His peace into your soul.

How often do you do this? Is there a connection between your answer and how much you experience God’s peace?

## Conclusion

Read 4:9. This is not just a super-general exhortation to imitate Paul. It is (in context) a pointed exhortation to practice (prasso) the above faith imperatives, as they saw Paul do this when he was with them.<sup>[7]</sup> This is the path to increasing peace!

NEXT WEEK: Phil. 4:10-23 – “Contentment & Generosity”

<sup>[1]</sup> Epictetus (55-135 AD) wrote: “While the emperor may give peace from war on land and sea, he is unable to give peace from (anxiety), grief, and envy. He cannot give peace of heart, for which man yearns more than even for outward peace.” Cited in Norval Geldenhuys, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, p. 112.

<sup>[2]</sup> See 1 Sam. 2:1; Isa. 25:9; 61:10; Ps. 40:16; 63:1-8; 94:17-19; 116; 130,131; etc.

<sup>[3]</sup> Ajith Fernando, The Call To Joy & Pain (Crossway Books, 2007), pp. 22,23,26.

<sup>[4]</sup> “The weak are always anxiously trying to defend their power and dignity. He who has heavenly authority can display saving, forgiving and redeeming clemency even to His personal enemies.” Kittel, G.,

Bromiley, G. W., & Friedrich, G. (Eds.). (1964–). *Theological dictionary of the New Testament* (electronic ed., Vol. 2, p. 589). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

[5] G. K. Chesterton, cited in Kevin Belmonte, *Defiant Joy* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2011), p. 25.

[6] G. K. Chesterton, cited in Kevin Belmonte, *Defiant Joy* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2011), p. 27.

[7] “Vv 8–9 constitute a single sentence in Greek that is marvelous for its rhetorical expression and for the loftiness of the moral standards it sets forth. It begins with τὸ λοιπόν, “and last of all,” which signals not the end of the letter or even its near end, but rather the last of the imperatives in a parenthetical section . . .” Hawthorne, G. F. (2004). *Philippians* (Vol. 43, p. 248). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.