

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

FEB 13TH - 14TH, 2021 // BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS

JOY IN UNITY (PHILIPPIANS 4:1-3)

"DEARLY LOVED AND LONGED FOR"

The language Paul uses throughout Philippians is of a deep love for his "brothers and sisters" in Philippi.

They are Paul's "joy and crown" because of their commitment to Christ.

- In this last chapter, Paul points back to all he has written and encourages them to "stand firm" in biblical principles and teachings.

PAUL ALSO ADDRESSES A SPECIFIC INCIDENT

Two influential women in the Philippian church were disagreeing about something to the level of having to involve Paul. Paul considered Euodia and Syntyche as "partners" in the faith who have "contended for the gospel."

- **Mature Christians should be able to resolve conflict and agree on major theological teachings.**

LIVING A LIFE OF HARMONY

Arguing, division, rudeness, and complaining should not mark the life and character of a Christian.

Believers are to be peaceful people, both internally and externally.

- **Living in harmony with people around us doesn't mean condoning sin, but demonstrating God's peace even in the face of disorder.**

HANDLING CONFLICT IN THE CHURCH

Jesus talks about conflict resolution in Matt. 18. If there is conflict we are to: 1) Go to the person in private, 2) bring another Christian, 3) bring two other Christians, if those steps don't work, 4) involve church leadership.

- **This method not only honors Christ, it eliminates gossip, slander, and divisiveness, all things God hates.**

JOY IN PEACE (PHILIPPIANS 4:4-9)

"I WILL SAY IT AGAIN: REJOICE!"

Paul makes it clear that despite circumstances we face, followers of Jesus should be joyful. One way we demonstrate our joy is by letting our "graciousness be known to everyone."

- **If we depend on Jesus to produce joy in us, we will naturally treat others with gentleness and kindness.** Joy should be a very visible trademark.

WE FORGET THAT "THE LORD IS NEAR."

Paul is about to take us into very sensitive waters. Paul instructs us to not be anxious and succumb to worry because Jesus is close to those who follow Him.

- **The great thief of joy is worry and anxiety. Fortunately, the Bible tells us the remedy for anxiety: "prayer and petition with thanksgiving."**

ANXIETY BOILS DOWN TO A LACK OF TRUST IN GOD

In Mt. 6:25-34 Jesus tells us to not let the worries of this life overcome us, but to trust in God. To truly trust in God means we submit to and obey the Word of God.

- **Most anxiety either comes from a lack of trust in Jesus' sovereignty or a lack of obedience to God's teachings through His Word.**

BEFORE SOMEONE THROWS ANYTHING...

We believe in science, doctors, and mental health, but we must also believe that Jesus is able to deliver and set people free from worry and anxiety.

- **We need to remember who we are in Jesus to avoid the lies that can creep in. We need counsel, a place to confess, and support from our church.**

PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING PRODUCE PEACE

Paul says that if we pray, ask for things within God's will (Jn. 14:13), and do so with a thankful posture, a "peace...which surpasses understanding, will guard [our] hearts and minds."

- **The world has no solution for internal or external peace. God offers a peace that is not dependent on circumstances.**

IT IS A CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO THINK DIFFERENTLY

Paul tells us to consciously "dwell on" what is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, morally excellent, and praiseworthy.

- **So much anxiety comes from what we subject ourselves to! Look at the effect of social media on depression and anxiety! How would our feelings change if we focused on righteous things?**

THE SECRET OF CONTENTMENT (PHILIPPIANS 4:10-14)

PAUL TELLING THE PHILIPPIANS THANK YOU

Paul not only loves the Christians in Philippi, but he is grateful for their support and financial gifts, though he consistently refused payment for his ministry work.

- More than money, Paul was thankful for their **love and respect** towards him. **To Christians, it isn't how much we give but the attitude behind the gift.**

"I DON'T SAY THIS OUT OF NEED"

Paul makes it clear that he wasn't thanking them so they would continue to give to him. Paul had already solved all of his economic problems by being content with whatever he had.

- Paul had been wealthy, prestigious, poor, and beaten. **He knew that contentment came from God not possessions.**

ONE THE MOST MISINTERPRETED PASSAGES

Philippians 4:13 may be one of the most misused scriptures in the Bible.

- Being "able to do all things through Him who strengthens me" isn't about winning games or getting a promotion, **it is about the ability to suffer and go through hardship without losing the contentment and joy we find in a relationship with Jesus.**

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT HIS HELP

The Christian walk isn't just difficult, it is impossible without the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

- We may find temporary highs and spurts of happiness, but everything in this world fades except our relationship with Jesus. **Without Christ walking with us, we are doomed to implode.**

JOY IN PROVISION (PHILIPPIANS 4:15-23)

LONG TIME BROTHERS AND SISTERS

The church in Philippi had been the one group of people consistently helping Paul for over a decade as he started new churches.

- Paul's letter was not a fundraising letter, but a way to encourage the church and let them know their works are noticed by him and God.

LIVING A LIFE OF ABUNDANCE

Paul (in prison mind you) says he is "full" and has an "abundance." What he is referring to is a mindset, not literal possessions and comforts.

- Paul wasn't fulfilled by the financial gift of the church, but by his relationship with God and the love of his Christian family.

"...MY GOD WILL SUPPLY ALL YOUR NEEDS"

We must really think about how much we trust the Lord. What is provision? Yes, **the Word says we will be given all we need, but do we trust that God knows what we need?**

- **We hold on to the things of this world too tightly. There are times we need to suffer and go without in order to build that dependency on Him.**

"ACCORDING TO HIS RICHES AND GLORY"

We can only have the provision of God when we trust in Him and follow His lead. This applies to all aspects of our lives from joy and contentment to finances and direction.

- **Access to the things of God are only available to those that humble themselves and seek His will and way.**

FINAL GREETINGS

Paul sends his final greetings to "the saints" of the church and "especially those who belong to Caesar's household."

- This implies that not only people who work close to Caesar had become Christians, but possibly family members as well!

WE ARE DESIGNED TO HAVE JOY

- Though this life is hard and we are assured that we will suffer at times, God has enabled us through Jesus to have a life of joy, contentment, and fulfillment if we have a relationship with Him.

ANXIETY IS THE ENEMY OF JOY

- **We often fall into anxiety and worry because we have forgotten the truth:** that God is all-powerful, loving, knows what we need, and holds the future.
- We are told that we're to **meet anxiety with prayer, petition, and thanksgiving.** If we run to Jesus in times of chaos, He will give a peace that defies logic.

CONSCIOUSLY WALKING INTO JOY

- We must **choose to think on righteous things** in a world that bombards us with darkness and lies.
- We must **choose to be content regardless of our circumstances.** This is only possible if we are full of God's Spirit.
- **If we are faithful, God is always faithful.** He loves us and wants us to live abundantly.

WHAT IS LIVING?

- God wants more for us than just full stomachs and nice cars. **God wants us to be so connected to Him that even if we are starving and having to walk, we are content in the fact that we are destined for an eternity with Jesus!**
- **Are we living in joy, peace, fulfillment, and love? If not, why?**