

PHILIPPIANS

The Epistle of

Joy



Old Testament Reading – Psalm 115:1-18
New Testament Reading – Romans 14:1-23

The Epistle Of Joy

“To the Glory and Praise of God” # 3

Philippians 1:3-11

Wayne J. Edwards, Pastor

In 1648, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland produced the Directory for “Catechizing such as are of weaker capacity.”

- The Shorter version contains 107 questions a parent or teacher can use to instruct children in the basic principles of the Christian Faith.
- The first question is: “**What is the chief end of man?**” The answer is: “**Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.**”
- Glorifying God is a way of expressing our joy in Him, and praising Him is the ultimate source of our joy.
 - Psalm 144:15 – *“Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD.*
 - Isaiah 12:2 – *“Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and*

my song; he also is become my salvation.”

- Living out this “chief end” requires a conscious effort to seek God’s will, cultivate a relationship with Him, and live in a way that brings Him glory. This includes serving Him, obeying His commands, and praising Him for His goodness.

The thrust of Paul’s letter to the Philippians was to thank them for their love for him, their personal gifts to him, and their financial support of his ministry. But his challenge to them was to live their lives ***“to the glory and praise of God.”***

- 2 Corinthians 6:17 – ***“Come out from the world and be separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.”***
- Romans 14:7-8 – ***“None of us lives to himself, and no man dies to himself, for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.”***
- Ephesians 1:5-6 – ***“Now that we know that God the Father chose us and adopted us as His children according to the good pleasure of His sovereign will, we should be holy and without blame before Him, and live each day to the praise of the glory of His grace.”***

1. The Purpose of Paul’s Letter – 1:3-5 – Vs. 3-4 – “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.”

- Paul and Silas started the church at Philippi during their first missionary journey between 49 and 52 A.D. It was the first Christian church in Europe.
 - Lydia, her family, the jailer, and his family received Jesus Christ as their Savior and were baptized.
 - A little derelict girl was freed from demon possession and being used by evil men.
- After completing their first and second missionary journeys, Paul and Silas arrived in Rome in 60 A.D. where Paul was arrested for preaching the gospel.
- While there, Epaphroditus, a member of the church at Philippi, brought Paul a love gift from the church, with instructions that he should remain as Paul’s servant.
- Paul’s heart was so filled with joy that he had to respond with a letter, assuring them that, even though he was in prison, God was still at work, and that he was able to face each day with the joy of the Lord over what He had seen God do on his missionary journey.
- **Spiritual joy is a gift of God** to those who believe the gospel, being produced in them by the Holy Spirit, because they believe and obey the Word, mixed with trials, and set their hope on God’s eternal glory. **Therefore, spiritual joy has nothing to do with our circumstances of life because spiritual joy is a gift from God.**

2. The Purity of Paul’s Heart – Philippians 1:6-8 – “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.”

The Apostle Paul listed the intrinsic motivations that inspired him to write this “epistle of joy.”

- **The joy of recollection** – Paul never mentioned the things done unto him, but he rejoiced in the things God did through him.
- **The joy of intercession** – Paul let them know how thankful he was to hear how the church was growing, and that he would

continue to pray for them.

- **The joy of participation** – Paul was grateful that so many people had received the gospel, but he was even more grateful that they were his partners in sharing the gospel with others.
- **The joy of anticipation** – Paul knew that God was at work in and through the church at Philippi, and he assured them that God was not finished with them.
- **The joy of affection** – Vs. 7 – ***“Just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart.”***
- The church at Philippi had gone above and beyond what the other churches had done to show their love and their support for the Apostle Paul – they had found a deep place in their heart for Paul, and Paul had found a deep place in his heart for them.
- Paul said: ***“It is right for me to think this way because of all you have done for me, and because of that, I have you in my heart.”***
- The word “heart” is used many different ways in the Bible, but primarily, it refers to the center of a person’s thoughts or feelings.
 - Proverbs 4:23 – ***“Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.”***
 - Deuteronomy 10:6 – ***“Love the Lord your God and serve Him with all your heart and all your soul.”***
- The Greek word for “affection” is “Splanchnon,” which means “bowels.” The bowels are that part of our physical anatomy that contains our internal organs.
- When Paul thought about how the Philippians loved him, he had this deep longing to let them know of his love for them.
- When God sent His only Son to give His life to redeem us from our sins, He gave us the depth of love we should have for one another.

3. The Passion of Paul’s Prayer – Vs. 9-11 – “And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”

Paul prayed for the Philippians to have:

- **An abounding love** – according to the model of 1 Corinthians 13 – a love that would never give out, give up, or give in – a love that would always set self aside for the good of the church body.
- **A deeper level of discernment** – that ability to distinguish between what is holy and unholy, according to the written pattern Paul gave them in chapter 4:8-9, but also according to the living pattern he gave to them with his life.
- **A sincerity about life** – a life free of pretense, deceit, or hypocrisy.
- **An honorable life** – A life above reproach; a life that is an example to others; a life that would avoid doing anything that might offend or put a stumbling block before others.
 - Francis Shaefter said, ***“No work of art is more important than the Christian’s life, for it is to be a thing of truth and a thing of beauty in the midst of a lost and despairing world. No work of art is more beautiful, more precious than a life lived for the glory of God and in the imitation of His Son.”***

The Passion of Paul’s prayer:

- Verse 11 – ***“Being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”***
- In these first eleven verses, the Apostle Paul defined what it means to live our daily lives according to the character displayed by Jesus Christ, for in so doing, we will fulfill God’s purpose for our lives, which is to glorify Him, and to praise Him forever.
- The basis upon which every decision in life is made is: **“Will this glorify God, or will it profane His holy name?”**
- Paul didn’t give the Philippians a list of things they must and must not do, to the glory and praise of God, but rather how they should live their daily lives.
- In John 15:4-5, Jesus told His disciples, if they would ABIDE in Him, He would produce His fruit through them, for without Him, they could do nothing.