

Joy and rejoice capture Paul's central message in Philippians. As we continue studying Paul's life, it becomes clearer that joy existed in Paul's life because it flowed from an undisputable, unchanging relationship with the Sovereign God. The joy Paul had was unrelated to his circumstances. It was rooted in his relationship with Jesus Christ. And therefore Paul saw the difficult and dark circumstances as God's opportunities.

I. PAUL'S THANKFULNESS, CONFIDENCE, AFFECTION

"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, being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus; just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace. For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ." Philippians 1:3-8

A. THANKFULNESS TO GOD

We are shown Paul's heart and passion in life as he pours out this greeting to the Philippians believers he loves.

1. PAUL'S THANKFULNESS IN EVERY REMEMBRANCE

"I thank my God upon every remembrance..." Philippians 1:3

What was on Paul's mind as he was remembering the Philippian believers? Think back to the beginning of the Philippian church. Remember how Paul preached the gospel of Jesus Christ at the river and a woman by the name of Lydia was saved? She invited Paul, Silas and Timothy to stay with her in her home. They preached the gospel and a new church was started. Soon after that, a demon possessed girl kept coming and interrupting the services. Paul cast the demon out of her and this enraged her master because her infirmity was the source of his income and it was now lost. Paul and Silas were beaten and thrown in prison, in stocks. (Acts 16:11-26) They were treated cruelly. And what does Paul say about that time as he remembers?

"I thank my God upon every remembrance..." Philippians 1:3

Even though Paul was chained to a Praetorian guard, he had the Philippians in his thoughts and prayers. He thanked God for them, spoke of them often and remembers them with joy! Would we have that same eternal perspective if events in our lives turned out for what seemed to be the worst? Paul saw his sufferings for Jesus Christ as a privilege. Paul was so very far from being bitter about the circumstances he had to endure that he remembered the time, place and people with thankfulness and joy. Paul didn't feel sorry for himself regarding the hardships of his life. He had an eternal perspective. He was a man with a mature faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul was thankful for everything that happened, knowing each difficult circumstance was used to spread the gospel. Is that our view of life? May we live as Paul lived... remembering the events of our lives with thankfulness, knowing God's eternal plan is being fulfilled.

2. PAUL'S THANKFULNESS AND JOY IN PRAYER

"...always in every prayer of mine making request for you with all joy..." Philippians 1:4

"Joy", Greek word, *"chara"* meaning calm delight, gladness, great exceeding joy.

Even though Paul was beaten, put in stocks and thrown in prison, he thinks upon that time and those saints in Philippi with *"chara"*, joy. It was Paul's delight to intercede for these believers.

Truly, the best way to remember a friend is at the throne of our Almighty God. When we pray for them, we show true love as we empty ourselves on their behalf. This is what Paul was doing for the ones he loved in Philippi. Does our joy for others cause us to empty ourselves in prayer to God on their behalf?

3. PAUL'S THANKFULNESS FOR FELLOWSHIP IN THE GOSPEL

"...for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now..." Philippians 1:5

"fellowship" refers to partnership, in companionship with.

Paul includes in his prayer a thankfulness for the Philippians' participation with him as fellow companions in sharing, representing, and contending for the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Philippian believers not only received the gospel, but shared the gospel with others, even though it meant persecution. Paul writes this letter some ten years following the start of the Philippian church. Paul is thankful for their continued commitment through the years of sharing the gospel. It became the habit and focus of their lives and Paul commends them for it. Is this the habit of our lives; to share, represent and contend for the gospel of Jesus Christ?

"Gospel", in the Greek, *"euangelion"*, referred to the good news that a messenger would bring regarding the results of a war. If it was good news, it was the euangelion. In God's Word, it refers to the good news about the saving truth of Jesus Christ as it is communicated.

B. CONFIDENCE IN GOD

"...being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ..." Philippians 1:6

“**Confident**” means to be 100% assured, to be absolutely convinced.

“**Day of Christ**” refers to the final glorification of the believer. 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10

Paul was absolutely convinced that God begins a noble, sanctifying work in every believer and will perfect it, bring that work to completion, at the day of Jesus Christ. The word “begun” here is used only one other time in the New Testament, in Galatians 3:3. It refers to a spiritual beginning, the beginning of salvation. Philippians 1:6, makes it absolutely clear that God *began* the work of salvation. Salvation is 100% the work of God. And it is God Who will perfect or complete that godly work of sanctification He began in us. Becoming like Jesus Christ is a lifelong process of maturity and growth that continues until the day of Christ. Paul is absolutely certain and confident that God will never give up on us, but complete the work He has started. How do we know salvation is the work of God?

- *Acts 16:14, “The Lord opened her heart...”*
- *Philippians 1:29, “It (salvation) has been granted on behalf of Jesus Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.”*
- *John 1:12, “He gave the right to become children of God.”*
- *Acts 11:18, “Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.”*
- *2 Thessalonians 2:13, “because God from the beginning chose you for salvation.”*
- *Titus 3:4,5, “He saved us”*

From these verses we see clearly that God has done the work of salvation. We can be absolutely convinced that God will also complete that work He began. Let’s have the attitude of Paul by not becoming discouraged at where we are, but being confident in what we will become as He brings to completion His saving work at the point of our glorification, the day of Christ Jesus. We are sinners saved by God’s grace, set apart for His purpose, not ours; being perfected into the image of Jesus Christ until the day of Christ, which will render us, glorified with Christ. Now that is encouraging!

C. AFFECTION

“...just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace. For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.” Philippians 1:7-8

Paul longs for the believers at Philippi. His joy for them revolved around the maturing, perfecting work of God evident in their lives as partakers in the defense and confirmation (legal terms) of the gospel which was the center of Paul’s whole ministry. These believers at Philippi joined with Paul in God’s work. They shared their love for Paul by providing for his needs, encouraging him and contending for the faith just as Paul did. Paul begins this letter by confirming his deep, compassionate love for them. Could the things Paul says of the Philippian believers be said of us? Are we partakers in the defense and confirmation of the gospel? Is the habit of our lives one of sharing, representing and contending for the gospel of Jesus Christ?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BIBLE STUDIES

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Legislators, Governor: Tuesday, 7:15am, Capitol Basement, Room 0109

Staff Study: Tuesday, Noon, SSB, 1525 Sherman, Rm 603