

## Wednesday Evening Bible Study

July 17, 2024

Series - The Life and Writings of the Apostle Paul

*The Prison Epistles*

*The Letter to the Philippians – The Joy of Faith*

Text - Philippians 4:1 – 7 – *And Again I Say, Rejoice*

Congregational Reading – Philippians 4

### Introduction

As we begin our examination of this concluding chapter in Paul's Letter to the Philippians, it is important that we notice, once again, the emphasis on joy. Verse four exhorts us to *"Rejoice in the Lord, always: and again I say, rejoice."* We have seen the word, "joy," 6 times, and the word, "rejoice," 9 times throughout this letter. Interestingly, these words are never associated with our immediate circumstances. In other words, we don't have to be at Disneyland to experience joy; we don't have to be driving a Ferrari and living in Beverly Hills to experience joy; we don't have to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol to enjoy life. True joy comes *"in the Lord,"* meaning it comes from within our relationship with Christ. Biblical joy is always *"in the Lord."* Philippians 3:1 says, *"Finally, my brethren, rejoice, in the Lord;"* Philippians 3:3 says that we *"rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."* To rejoice, you have to be *"in Christ,"* meaning you have to be saved, born-again by the Spirit of God.

*"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17)*

Being saved is prerequisite for a life of joy, but there is more required. It is also needful to be in a right relationship with Christ, meaning that we must be in submission to His will. This last chapter of Philippians contains many practical truths, all of which, if applied to our lives, will produce joy. Remember, the fruit of a Spirit-filled life, a life surrendered to the Holy Spirit and in submission to the will of God, is joy. 2 Corinthians 5:20 says that we are God's ambassadors on this earth; we are His representatives. What an awesome privilege to be saved and then appointed to do God's work here in this world. If you are not enjoying the journey as God's ambassador in this world, there is something wrong. You are not following these principles and cannot be Spirit-filled. But the good news is that can all be remedied. God wants you to have joy, so listen carefully as we look at some of the ingredients that will produce joy in your life.

## I. Stand Firm in the Lord (v. 1)

*"Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved." (Philippians 4:1)*

### A. Our Standing in Him

Before we discuss from this verse how we are supposed to stand, let's consider where these Philippians stood in their relationship with the Apostle Paul. Notice the terms of endearment that Paul uses in this verse referring to the Philippians: "my brethren dearly beloved and longed for," "my joy and crown." Crowns refer to the rewards that believers will receive in Heaven. In Paul's letter to the Thessalonians, he referred to the "Crown of Rejoicing:"

*"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" (1 Thessalonians 2:19)*

Paul was telling these Philippians that one of his greatest rewards was just the fact that they were going to be joining him in Heaven.

By the way, this verse not only describes the way Paul loved the Philippians, but it also describes the way that God feels about us.

Knowing somebody loves you will produce joy, but realizing that God loves you, even though He knows everything about you, ought to really give you a reason to rejoice.

**Illustrate - *He Loves Me*** - George Amon Webster

Why did He go to Calvary?

Why was His life's blood shed for me?

Why did He suffer as no man has ever done? There's just one reason—I am the one

*He loves me, He loves me Jesus loves me*

*He loves me, He loves me Jesus loves me*

When I'm sad, He loves me

Even when I'm bad, He loves

When it seems no one cares for me I talk to Jesus,

He loves me

### B. Our Stand For Him

He tells us to “stand fast” or stand firm “in the Lord”. This means that we are supposed to be unwavering in our faith and devotion to the Lord, regardless of the pressure that may be on us to give in.

*"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:58)*

*"Preach the word; be instant **in season, out of season**; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." (2 Timothy 4:2)*

### **1. Stand fast in your doctrine.**

*"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;" (Ephesians 4:14)*

*"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." (Psalms 1:1-3)*

### **2. Stand fast in your devotion.**

Don't be ashamed of the Lord. Take a stand for Him. Let everybody know where you stand.

### **3. Stand fast in your duty.**

Do what you are supposed to do. Be where you are supposed to be. Be consistent and dependable. Quit letting your feelings and emotions determine what you will do. Do right, even when you don't feel like it.

Christian, you need to realize your standing with God. He loves you, and he is not ashamed of you. He doesn't waver in his devotion and duty towards you. Because He stands for you, you need to stand for Him.

Standing produces joy.

## **II. Serve Faithfully in Harmony (vs. 2 – 3)**

### **A. Serve Simpatically – Get along**

*"I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord."*  
(Philippians 4:2)

Read Philippians 2:1 – 8

If you are going to have joy in life, you must learn that you will not always get what you want. You must learn to work together with people, striving together to accomplish what Christ wants. Strife within a church will not only kill joy, but it will also hinder its effectiveness in reaching the community. You cannot fight against the devil's hold on a community if you are battling within the church. For Christ's sake, settle your differences, and then take the battle to the true enemy – Satan. Sometimes, God may want you to give in, even when you are right.

### **B. Serve Sacrificially (v. 3)**

*"And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life."* (Philippians 4:3)

Paul now asks an unknown person, perhaps a pastor, to assist these women in settling the dispute. The word "help" is interesting. It means to "seize or take control." Paul wanted somebody from within the church to intervene and take control of the situation in this dispute between these two women.

It is easier not to get involved, but there are times that you need to step up and do something to restore order and tranquility within the church.

Harmony within the local church produces joy. Harmony on the job produces joy. Harmony in the home produces joy.

Notice again v. 4

*"Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice."* (Philippians 4:4)

Notice the word "always." Don't let the strife of others affect your joy. Don't let anything rob you of your joy.

### **C. Serve Simply as an Example (v. 5)**

*"Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand."* (Philippians 4:5)

The word “moderation” means to be gentle and patient. Paul is saying that we should be an example of gentleness, patience, and forbearance. When people are fighting, you should be a patient peacemaker.

*"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." (Matthew 5:9)*

*"A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger." (Proverbs 15:1)*

When you demonstrate the peace and gentleness of God in your life, the joy within you, it will give joy to others.

### III. Supplicate (Pray) Fervently and Stop Worrying (vs. 6 – 7)

***"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." (Philippians 4:6)***

Stress is a joy killer. Most of the things which cause us stress are things that we can do little about on our own to fix. The best thing to do is to give them over to God. Give your problems to Him.

#### Illustration

Kevin Carter could never escape his continent's turmoil. For a decade, the photographer captured vivid pictures of repression and strife in his native South Africa. Years ago, he went to famine-racked Sudan and came upon a starving toddler stalked by a vulture. He photographed the scene - an image that won a Pulitzer Prize - then chased the vulture away. As the child resumed her walk to a feeding station, he lit a cigarette and wept. At 33, he killed himself with carbon monoxide pumped into his pickup truck. His father exclaimed: "Kevin always carried around the horror of the work he did."

We deal with some huge problems in this life – family problems, financial problems, physical problems, painful problems. Some problems we can fix, many we can't; but we can give them to Somebody else. I don't have to worry about them if I know that God is. If He is handling the situation, then all I must do is find out what He wants me to do – and He may not want me to do anything, other than pray.

*"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed." (James 1:5-6)*

Illustration – I’ve observed Gerald Hicks several times dealing with people who have come to him with very difficult problems. He always says the same thing. “I know what we can do about this problem – we can pray”.

*"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:7)*

Lack of worry means a lack of stress, and the absence of stress is the presence of peace; and peace is the twin sister of joy. They always go together. “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace.”

## **Conclusion**

How can you have true joy and peace in your life, even when you’re not at Disneyland?

You can realize where you stand with God and then stand for Him.

You can learn to serve together with people in harmony, being an example of moderation.

You can learn to stop worrying and start praying.