

Finding Joy

A study of Paul's Letter to the Philippians

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1- Finding Joy in Other's SalvationPhilippians 1:1-11

Php 1:1-11 Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: 2 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, 5 For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; 6 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: 7 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 defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. 8 For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. 9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; 10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; 11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

We live in a world that pursues pleasure and happiness like a blind hog trying to find the proverbial acorn. The joke says even a blind hog stumbles on one at times. The world stumbles on a bit of happiness at times as well. The birth of a child, the wedding of two lives and others things bring a season of joy.

By contrast, those who walk with God can have the joy of the Lord in their lives constantly and daily. Christ spoke in *John 15* about joy in obedience to God. *John 15:11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*

Peter speaking of believers trials of the faith said in *1 Peter 1:8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*

James Ryle recorded in *Rylisms*, commenting on *Psa 34:5, They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed*, said the following about joy and the grace of God. It is entitled *The Clan of the Radiant Face*.

God created us with faces that have the unique ability of reflecting to others the things that we cherish deepest in our hearts. Whatever holds your affections, and arouses your highest admiration; whatever it is that has captured your attention and become the focus of your desires — it will be seen on your face.

Some people love money, and their faces are marred with greed and avarice. Others drool after sex, and walk about with faces reddened by lust. Other love only themselves and cast forth a countenance of arrogance and contempt for others. And on and on it goes, for our world is filled with many, many faces.

But then there is the Clan of the Radiant Face. These are those who love the Lord Jesus — truly, deeply, and fully. Their faces shine with His favor and blessing. They give off light in every dark place, and are attractive to all things good and noble. The Lord beautifies the meek with salvation, and fills their face with life and gladness.

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Yet, even for them, there are times when something else catches their eye and they drift away their gaze from Jesus to other things. Then their faces slowly dim, as a dullness clouds their once radiant countenance. Perhaps you may be in such a drifted state even now, and remember fonder days when the light of the Lord was shed upon your way. All you need do is turn back your face to Him — He will take care of the rest.

Let your identity come from how much the Lord loves you, rather than fixing your attention on how much the Lord is using you, or blessing you. For even these things, when they catch our eye, will become clouds that shade our faces from His glory.

You know the old song — "Turn your eyes upon Jesus; look full in His wonderful face. And the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace."

So, what are you looking at? It's written all over your face.

I have entitled the series we are beginning in Philippians, *Finding Joy*. We will explore this great book and find things that we can find joy in, over, with when, by and being. This will, I am confident, allow us to reflect the joy of Christ with our countenance and lift the world by helping them find joy in Christ as well. It will allow us to join the clan of the radiant face. Paul's great admonishment in **Php 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice.** This speaks volumes when we realize that Paul was in prison when writing.

I- Philippians in the Book of Acts:

To begin to understand whom Paul is addressing in historical context of this letter

we need to explore some of the individuals briefly that he encountered before being led by the Holy Spirit of God to pen the letter.

Philippi was the first point in Europe that the gospel was preached. The call for help that propelled the gospel to Europe is found in **Act 16:9-10** *And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. 10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.* Paul arrived in a city that residence were citizens of Rome. (See Acts 16:20) A city that was prosperous because it was on the trade route from east to west.

A few days after arriving in the city of Philippi, Paul has his first converts. **Act 16:13-15** *And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. 14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. 15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.*

Problems arose when Paul and Silas, on their way to the synagogue to pray, drove a demon out of a young girl. This led to an uproar from her master because he used her for gain in divination. Paul and Silas are brought before the magistrate and placed and they were placed in prison.

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This lead to what we might call the first midnight concert. *Act 16:25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.* The earth quaked and the doors of the prison flew open. The jailor was at the point of taking his own life when Paul cried out to him. We know the story well recorded in *Act 16:29-34 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, 30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? 31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. 32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. 34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.*

They departed the city soon afterwards. The letter which we now undertake to study is written to these dear friends. The letter is almost void of any censoring of the church. Paul is writing to his friends in a personal tenderhearted way.

II- Greeting of Grace and Peace:

Paul begins the letter with a customary greeting. *Php 1:1 Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: 2 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Timothy was with Paul for some unknown reason while Paul was prisoner in Rome. Paul attached his name in greeting at the beginning of the letter. Timothy was known by the

church at Philippi, being with Paul from the founding on the bank of the river.

III- Finding Joy in Other's Salvation:

Paul most certainly had been kept informed about the growth of the church at Philippi. He had lead many of them to the Lord and nothing caused more joy in a life than being allowed by God to lead someone to Christ. Paul was thankful for their faith and their participation with him in the spread of the gospel.

Php 1:3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, 5 For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;

There are many over the years of my ministry that I cherish their salvations. Paul spoke of his confidence in God keeping those believers as well.

*Php 1:6 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: Paul was certainly confident in the Philippians but we see this was born of a confidence that God would complete the work began in them. Paul would say later to Timothy in *2 Timothy 4:7-8 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.**

Beloved we can find joy in others salvation and the keeping power of God of them in their salvation.

Php 1:7 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 defence and confirmation of the

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gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. 8 For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

Paul held their salvation and hope tenderly in his heart.

IV- Prayer for the Church:

Paul next offers a pray in *Php 1:9* *And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; 10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; 11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.*

Let us notice a few things from this prayer. First, Paul prayed that their love would abound and grow. The *Holman Christian Standard Bible* translates *Philippians 1:9-10* *And I pray this: that your love will keep on growing in knowledge and every kind of discernment, 10 so that you can determine what really matters and can be pure and blameless in the day of Christ.* Joy in others salvation comes when those we love that are saved grow and make decisions about their life based on the message of the Word of God. When someone is saved there is a battle that begins within about which framework of thinking will take precedence in their life. We have been indoctrinated by the world to think like a nature man about things. When we are saved we must learn to think with spiritual eyes and see with a worldview of a Christian and not as we formally did as lost men. This takes knowledge of the Word of God and discernment from the Holy Spirit. Paul

admonished Corinthian church because they had not grown. *1 Corinthians 3:1-3* *And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*

From what worldview are you making decision? Sadly many never grow and continue to make decisions based on a temporal and not an eternal one.

Paul also prayed those in whom he was rejoicing over their salvation that they might be filled with fruits of righteousness so that God would be glorified. Beloved we do not live our life as we can so others can put us on a pedestal but that God will be glorified. Jesus said in *John 15:8* *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.* He had just explained the fact we must never forget that He is the vine and we the branches and we must abide in Him to produce this fruit. These fruits are right acts, thoughts, and words. They spring forth from the salvation that resided in the heart. We certainly can find joy in the salvation of others when we see these fruits. We can also rejoice when we hear of a lost man being saved after all Jesus said, *"I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. Luke 15:7 NASB*