

The Letters to the Churches- Joy In Our World...*Philippians*

Philippians is one of the letters known as the prison epistles of Paul the Apostle. Paul teaches us that the Joy of the Lord can and should be part of our life regardless of the circumstances we find ourselves in. This book is very important when we consider that the suicide rate is so high in our world and that depression is our greatest problem in a lot of cases. This book teaches us we can have Joy in our World in spite of problems.

The date of the writing of this book is from 52-63 A.D. The key words of the book are *joy* (used 14 times) and rejoice. The two key verses could be **3:1** *Philippians 3:1 "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord..."* and *Philippians 4:4 "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice."*

Allow me to offer the following outline for our study.

Joy In Our World:

I- Rejoice Over the Gospel 1:12-18

II- Rejoice In Our Hope 1:20-30

III- Rejoice in Unity 2:1-18

IV- Rejoice in God's People 2:19-30

V- Rejoice Over Grace 3:1-11

VI- Rejoice In the Journey 3:12-21

VII- Rejoice in Godliness 4:8-9

VIII- Rejoice in Contentment 4:11-23

Joy In Our World:

I- Rejoice Over the Gospel 1:12-18

Paul had a heart for the Philippian church members (1:7). Timothy was with him at the time of the writing of Philippians. He longed to see the Philippians walk in fellowship of the gospel.

There were some that might have been discouraged about the treatment

of Paul for the gospel's sake. He tells them that all the so-called bad things had been for the furtherance of the gospel (1:12).

Paul told them that regardless of the reason that the gospel is proclaimed we should rejoice because the regeneration power is not in the messenger but the message (1:15-16).

II- Rejoice In Our Hope 1:20-30

Paul had stated in 1:6 that he was confident that God would complete the good work in them that He had begun.

In this section he talked about wanting to go home to be with the Lord and teaches us to rejoice in our hope while we serve on this side of eternity (1:23-25). Paul wanted to go home but realized that God had a purpose for leaving him here.

We must realize from this example that God wants us to have joy in the midst of suffering and not in spite of it. Joy is not possible in a void without suffering.

III- Rejoice in Unity 2:1-18

1:27 lays the groundwork for unity. In chapter two Paul tells us how to have unity.

In 2:3-4 we find that we are to esteem others above ourselves.

2:5 tells us to have the "*mind of Christ.*" Remember that Christ emptied Himself and became a man for us. He gave His life for us.

When we practice 2:14 we will also see that others will be sweeter as well.

IV- Rejoice in God's People 2:19-30

You have heard it said that we don't live on an island. Paul had reasons

to rejoice over some people that helped him. He had Timothy with Him and planned to send him to Phillipi. (2:25-26) He had been sick and the church had been worried about him.

Paul thanked them in 4:10 for taking care of his needs as well.

V- Rejoice Over Grace 3:1-11

Paul warns them that some would come who wanted to bring grace into bondage of the Law. He recounted for them what I call his pedigree in 3:4-6 but tells that it is worthless compared to grace. He reminds us all that we should rejoice in grace because salvation is not of works or of social status.

VI- Rejoice In the Journey 3:12-21

He realized that he had not arrived where he needed to be yet. He however realized that he must journey on to the "mark of the prize." He made a bold statement when he said, "be followers together of me..." Paul wanted them to see his journey of life and rejoice not only in his walk but in others.

VII- Rejoice in Godliness 4:8-9

When we have a purity of life there is something refreshing about it. These verses are power packed with right actions that we need to practice to be able to rejoice in Godliness.

VIII- Rejoice in Contentment 4:11-23

It is oft said, "the only difference between men and boys is the price of their toys." In our culture it seems contentment is a long lost antiquated emotion. It seems to have no place in today's world. However, for us truly to rejoice we must learn contentment and for us to learn contentment we must rest in the Lord and rejoice in Him.

Paul tells us he had learned to be content no matter what the case. If a millionaire who had a silver spoon in his

mouth all his life says this we are skeptically and rightly so. But remember that Paul is in prison at the time, he had been beaten, ship wrecked, snake bitten, lied upon, etc.

He made one of the most profound statements for you and I anywhere in Scripture out of this context, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." 4:13

Application to Life's Steps

- 1- Joy is possible regardless of the circumstances if we focus on Christ.
- 2- There are many things in our life that we can rejoice over.
- 3- We should rejoice over a soul that is saved anywhere and in any church.
- 4- The source of our joy is Christ not circumstances.
- 5- Godliness will bring joy in our life.
- 6- Contentment is something that we must learn.

Retracing Our Steps

- 1- Who wrote the book of Philipians?

- 2- What are some of the things that we have to rejoice in? _____

- 3- What is the ultimate source of our joy? _____
- 4- What area of your life do you need to work on to be able to rejoice more?

- 5- What will you do to work on this?

