

A Philippians Sermon Series

JOY

IN THE MIDST OF ANYTHING

OPENING COMMENT

The letter to the Philippian church is unique in that it exudes an extraordinary level of joy and rejoicing. Paul, in prison, is full of joy when he thinks of the church in Philippi and it overflows into his letter to them. This is starkly counter to the culture we find ourselves in, which disparages and distrusts the church. In some cases, this is a justifiable position, but as we begin to understand why Paul has such joy and confidence in the church the cultural disposition becomes less and less applicable.

READ THE TEXT: Philippians 1:1-11

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:

²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, ⁵because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. ⁹And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.



UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

1. What do you notice about how Paul talks about himself and about the church he is writing to?
2. Why does Paul thank God for the Philippian church? (vs. 5)
3. Where does Paul's confidence ultimately lie? (vs. 6)
4. Why does Paul say it is right to think the way that he does? (vs. 7)
5. How ought love be qualified? (vs. 9)
6. What is the purpose or agenda of Paul's prayer? (vs. 10,11)

APPLYING THE TEXT

1. How does Paul's understanding of the church, that they are saints, act as an encouragement in your faith and walk?
2. What do you take joy in when you reflect on the church? Where do you struggle to find joy?
3. Where does your confidence in the church stem from? How does that impact your participation or hope in its future?
4. Paul praises the church for being partakers in grace through his imprisonment. What does it look like to be partakers in grace today?
5. We tend to see knowledge/discernment as opposing love. First, if that were true, which side of the pendulum do you find yourself gravitating towards? How might we find a better path forward in maintaining love but employing and seeking knowledge?
6. Given the prayer Paul prays over the Philippian church, how might we better pray for the church?

BIBLICAL THREAD

1. Matthew 22:1-14 – kingdom of God as a wedding feast.
2. Matthew 25:1-13 – Jesus as the bridegroom.
3. John 13: 31-25 – Jesus commands love as a defining characteristic.
4. Romans 8:26-30 – being conformed into the image of the Son.
5. James 1:2-4 – trial/testing used to refine those who follow Christ.
6. James 2:18-23 – the correlation of faith and works from Abraham's experience.
7. 1 John 3:11-24 – Loving one another.
8. Revelation 19:6-10 – The bride of Christ.



CONCLUSION

Paul's excitement for the church is palpable. This is not solely because they were a church that had things right, but because they found their identity in Christ and were partners with Paul in the defense of the Gospel. Their support and conviction bring him great encouragement and hope. Yet, his ultimate assurance is grounded in the reality that God is the initiator of the church. Since He is faithful, he will bring it to completion, so he unabashedly celebrates the church, even though they are flawed. How readily to we celebrate what God is doing amongst our brokenness?

SHARE & PRAY

LIFE GROUP VISION:

The goal to meeting together around the word of God is three fold. First, we want to more clearly understand what God is saying to us through his Word and apply it to our own hearts and minds. Secondly, we want to build a loving community with each other to disciple one another toward maturity in Christ. Thirdly, we desire each of us, as ambassadors of Christ, to look outwards to our community and ask how we can bring the truth of the gospel to bear on those whom God has placed in our lives.

