

THE JOY OF THE LORD

TEXT: PHIL. 2:1-4

Introduction:

1. The epistle to the Philippians is one of the apostle Paul's four prison epistles (the others are Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon).
2. Joy comes from within, not from without. Paul was in prison, but he did not let this rob him of his joy (1:4, 18, 25, 26; 2:2, 16, 17, 18, 28; 3:1, 3; 4:1, 4, 10, 11).
3. No matter where Paul was, he was always joyful and always content (cf. 4:11). Paul had the joy of the Lord.
4. Paul was already full of joy. Now he asks the saints at Philippi to fill his cup to overflowing – "Fulfill ye my joy..." (2:2a).

I. THIS JOY COMES FROM A SINGLE MIND

II. THIS JOY COMES FROM A SUBMISSIVE MIND

III. THIS JOY COMES FROM AN UNSELFISH MIND

I. A SINGLE MIND (2:1, 2).

1. The secret of joy in spite of difficult circumstances is a single mind.
2. The Holy Spirit ("fellowship of the Spirit") brings unity to the local church (2:1; cf. Eph. 4:1-6).
3. Christians must be "like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind" (2:2).
4. This does not mean that church members will always think alike or act alike, but there will be harmony and unity when Christians are right with God.
5. "Like-minded" (2:2) means to have the mind of Christ (cf. 2:5), i.e., to see things as Christ would see them, and to act as He would act. If we are all "of one mind" (2:2), there will not be any divisions or strife in the church.
6. To have "the same love" (2:2) means to show the same love to others that the Lord has shown unto us (cf. Eph. 5:25).
7. "Being of one accord" (2:2) means being able to work together in harmony toward a common goal (building fund, missions program, renovation work, etc.).

II. A SUBMISSIVE MIND (2:3).

1. A single mind speaks of unity. A submissive mind speaks of meekness. There cannot be unity without meekness. As long as there are believers asserting themselves and trying to call the shots, there will be disunity.
2. Nothing whatever should be "done through strife or vainglory" (2:3). I remember years ago at a trustees meeting, one brother gave a devotional. His message was similar to this and it was on joy. In fact, I mentioned it this past Sunday morning. He used this acronym for joy: JESUS first, OTHERS second, then YOURSELF last!

3. I dealt with the problem of “selfism” on Sunday. Our text tonight is an appropriate follow-up to that. Verse 3 says, “but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.”
4. Paul says, “nothing” should be done through strife or vainglory; “but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves” (2:3). This means we should put others’ interests above our own.
5. Andrew Murray said being humble does not mean thinking poorly of yourself – it means not thinking of yourself at all. Rom. 12:3 says, “For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.”
6. Many years ago, back when the Salvation Army used to preach the Gospel, they had a big convention but there was a question whether or not General Booth could make it. He was very sick and getting old. The convention started but General Booth was not there. Soon, word spread that he was going to send a telegram. Everyone eagerly awaited his message, and soon it was read from the platform: “OTHERS” (cf. 2:4).
7. I wish we had more Baptists like General Booth! As a young preacher, William Booth knelt down in the Broad Street Chapel, and vowed that, “God should have all there was of William Booth.”
8. The great evangelist J. Wilbur Chapman was in London one time and was given the opportunity to meet General Booth. At that time General Booth was past eighty years of age. Dr. Chapman listened reverently as the old general spoke of the trials and the conflicts and the victories of his life. Dr. Chapman then asked the general if he would disclose his secret for success. “He hesitated a second,” Dr. Chapman said, “and I saw the tears come into his eyes and fall down his cheeks, and then he said, ‘I will tell you the secret. God has had all there was of me. There have been men with greater brains than I, men with greater opportunities; but from the day I got the poor of London on my heart, and a vision of what Jesus Christ could do with the poor of London, I made up my mind that God would have all of William Booth there was. And if there is anything of power in the Salvation Army today, it is because God has all the adoration of my heart, all the power of my will, and all the influence of my life.’”
9. Dr. Chapman said he went away from that meeting with General Booth knowing “that the greatness of a man’s power is the measure of his surrender.” General Booth was submissive to the will of God.
10. If we have a single mind that is really the mind of Christ, and we have a submissive mind that is always thinking of others, then we will automatically have an unselfish mind.

III. AN UNSELFISH MIND (2:4).

1. Someone once asked the evangelist Sam Jones what hell was like. Sam Jones said, “Hell is selfishness on fire!”
2. This world is full of selfish people, but God wants us to be unselfish. On Sunday morning, I mentioned that Oprah Winfrey promotes selfism. Interestingly, our guest speaker Sunday night said the same thing. Oprah’s website says, “Discover, embrace and nurture yourself ... celebrate and honor you!”

3. But what does God's Word say? (Cf. Phil. 2:3, 4).
4. Paul put it this way in II Cor. 4:5, "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."
5. Again, our great example is the Lord Jesus (Phil. 2:5-8).
6. The solution to all of the problems in our churches (and in the world for that matter) is to be more concerned with "the things (interests, needs, their situation) of others" (2:4).
7. Why did Christ come down from the glories of heaven to this earth? It was for others. As He hung on the cross, His enemies looked up and said: "He saved others; Himself He cannot save" (Mark 15:31).
8. Why should we carry the Gospel to the four corners of the world? For others.

CONCLUSION:

1. H.A. Ironside wrote: "Alas, that it is so much easier to speak or write of these things than to practically demonstrate them. It is not in the natural man to live out what is here inculcated. The man after the flesh 'looks out for number one,' as he puts it, and is fond of reminding himself, and his fellows, that 'charity begins at home.'"
2. *Others, Lord, yes, others,
Let this my motto be;
Help me to live for others,
That I might live like Thee* – Charles D. Meigs.