

REASONS TO REJOICE
ESSENTIALS FOR A JOYFUL LIFE–PT 1
PHILIPPIANS 1:12-26

Introduction

Some people don't really **ENJOY** life—they just **ENDURE LIFE** and **GO THROUGH LIFE** with **NO REAL SENSE OF JOY**. The **LORD** used **KING SOLOMON** to write the book of **ECCLESIASTES** that describes our lives that are lived **under the SUN** (*i.e. our earthly existence*). Is there any wonder that one of the key words in that book is “*vanity*” and one of the key phrases is “*vexation of spirit*.”

SOLOMON himself looked to the things of this world to find fulfillment! But, listen to his statement after he had lavished on himself wine, women, and song and whatever his vast riches could afford him:
Ecclesiastes 2:11—“*Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.*”

For many, life has become just a series of chores and obstacles that one must go through – just to **ENDURE LIFE**. There is little **HAPPINESS** and there is little **JOY**!

The dreams of – “*If only*” fill the minds of most, especially the most discontented. You know what I am talking about. “*If only*” I could find the right job...the right mate...I could win the lottery or the Publisher's Clearing house jackpot! “*If only*”... “*If only*”... “*If only*.”

But even after a small minority have their “*if only's*” fulfilled they find that although there may be a temporary **HAPPINESS**, there is still no lasting **JOY** found in those things!

SOLOMON also said, *Ecclesiastes 5:10*—“*He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity.*”

Well, is it possible to have **JOY** whether or not we have the “*If only's*”? Many people believe that **HAPPINESS** is based on perfect **CIRCUMSTANCES**.

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“*If everything is perfect – I will be happy.*” We all like it when we find ourselves in **GOOD SITUATIONS** and **CIRCUMSTANCES**! But listen, having **JOY** in our life should **NOT** be based on our **CIRCUMSTANCES** having to be **PERFECT**!

We live in a **SIN CURSED WORLD** and so **PERFECT CIRCUMSTANCES** are not going to be the norm. In fact, more often than not life is going to be **WAY LESS THAN PERFECT**!

But, with the **LORD JESUS CHRIST** in our lives, it is possible to have **JOY WITHIN IN SPITE OF OUR CIRCUMSTANCES**! **HAPPINESS** may be based on the **GOOD HAPPENINGS** in our life! However, **TRUE JOY** is **NOT BASED** on our **CIRCUMSTANCES**, but rather comes from what **CHRIST** brings deep within our lives!

PAUL wrote a lot about **JOY** in this letter to the **PHILLIPIANS**! Even though many of the **CIRCUMSTANCES** he found himself in were rough – he still had **JOY** in his life!

The background of our passage today is that **PAUL**, for the previous four years, had been in some miserable conditions. His **CIRCUMSTANCES** were far from perfect. He had spent two years in prison in **CAESAREA** on a trumped up charge.

He was then put on a ship to go to **ROME** to appear before **NERO** who **WAS NOT** known for his nice treatment of **CHRISTIANS**. On the way to **ROME**, the ship wrecked and he was stranded on an island, bitten by a poisonous snake, spent three months of winter there, then finally continued on to **ROME** where he spent another two years in custody awaiting trial.

Though he was under “*house arrest*” with a guard, he was still bound with a chain. He was also granted some limited freedoms which allowed him to receive visitors and preach there at his house. (*Acts 28:16-20, 30-31*)

Now follow along with me as I read our passage this morning. (*Read Text*)

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So, how was **PAUL** able to have and to show **JOY**? What was his secret? How was he able to stay positive while imprisoned? How did he **TRIUMPH** over his **TROUBLES**? How did he **DELIGHT** though in great **DIFFICULTIES**? How did he stay so **POSITIVE** and **JOYFUL** in spite of the fact that everything had **NOT** turned out the way he would have wanted or planned it.

Well, I believe that our passage of **SCRIPTURE** today gives us some secrets to living a **JOYFUL** life. I'm calling these:
ESSENTIALS FOR A JOYFUL LIFE!

I. WE NEED TO VIEW OUR LIFE FROM THE LORD'S PERSPECTIVE! (Vs. 12-14)

Folks here is a fact: Every one of us has **PROBLEMS!** Some of our **PROBLEMS** are big. Some of our **PROBLEMS** are small. But they are still **PROBLEMS** – just the same!

No doubt some of you have brought your **PROBLEMS** in here with you today and consequently, you're finding it hard to **WORSHIP** because of your **PROBLEMS!**

But folks here is the secret: The way we look at our **PROBLEMS** is much more important than the **PROBLEMS** themselves! Our **PERSPECTIVE** about our **PROBLEMS** (i.e. our **VIEW** or **UNDERSTANDING** of our **PROBLEMS**) and what we **FOCUS ON** in the midst of our **PROBLEMS** can make all the difference in the world!

In fact, our **PROBLEMS** are not as important as **HOW WE VIEW OUR PROBLEMS**. Look at *verses 12 and 13* again!

PAUL'S imprisonment gave an **OPPORTUNITY** for the **GOSPEL** to be shared where it otherwise may never have been shared!

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Our **LORD** is big enough to take our **BAD CIRCUMSTANCES** and turn them around for **HIS HONOR** and **HIS GLORY!** **HE'S** big enough to turn them inside out. **HE** is big enough to flip them over, shake them up and make a bad situation – good! If **HE** could do it with the **CROSS OF CHRIST** at **CALVARY** – **HE** is big enough to do it in our lives too!

Look at what **PAUL** says in *verse 13-14!*

PAUL'S ATTITUDE toward his **PROBLEMS** had been an **ENCOURAGEMENT** to other **BELIEVERS** in his day! His **COURAGE** was **CONTAGIOUS!** It spread like wildfire. Other **BELIEVERS** became **BOLD** because of **PAUL'S BOLDNESS!**

The **PERSPECTIVE** we need to live from – if we're going to have **JOY** in our life – is found in *Romans 8:28*–“*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*”

When we get the **LORD'S PERSPECTIVE**, then we will be well on our way to **JOYFUL LIVING!** **PAUL** tells us that **GOD** has a **PURPOSE** behind all the **PROBLEMS** of the **CHILD OF GOD**, therefore we must **VIEW AND LIVE OUR LIVE FROM HIS PERSPECTIVE!**

II. WE NEED TO LIVE OUR LIFE WITH THE LORD'S PRIORITIES! (Vs. 15-19)

In life we need to **KNOW** what's **IMPORTANT** and what is not!

If we don't **CHOOSE OUR PRIORITIES** we'll spend a lot of time spinning our wheels. We'll be **REACTIONARY** – rather than **PROACTIVE!** We'll go around putting out one fire after another and living our life from problem, to problem, to problem – without ever **CHOOSING WHAT'S IMPORTANT!**

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Here in *verses 15-17* we see what the most important thing was to **PAUL—CHRIST WAS BEING PREACHED!** Whether **HE** was **BEING PREACHED** out of **ENVY** and **STRIFE** or out of **LOVE**—**CHRIST WAS BEING PREACHED—HIS NAME WAS PROCLAIMED!**

PAUL REJOICED that the **GOSPEL** was getting out! Yes – he would rather that the **GOSPEL** be **PREACHED** out of **LOVE**— but he **REJOICED** in the fact that the **GOSPEL WAS BEING PROCLAIMED!** That was one thing that made him **REJOICE!**

Some of their **MOTIVES** may have been wrong – their **STYLE** may have been lacking – their **DELIVERY** may not have been best—but the **MESSAGE** was getting out! **CHRIST** was proclaimed!

But some may say, “*Bro. Jerry, if it is not preached in love—isn’t it wrong?*” Is that what **PAUL** said? Look with me at *verses 18-19*.

Listen, if you want something to **STEAL YOUR JOY** quicker than anything else, just listen to everybody who criticizes you!

Believe you me, other people are going to criticize you! Folks there are sometimes when you can’t win for anything! If you do “*this*” – one crowd will criticize you! If you do “*that*” the other crowd will criticize you! And even if you do “*nothing*” there is a crowd who will criticize you! So we should just **do what the LORD wants us to do and not pay attention to the criticism!**

Is there any of the **CRITICISM** worth losing our **JOY** over? No! **PAUL** had **GOD’S PERSPECTIVE TO LIVE FROM** and **GOD’S PRIORITIES TO LIVE BY!** **PAUL** wasn’t going to let anybody or anything **STEAL HIS JOY!** Not critics! Not circumstances! Not situations!

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TRUE JOY comes from **VIEWING OUR LIFE FROM THE LORD’S PERSPECTIVE** and **LIVING OUR LIFE WITH THE LORD’S PRIORITIES!** Let’s **SET OUR PRIORITIES** to the **LORD’S PRIORITIES** and it will help us **LIVE A LIFE OF JOY!**

III. WE NEED THE PRAYERS OF FELLOW BELIEVERS IN OUR LIFE! (*Vs 19*)

We **ALL** need **GOD’S HELP** and **STRENGTH** to get through life! I know I certainly do! We need the **LORD’S POWER** to help us **ENDURE HARDNESS** that comes our way and **POWER** to just **ENDURE**—To just “*keep on keeping on!*” Because **OUR POWER** can give out very quickly! Life can drain us and wear us out! Living from one crisis to another can deplete **OUR ENERGY!**

And the older we get, the easier it is for us to lose **OUR ENERGY** and **OUR POWER!** We express this sometimes by saying, “*My git up and go has done got up and went!*” Can I get a witness?

The **LORD** doesn’t want us to do things in **OUR** own **POWER!** Understand that **THE LORD’S POWER IS AVAILABLE!** Look at what **PAUL** said in *verse 19!*

PAUL said, “*I have two things that are my salvation*” (not salvation of his soul, but rather **giving him the STRENGTH to keep him going on in the ministry!**)

First he mentions the **PRAYERS** of the **BELIEVERS** at **Philippi!** **PAUL BELIEVED THAT PRAYERS** are **POWERFUL!**

- A. **We Know That Because PAUL PRAYED For Others!**
(*1:3-4; Colossians 1:3, 9-11; Romans 1:8-10; Eph. 1:15-16*)
- B. **We Know That Because PAUL ASKED For PRAYER!**
(*Romans 15:30ff; Colossians 4:2-4; 2 Thessalonians 3:1-3*)
1 Thessalonians 5:25—“Brethren, pray for us.”
- C. **We Know That Because PAUL ENCOURAGED OTHERS**

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In The Matter Of PRAYER!

1 Timothy 2:1-3–“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;”

Ephesians 6:18-20–“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; 19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

Yes, we need to **PRAY** for ourselves that we will have **STRENGTH** and **WISDOM** in **what we do for the LORD!** But listen, **WE NEED TO HAVE OTHER PEOPLE PRAY FOR US TOO!** In fact, the **BIBLE** tells us that **WE ARE TO PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER!** Why?

James 5:16–“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER GLORIFIES GOD as we ACKNOWLEDGE HIM AND HIS WORKING!

PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER is a POWERFUL WAY TO CONNECT WITH GOD and HELP OTHERS.

Galatians 6:2–“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”

It is **ENCOURAGING TO KNOW THAT GOD’S PEOPLE ARE**

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PRAYING TO GOD FOR US!

I DON’T KNOW ABOUT YOU, BUT I NEED ALL THE PRAYERS I CAN GET!!!

Conclusion

I’ve shared these three **ESSENTIALS FOR A JOYFUL LIFE.** Next week, **LORD WILLING,** we’ll see **THREE MORE!**

So let me ask...

ARE YOU VIEWING LIFE FROM THE LORD’S PERSPECTIVE?

If not, you are wide open to having your JOY stolen!

ARE YOU LIVING LIFE WITH THE LORD’S PRIORITIES?

A Christ-centered life in every area of life is key to JOY!

ARE YOU SENSING THE NEED FOR NOT ONLY PRAYERS FROM OTHERS BUT ALSO FOR PRAYING FOR OTHERS!

We Need To Ask For Prayer!

Don’t be too proud to admit that you need PRAYER!

We Need To Pray For Others!

When asked to PRAY for others, PRAY!

Encourage others in your PRAYER life!