

Joy Filled Prisoner *Philippians 1:1-2*

Good morning.

Everyone sees life through their unique perspective, because of the assumptions or expectations that give them their own opinion about a specific situation.

However, having an unhealthy, ungodly, or unproductive mindset can adversely affect every part of our lives, including the way we view the Lord and our walk with Him.

We tend to view problems as too big to handle at times because of a distorted perspective.

The Lord has told us in His Word how we can have peace and joy in this Life, despite our circumstances, by keeping our eyes on Him.

The trials of this life will fade away as we think about our loving, powerful Lord, who loves us and gave Himself for us.

Please open your Bibles to the *Book of Philippians* as we embark on a verse-by-verse study of that letter, written by Paul.

The *Book of Philippians* is often known as the “Epistle of Joy” because of the attitude Paul maintained when he wrote this letter, even though he was under house arrest while writing it.

Paul mentions the word *joy* at least **ten** times in the four chapters of the *Book of Philippians*.

*How can we find joy during the worst kinds of pain and suffering in life? The answer is found in **Philippians**.*

Paul taught his readers to rejoice in every circumstance and to find joy during the trials of life. Paul was a prisoner as a minister of the Gospel yet he still had joy and thankfulness!

We have learned many times before that: Happiness usually depends on **happenings**, but **joy** is based on a relationship with Jesus regardless of our circumstances.

I. Background of the letter.

During Paul's second missionary journey, the Lord re-routed him several different times. At times the Holy Spirit forbade him from going to certain places and later He led him to other places.

In *Acts 16*, Paul had a vision about going to Macedonia.

Acts 16:6 Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia.

Acts 16:7 After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them.

Acts 16:8 So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas.

Acts 16:9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."

Acts 16:10 Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them. NKJV

How many times have we got frustrated when our plans did not work out the way we planned, all to find out later, that the Lord had plans for us, even when we did not realize it?

Paul received a vision from the Holy Spirit during his second missionary journey so, he went to Macedonia to preach the Gospel. While in the area, Paul began the Church in Philippi.

The city of Philippi was named after Alexander the Great's father and this church was the first Church started in **Europe**.

Eleven years after his second missionary journey, Paul wrote this letter to the Church he had previously started.

Henry Blackaby said, *“Paul gave specific instruction to the Philippians about how to pray, how to live above anxiety, how to believe, how to think, and how to behave.*

His message was to mature believers as well as to those who were being added to the Church.”

*“He encouraged the Church to remain joyful in the face of persecution, continue to be humble in service, and walk **steadfastly** in faith.”* (Henry Blackaby)

II. The author's greeting.

Read ***Philippians 1:1a***

Who was Paul? He was under house arrest, while writing this letter, waiting for an appearance before Caesar around 61 A.D.

But we first met Paul in Acts 7 consenting to Stephen being put to death as he became the first Christian martyred for his faith.

Acts 7:59 And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Acts 7:60 Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Acts 8:1 Now Saul was consenting to his death. NKJV

*Saul/ Paul was a devoted rabbi before his conversion and was one of the leaders who was **against** the Christians in Jerusalem.*

Acts 9:1, "Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest...

Acts 9:2 and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

Acts 9:3 As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven.

Acts 9:4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

Acts 9:5 And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads."

(And the conversion of Paul) *Acts 9:6 So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" NKJV*

Paul knew about God, but he did not know the Lord personally. Jesus revealed Himself to Paul and his response was to ask, *"Lord, what do You want me to do?"*

Although Paul thought he was a religious man, once he was called by the Lord, he **responded** and obeyed Jesus, by faith.

Paul never forgot where he came from, but he also knew he had become a new creation in Christ after that meeting on the road!

Who was Timothy? When Paul ended his first missionary journey about 5 years before the events of *Acts 16*, he met a teenage disciple named Timothy in Lystra.

Timothy was the son of a Jewish woman, but his father was a Greek. Timothy's name means *"one who honors God."*

This young man would become very important in the life of Paul. Listen to how Paul addressed Timothy later in life.

1 Timothy 1:2 To Timothy, my true child in the faith.

Paul became a mentor to Timothy and Timothy became a mighty person for Christ. And notice Paul referred to himself and Timothy as *bondservants*.

Throughout the entire ancient world, some people worked for others on the principle of servitude.

According to gotquestions.org, “*In Roman times, the term bondservant or slave could refer to someone who voluntarily served others.*

But it usually referred to one who was held in a permanent position of servitude. Under Roman law, a bondservant was considered the owner’s personal property.

Slaves essentially had no rights and could even be killed with impunity by their owners.”

Employees in the ancient world were similar to slaves but they had the **ability** to quit and take other employment.

Exodus 21 describes a *bondservant*.

Exodus 21:2 If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing.

Exodus 21:3 If he comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him.

Exodus 21:4 If his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself.

Exodus 21:5 But if the servant plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,'

Exodus 21:6 then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever. NKJV

According to the Old Testament, there were four ways of becoming a servant:

- A poor person could sell themselves as a slave for survival.
- A father could sell a daughter as a **servant** into a family with the hopes that she would marry into that family.
- If a person went bankrupt, the person would become a slave to their creditors.
- A person who could not pay back what they had **stolen** would become a servant to the injured party.

If a Jew became a slave, they would never become a lifelong slave. The servant worked for six **years** and then was set **free**.

At the end of the six years, the servant went out with what he came in with. However, if the master provided a wife and they had children, the wife and children **belonged** to the master.

The lifelong commitment of a **bond servant** to his master was not motivated by debt or obligation, only by **love** for the master, and the good things that the master had provided for the servant.

This willing slave had fulfilled his obligation yet still wanted to serve his master out of **love**. The owner would take the slave and have his ear pierced with an awl as a sign he was a **bondservant**.

We know Jesus was a perfect *bondservant* to the Father.

F.B. Meyer said, In *Exodus 21:6* “*That awl represents the nail that affixed Christ to the cross, and we must expect it in every true act of consecration.*” (F.B. Meyer)

But being a *bondservant* is also a picture of our service to Jesus.

- We choose to serve the Lord.

John 1:11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name. NKJV

- We lay down our **rights** and count ourselves as slaves unto God.

1 Corinthians 6:20 For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. NKJV

Paul also said in, *1 Corinthians 7:22, For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise, he who is called while free is Christ's slave.*

1 Corinthians 7:23 You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. NKJV

A Christ follower is motivated by love for our Master.

1 Corinthians 5:14 For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; NKJV

III. *“You are either a saint or an aint.” (J. Vernon McGee)*

Read *Philippians 1:1b*

Paul addressed this to all the *saints* in Christ Jesus, in Philippi.

“Saint” means sacred (physically, pure, morally blameless or religious, ceremonially, consecrated): (most holy one or thing).

A Christian becomes a *saint* by being sanctified and cleansed by Jesus’ free gift of salvation alone, not by any works they can do.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

Ephesians 2:9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. NKJV

David Wilkerson has said, *“Some think of faithfulness as simply obtaining victory over sinful habits. Others think of it as doing good deeds.*

Still others think of it as being deeply spiritual, constantly in prayer or reading the scriptures.

*All of these wonderful things are commanded by God’s Word, and we **will do them** if we are faithful. But in themselves they do not constitute faithfulness.*

*“Faithfulness to God is impossible unless it springs from a trusting, **believing** heart.” (David Wilkerson)*

You **do not** become a Christian by simply believing that a god or a higher power exists somewhere.

James 2:19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe — and tremble! NKJV

A person becomes a *saint* by placing their faith in Jesus Christ, not by anything they can do or achieve.

People become Christians by being *born again*. **Why?**

John 3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.

John 3:2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

John 3:4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

John 3:5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. NKJV

A person is only a Christian if they have a **new life** that was given to them from above. *John 3:1-6*

Ultimately, faith in Christ provides us with our right standing and position with the Lord, as well as our ability to be *faithful*.

Then notice the letter was also written to *all the bishops and deacons*. *Bishops* in a general sense, meant those with leadership responsibilities, but the Greek word means *overseers*.

The words *pastor*, *elder*, *bishop*, and *overseer* are used interchangeably within the New Testament.

The word *deacon* simply means *servant* and is speaking of those who had recognized positions of service.

IV. The Siamese twins of Paul's writings.

Read *Philippians 1:2*

In *verse 2*, we see a very typical greeting from the Apostle Paul which is found in most of his letters in the New Testament.

The first word mentioned is the word, "**Grace**". "The word *grace* according to Waren Wiersbe means "*the kindness of God toward undeserving people.*"

It is God's *grace* that gives the spiritual position to the believer so once they are identified with Christ, they are able to draw on the **wealth** of Christ for power for daily living.

The word "**Peace**" implies two things about our relationship with the Lord.

- Once we are saved by Grace, we have peace **with** God.

Prior to salvation, we were enemies of God because we were born natural sinners but in Christ, we have peace with Him.

Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Romans 5:2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. NKJV

- Once saved by Grace, we also have the peace **of** God.

Philippians 4:7 the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. NKJV

A person must be saved by God's grace **first** because no one can experience God's *peace* until they first receive God's grace.

Imagine, once **in Christ**, the Lord calls us His children and promises us as His children that we are co-heirs with Christ.

A foundational Christian belief is the belief in the Triune God.

God the Father is the first Person of the Trinity with Jesus and the Holy Spirit being the other two persons within the Trinity.

The word **God** in *Philippians 1:2* is the Greek word Theos which means the Godhead, Trinity. (Stong's G2316)

Stong's G2316 defines *Theos* as, "God the Father, the first person in the trinity. Christ, the second person of the trinity. Holy Spirit, the third person in the trinity."

So how can the one God we believe in, be revealed in three distinct persons?

While the word **Trinity** does not appear in the Bible, we do see several times in scripture, where the Father appears along with the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

We see all the members of the Trinity together at the Baptism of Jesus, the Resurrection, and even the Transfiguration of Jesus.

All three members of the Trinity are all-powerful, all-knowing, and present everywhere. The Lord is absolutely holy, completely sinless, and no darkness exists within Him.

God is completely **just** but He is also merciful. He gave humans the gift of free will, by not forcing anyone to follow Him.

The Lord also cares and offers us the opportunity to have eternal life with Him, by receiving Jesus Christ as our Savior.

The Lord intervenes in the lives of people. He answers prayer and reveals Himself through His Word, circumstances, and other people.

But the Lord is also sovereign, which means He is in complete control, no matter what is happening in the world.

The Lord's ultimate will and plan always overrules humankind.

So, the *grace* and *peace* we receive as children of God are given to us by the Father, *and the Lord Jesus Christ*.

Lord is *kyrios* which means, He to whom a person or thing belongs, which He has the power of deciding.

Kyrios is master, boss, and Lord. **Jesus has all the power to decide all matters.**

But when Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, took on a human form, He voluntarily gave up His privilege of freely exercising His divine attributes, at certain times.

Jesus fully subjected Himself to the will of the Father while on here earth. He did not at any time stop being God, He simply submitted Himself to the Father.

Jesus had the choice to refuse the Cross, but He willingly sacrificed Himself for our salvation, and to obey the Father.

So, our gift of *Grace and peace* comes from *God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ* both!

V. Practical Application.

Everyone sees life through their unique perspective because of their assumptions or expectations that give them their opinion on situations.

Having an unhealthy, ungodly, or unproductive mindset can adversely affect every part of our lives, including the way we view the Lord and our walk with Him.

We tend to view our problems as too big at times because we sometimes have a distorted perspective.

The trials of this life will fade away as we think about our loving, powerful Lord, who loves us and gave Himself for us.

Warren Wiersbe asked, *“What was the secret of this joy? The secret is found in another word that is often repeated in Philippians: It is the word mind.*

Paul used a total of sixteen references to the mind.

In other words, the secret of Christian joy is found in the way the believer thinks—his attitude. After all, outlook determines the outcome.”

Proverbs 23:7 For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. NKJV

As we continue in the study of this epistle from Paul, may we learn to know Jesus more, and experience His joy, as we meditate on the praiseworthy things of the Lord.

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy — meditate on these things. NKJV

We have learned many times before that happiness usually depends on happenings, but **joy** is based on a relationship with Jesus regardless of our circumstances.