

June 22, 2014

## True Joy Philippians 1:1-2

### All Stand and Read Scripture

#### **Philippians 1:1-2**

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

1 Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons: <sup>2</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

### Prayer

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

I pray that this series in Philippians will be an encouragement and a blessing to you. The theme of this book from Paul to the Philippians is joy. Although he is in prison, he did not dwell on the circumstances of his life. Instead he knew the true **JOY** that came from being a bond-servant of Christ. That is the title to my message this morning, **TRUE JOY**.

We tend to try to spend our lives trying to do things that we think will make us **HAPPY**. We pursue happiness.

The definition of **happiness** is “*A temporary feeling of pleasure based upon positive circumstances*”.

#### **ILLUSTRATION:**

- When we were in high school, many of us thought, if I become licensed to drive and get a car, I could finally be happy.
- If I graduate with good grades, I would really be happy.
- If I could find the right person to marry, I would be happy.
- If I could find a good paying job, I would be happy.
- If we could finally own our own house, I would be happy.

You get the point. We are always seeking for positive events in our life that can make us **HAPPY**.

But, what happens when things don't go your way? What happens when you lose your job and you can no longer pay the house payments on your house? You are no longer happy.

**Happiness** is *“A temporary feeling of pleasure based upon positive circumstances”*.

The search for happiness can be for good “socially accepted ways”. It does not have to be for personal pleasure such as:

- drunkenness,
- illicit sex,
- or drugs.

Regardless of the type of happiness we seek the end result is the same. When the **positive results from those endeavors end**, happiness goes away.

We can continue to chase happiness, even in “socially accepted ways”, or we can realize that Christ can offer us something much better than happiness.

What does Christ offer us? Christ offers us **JOY!**

The definition of **joy** is *“A persistent confidence in the character of God that transcends circumstances and leads to a sense of well-being”*.

Paul understood and experienced true joy in his life. That is why he was able to say,

### **Philippians 4:11-12**

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

<sup>11</sup> ...I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. <sup>12</sup> I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have **learned the secret** of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.

What was Paul’s “secret” to be “content in whatever circumstance” he faced?

It was **JOY!**

**Joy** is *“A persistent confidence in the character of God that transcends circumstances and leads to a sense of well-being”*.

This is why Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians. The dominant theme of his letter was **JOY!**

In fact he uses the words “joy, rejoice, or rejoiced” **16 times** in this short letter.

Consider his circumstances. He was in a prison in Rome chained to a Roman soldier possibly facing death. Yet, he was filled with joy! In fact, his **burden for writing the letter** was that he wanted to **encourage** them to rejoice.

**Philippians 4:4** <sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

## **BODY:**

This morning, I would like to present **three foundational truths** that will help us to **receive Paul's instruction** so that we can **experience joy in our lives**.

1. Joy begins with slavery to Christ.
2. Joy is sustained by union with Christ.
3. Joy is dependent on the grace of Christ.

### **I. Joy Begins with Slavery to Christ.**

You may be thinking, “You mean for me to have joy I must be a slave”?

Yes! As a Christian, we must understand this truth.

Paul starts his letter this way,

#### **Philippians 1:1**

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

1 Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus,

Although Paul mentions Timothy, we know the letter is written by Paul. Notice the words he uses in verses 3 & 4.

#### **Philippians 1:3-4**

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

<sup>3</sup> I thank **my** God in all **my** remembrance of you, <sup>4</sup> always offering prayer with joy in **my** every prayer for you all,

Let's consider the word “bond-servant” or the words “servant” or “slave” in other translations. What do they mean?

Neither servant nor slave provide a perfect description their meaning

When we think of a **slave**, we generally think of someone who is **owned** by his master and is **forced to work** for him **without pay**.

When we think of a **servant**, we generally think of someone who gets **paid for his services**.

This is **not forced slavery**, it is **voluntary slavery**. We do not receive financial payments for our service.

So, a **bond-servant**, servant, or slave **of Christ**, is someone who **voluntarily** works for Christ **without financial pay**. He is not **forced** to work. He serves Him by his **own will**.

We are **owned** by Him. We **recognize Him as our Master** and we **serve Him** by our **own will**. **That is what we do!**

### **Exodus 21:2, 5-6**

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

<sup>2</sup> “If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six years; but on the seventh he shall go out as a free man without payment.

<sup>5</sup> But if the slave plainly says, ‘I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man,’ <sup>6</sup> then his master shall bring him to God, then he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him permanently.

You could be a slave in the Old Testament economy and your master could say your time is up, you may go. But, you could say *“NO, I love you too much!” “I want to live the rest of my life being your slave and working for you”*.

What a wonderful picture is painted here in the Old Testament of being a slave in the Lord Jesus Christ! *Saying to Christ, “I love you so much I want to be your slave!”*

When we are **called a slave**, it means there **must be a Master**.

We are **owned** by the Master.

We do **not have our own will**, we must **serve the will of the Master**.

When you finally come to God and say, “I love you so much!” “I will serve you for the rest of my life”. Then you will begin to **experience true JOY in your life**.

In our country, we **frown upon slavery** and we very much **pride ourselves on being a free people**.

May I suggest to you that there is **no such thing as being a free person**. Everyone of us is a slave to somebody or something.

### **Matthew 6:19-21, 24**

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

<sup>19</sup> “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup> But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; <sup>21</sup> for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

<sup>24</sup> “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

## ILLUSTRATION:

There are many things that we can put in front of God.

If you are proud of your house and you spend all of your time keeping it clean; if you are continuously spend your time updating, remodeling, and accessorizing it; if the pictures of your whole house could be put in the “Good Housekeeping” magazine; then your master is your house.

Whatever is demanding all of your time; whatever is demanding all of your attention; whatever you continuously focus on; that is your master.

**For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

If your focus is on happiness, you will only experience happiness as long as the circumstances remain positive.

When the windstorm comes and rips off your roof and the rain ruins the interior of your home, your circumstances change and your happiness is gone.

**Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal.**

When we have submitted ourselves to the Lordship of Christ, we, like Paul, can have TRUE JOY when our circumstances change.

## II. **Joy is Sustained by Union with Christ.**

### **Philippians 1:1**

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

1... To all the saints **IN** Christ Jesus

What does “Saint” mean? Who is a saint?

There are two definitions that we frequently hear.

- The Catholics refer to the apostles as saints. (Saint Paul, Saint Peter, etc.) We generally do not “title” the apostles as saints. The scriptures do not suggest that there are different levels of Christians
- We often refer to someone we know and are fond of as a saint. “She is so nice and helpful, she is a saint”.

Neither of these are the true meaning of a saint.

The word saint means *“Someone who is set apart”*.

If you are saved; if you have put your faith in Christ Jesus; if you are trusting in Him and Him alone; you are a saint.

If we are going to call Paul a saint, then we are a saint too.  
If you are a saint, you are saved. If you are not a saint, you are not saved.

The word simply means “*Someone who is set apart*”. We are a people that has been set apart from the world to God.

The world is always seeking happiness...seeking pleasure based upon positive circumstances. When God saves you, He pulls you out of the world and brings you to Himself.

How does it change us?

1. We do not spend our life **chasing after happiness**.
2. We find ourselves **seeking true joy**.

How does this take place?

Paul is writing to all of the saints **IN** Christ Jesus. Being a Christian is not merely following Jesus Christ. You are **IN** Christ. You have a **UNION** with Christ.

#### ILLUSTRATION:

If you are a Muslim, you follow Mohammed.

If you are a Buddhist, you follow Buddha.

If you are a Christian, you follow Christ. But, there is more than that. You are **IN** Christ. You have a **UNION** with Christ.

#### **Romans 6:3-7**

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

<sup>3</sup> Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? <sup>4</sup> Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. <sup>5</sup> For if we have become **UNITED** with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, <sup>6</sup> knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; <sup>7</sup> for he who has died is freed from sin.

Since we have been set apart in Christ, nothing can separate us from Christ. No circumstances, negative events, ill health, disease, financial setback, or tragedy.

### III. Joy is Dependent on the Grace of Christ.

#### Philippians 1:2

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

<sup>2</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace for the unbeliever is often described as an “unmerited favor” or **G**od’s **R**econciliation **a**t **C**hrist’s **E**xpense. Christ died on the cross for our sins. We are the ones who sinned. We deserve the punishment for that sin, but Christ died on the cross to wipe away that sin and reconcile us back to God.

Grace for the Christian is a **divine enablement** (or **supernatural help**).

Remember, Paul had a **thorn in the flesh**. We do not know what the infliction was, but we know that Paul asked three times for it to be removed.

What was God’s response?

“My grace is sufficient for you.”

God was telling Paul, You have the grace of Jesus in your life and that is all you need for this problem.

What happens when we get that kind of grace?

See verse 2. It says **Grace to you and peace**. We have peace. The peace is evidence that we are experiencing grace. If you have no peace, then you have no grace. It appears that it is the peace that follows the grace.

**Peace is the freedom from anxiety.**

How do you deal with anxiety? Grace. Grace is a divine enablement from God. If you are experiencing anxiety in your life, you will not need to go to the pharmacist for tranquilizers if you go to the Lord Jesus Christ and seek grace. Grace produces peace. The divine enablement he gives you frees you from anxiety. The freedom from anxiety is Peace.

This all comes from our relationship with God. The last part of verse two says that it comes **from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**.

#### Matthew 6:27-33

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

<sup>27</sup> **And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?** <sup>28</sup> **And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin,** <sup>29</sup> **yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all**

his glory clothed himself like one of these. <sup>30</sup> But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is *alive* today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, *will He* not much more *clothe* you? You of little faith! <sup>31</sup> Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’ <sup>32</sup> For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. <sup>33</sup> But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

## **CONCLUSION:**

I would urge you to stop chasing happiness. It will keep you disappointed. Happiness is temporary. If you are putting your faith in worldly things and seeking your happiness there, your circumstances WILL eventually change.

God offers us something better than happiness. God offers us JOY.  
**Joy** is *“The persistent confidence in the character of God that transcends circumstances and leads to a sense of well-being”*.

You, too, can have JOY! This text is about Jesus. The same Christ that administered JOY to Paul can also administer JOY to you.

I don’t know what circumstances you are in right now. But, if you are a brother or sister in Christ, regardless of what you are facing, you can have JOY.

IT IS YOURS!

It begins with Slavery to Christ.  
It is obtained with Union with Christ.  
It is dependent upon the Grace of Christ.

The only way it is not true for you is if you have not put your faith in Christ. If you are a person who is always anxious, ask yourself a simple question.

Have you come to God and said, “I love you so much!” “I want to serve you for the rest of my life”. When you do, you will begin to **experience peace from anxiety and true JOY in your life**.

You can have it if you want it. You start by praying to God and telling Him that you believe in Him and that you realize that you are in sin. Ask repentance from Him and be baptized.

We are also here with open arms, if you would like to identify yourself as part of this family of God in the Greenwood Christian church.

## **The Family of God**

I’m so glad I’m a part of the family of God.  
I’ve been washed in the fountain, cleansed by His blood!  
Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod,  
For I’m part of the family, the family of God.