

Sermon Outline for FBC January 6, 2019

### **Joy When It Is Least Expected**

Good morning!

Today my message is entitled "Joy When It Is Least Expected!" We are taking a run through the book of Philippians this month to see what the Apostle Paul says to the Philippians and how it still might apply to us almost 2000 years later.

First, we need to understand Paul's relationship to the Philippians to be able to understand him writing such a personal letter. It all started around 50 AD, when God told Paul to go to Philippi to teach them the gospel. So, Paul travels to Philippi and meets a people eager to hear the gospel, ready to change their lives and futures forever.

#### **Acts 16:6-12 NIV**

**6** Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia.

**7** When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.

**8** So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas.

**9** During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."

**10** After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

**11** From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis.

**12** From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

This must have been an incredible experience for Paul! Try to imagine how he felt when the Holy Spirit so actively directed his path. To be so in tune with God had to give him boldness.

Imagine being given a task to try to change a bunch of strange people's way of living, and they willingly and eagerly say yes! What a rush that must have been!

#### **Acts 16:13-15 NIV**

**13** On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there.

**14** One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.

**15** When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

Five years later Paul returned to Philippi to find a strong church growing and maturing. Still eager and bold, the Philippians encouraged Paul in his ministry. After all the persecution he had seen, this must have been a delight.

Then five years later, Paul writes this letter to them from jail. Now it is his turn to encourage and uplift them. Paul's letter is full of joy – both in how he writes and in what he says.

What is this joy that Paul emphasizes throughout the book?

My study Bible has this opening for Philippians:

Joy. The word has a quick, poignant ring to it. Yet it, like other words, has been drained of meaning over the years, even tapped as a name for a dish washing detergent. Nowadays joy is used most commonly for a sensation like thrill.

We think of joy as something you save up for months to experience and then splurge on in a moment of exhilaration: a trip to Disney World, a free-fall dive, a heart stopping ride on the world's meanest roller coaster, a hot-air balloon trip. Paul had a different understanding of the word, as this letter reveals. <sup>1</sup>

### ***Philippians 1:1-11 NIV***

***1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,***

*To all the Saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons* [The word deacons refers here to Christians designated to serve with the overseers/elders of the church in a variety of ways; similarly in Romans 16:1 and 1 Tim. 3:8,12]: <sup>2</sup>

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

***3 I thank my God every time I remember you.***

***4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy***

***5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now,***

***6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.***

This last verse has become one of the key statements from Paul for all people who found a life with Christ. Be reassured that if your walk with the Lord Jesus Christ is a bit rocky, keep going so that God can continue to mature you into the family. Paul continues writing:

***7 It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart: for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me.***

***8 God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.***

Here, Paul is allowing his emotions to show in his writing. He really has a heart for these people in Philippi, a kindred relationship. They have remained steadfast in their love for Jesus and that moves Paul to express his own love for them.

In fact, Paul is one of their strongest prayer warriors and supporters. As we continue, you will see what Paul prays for:

***9 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight,***

***10 so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ,***

***11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.***

That prayer is as important today for us as it was for the Philippians back then. In fact, it is a prayer that we could use regularly for each other, to encourage and empower all of us.

Let's not forget to pray for each other! Let's not forget to encourage each other to walk as Jesus walked, talk as Jesus talked and love as Jesus loved!

In all of it, remember to allow the joy of the Lord to pour through you to all those around you. Show that joy when times are rough and tough!

Then you will have "Joy When It Is Least Expected"

Let's pray!

<sup>1</sup>My Study Bible, pg. 1236

<sup>2</sup>Holy Bible, New International Version

### **Bibliography:**

The Experiencing God Study Bible (Broadman & Holman Publishers, Nashville, Tennessee, 1994)

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The Holy Bible, authorized King James Version (World Bible Publishers, USA)

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