

Phil 1:1-11

How is everyone this morning? Good

Everyone happy? Anyone not happy?

Here is another question? Is everyone “joyful”

Why do I ask???

You see, happiness and joy are not the same thing.

They are very different.

Happiness is how we respond to the circumstances around us.

- When my kids are not screaming at each other at home as I am working on my sermons – I am happy.
- Not being stuck in traffic – happy
- Having lunch at In-N-Out – Extremely Happy

However, these circumstances can change in an instant.

- Being stuck behind someone going 45 on the fast lane on I19 – doesn't make anyone happy
- Being pulled over by a police officer for speeding after you passed that guy going 45 mph – doesn't make one happy.
- Finding out a loved one has become ill –

- Realizing that you are not going to be able to pay next month's rent on time –
- Watching the evening news –

Happiness is short-lived.

Joy is different – especially if that joy revolves around Jesus Christ.

Despite hardships, struggles, tribulations – it doesn't matter what circumstances we are facing, as long as our focus is on Jesus Christ first, we can always rejoice.

The last worship song we sung, Create in me a clean heart

There is a line in the song that goes,

Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation –

those are the words of King David from Psalm 51 where he is crying out to the Lord with a repentant heart after spending many months hiding his sin.

David knew the misery of spiritual defeat.

David is asking to be able to experience that joy once again that can only be attributed to salvation – which is from the Lord.

The scriptures never guarantee us happiness – however, the scriptures do command us to be joyful – to rejoice.

Joy is not an option for the believer –

Why am I making a big deal about joy this morning? It is because the book of Philippians is all about joy.

Why is joy so important in the life of the believer?

I can't think of anything that reveals the person and work of Jesus Christ in the lives of believers more than the manifestation of joy. Amen

Let's pray...

[Phi 1:1-11 CSB] 1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus: To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons. 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you, 4 always praying with joy for all of you in my every prayer, 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. 6 I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. 7 Indeed, it is right for me to think this way about all of you, because I have you in my heart, and you are all partners with me in grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. 8 For God is my witness, how deeply I miss all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. 9 And I pray this: that your love will keep on growing in knowledge and

every kind of discernment, 10 so that you may approve the things that are superior and may be pure and blameless in the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

So a little introduction to the book of Philippians

The book of Philippians was written by the Apostle Paul between the years 61 and 63 AD.

Paul wrote this letter from Rome as he was being held under house arrest as he was awaiting his appeal with Caesar.

In the book of Acts, Paul gets accused of trying to sneak a gentile into the temple, the Jewish leaders tried to have him killed and because Paul was a Roman citizen, he was able to appeal his case all the way to Rome.

He actually wrote four of the letters during this stint in prison, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and the short epistle of Philemon were actually written while Paul was chained to a Roman soldier.

Despite the hardships Paul faced during this time, it never deterred him from lifting up the church. That was the joy in Paul.

In verse one, Paul opens up the letter with his signature, back in those days, people would sign their letter first and provide their credentials – unlike today, where we tend to place it at the end of the letter.

Not that we send letters anymore – more like emails.

But notice how Paul lays claim to the title of slave/bondservant.

The Greek word utilized here is the word “doulos”.

Now, in Old Testament times, if people were in debt – they could chose to be someone’s slave.

Many times, they would offer their children to be their slaves as children were allowed to be used as collateral.

Now, if you were Hebrew you could only be a slave for six years and then you had to be released on the seventh year. Debt was then forgiven – that was the law.

However, at that time, if the slave wanted to remain a slave – let's say he got married to another one of his master's slaves and had children, when he was pronounce free – he couldn't take his wife and kids because they were considered property of the master.

He could chose to remain a slave – this was called a bondservant. A bondservant choses to remain a slave despite being allowed to go free.

The owner would then go to the post of his front door and drive an awl through the ear of the bondservant and then He would then serve him forever.

So when Paul claims the title of a bondservant of Jesus Christ, what Paul he is saying is that he is the absolute procession of Jesus Christ.

Listen, Jesus Christ purchased us and we are His.

This is true for all believers.

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

What Paul is also stating is that as a slave/bondservant of Christ, he owes an absolute surrender to Him. Remember, slaves have no will of their own. Their master's will must be their own.

So Paul has no will but Christ's, and no obedience but to his Savior and Lord.

Timothy was Paul's padawan – he was his spiritual son as Paul took him under his wing from a very young age.

Eventually Timothy becomes the pastor of the Church in Ephesus – another church that Paul began just like the church in Philippi.

The letter is addressed to all the saints in Christ Jesus –

Who are the saints?

These were not people who walked around with shiny golden rings floating above their heads.

The New Testament concept of "saint" is a believer.

Every believer is a “saint”.

Every believer has been “set aside or set apart” for God’s special use.

Each one of us in this room who are believers in Jesus Christ are “saints”.

When Paul speaks of the saints in Christ Jesus, he means those who are different from other people and who are consecrated to God because of their special relationship to Jesus Christ – and this is what every Christian should be.

Now, turn with me to the book of Acts 16.

[Act 16:6-25 NKJV] 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. 7 After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them. 8 So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. 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."

If there is one word that would summarize Paul, it would be determination. Even before his conversion, Paul's determination or zeal, was the driving force behind him persecuting the early church.

God used that same determination to help spread the gospel after Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus

Paul was obedient to the words of Jesus Christ spoken in the book of Acts **and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."**

And that is what Paul is doing here except – notice how he is being led by the Holy Spirit. Paul initially wanted to go to Asia but the Holy Spirit stopped him.

He then wanted to go north to Bithynia – a region in modern day turkey near the Black Sea and the Holy Spirit stopped him again.

Now, scriptures do not reveal to us how the Holy Spirit stopped them – maybe their wagons broke or their horses got sick. We don't know.

However, this detour allowed to gospel to be preached in Philippi.

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. 11 Therefore, sailing from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and the next [day] came to Neapolis, 12 and from there to Philippi, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a colony. And we were staying in that city for some days. 13 And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met [there]. 14 Now a certain woman named Lydia heard [us]. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. 15 And when she and her household were baptized, she begged [us], saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us. 16 Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. 17 This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation." 18 And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I

command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And he came out that very hour. 19 But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged [them] into the marketplace to the authorities. 20 And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, "These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; 21 "and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe." 22 Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded [them] to be beaten with rods. 23 And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw [them] into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. 24 Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. 25 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

As Paul and Silas started this small church in Philippi with Lydia and her household, immediately they started getting resistance.

This demon possessed girl kept following them around. Not only was she demon possessed but, she was also the cash cow for her masters as she was involved in fortune telling and divination.

One day Paul got fed up and eventually freed her from the demon that was inside her.

The girls master were upset and Paul and Silas were beaten and put in jail.

But notice their response to all of this in verse 25 – they were praying and singing hymns to God.

And as you continue to read the story, it says that the other prisoners heard them singing and praising God.

Then suddenly, there was a great earthquake and the door opened up and everyone's chains were loosened.

The jailer wakes up and he was about to take his own life because according to Roman law, if you were entrusted with a prisoner and they escaped – your punishment was death.

But Paul sees the jailors anguish and he stops the jailor from killing himself.

Go to verse 30 now, look at the question the jailor is about to ask Paul and Silas

[Act 16:30-31 NKJV] 30 And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

Did Paul and Silas give the jailor a list of sacraments that must be done? No

Did Paul and Silas tell the jailor that he has to join a particular church or denomination? No

31 So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

The jailor wanted that joy that Paul and Silas had despite their circumstances.

And here in the book of Philippians, Paul is demonstrating that joy by what he is writing to the church in Philippi despite similar circumstances he faced the first time he went to Philippi.

In verse two, Paul continues his letter to the Philippian with the words grace and peace.

Why grace and peace?

Because grace and peace are only available from our Heavenly Father and through Jesus Christ.

The order is always “grace” and then “peace”.

I think this is because you cannot know God’s “peace” until you begin to understand His “grace”.

I cannot know “peace” in my life until I understand that my relationship with God is based on His unmerited favor towards me, and not because of my good works.

That is why those who are in bondage to religion can never attain peace because they always have to continue to work.

The grace and the peace of God are both the root and the fruit of our faith.
The root of our faith is grace.

[Jhn 1:17 NKJV] 17 For the law was given through Moses, [but] grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Grace is God’s undeserved favor that we receive daily from God.

No matter how bad we blow it or how far we have fallen. God is always there to pour His amazing grace upon each and every one of us.

It is that same grace of God that sustains us – it is the grace of God that keeps us from making the same knuckle head decisions over and over again.

The wonderful thing about grace though is that it is the same grace that picks us up –

[Pro 24:16 NKJV] 16 For a righteous [man] may fall seven times And rise again,

We are not perfect church – we are not sinless. But by God's grace and His power we can certainly sin less.

If grace is the root of our faith, then peace is the fruit of our faith.

As believers, we have both peace with God and the peace of God. God has promised this peace to every believer.

He has given it to us as a gift.

This peace, however, doesn't come from what or who we are, but from what God has done—how He has justified us in response to our faith. A wonderful byproduct of this reality is a deep inner peace that floods our soul.

The remaining portion of our text this morning is Paul offering thanksgiving and prayer toward the church in Philippi.

Paul loved the church of Philippi and he was not afraid to tell them.

He opens us verse three by offering thanksgiving for the memories that Philippi had given to him.

You see, Paul didn't hold any grudges toward the people of Philippi, notice how he doesn't mention the demon possessed girl that continued to annoy him or the beating that he took as the people arrested him. That is never mentioned here.

Paul only remembers how he was blessed by the fellowship he had with the likes of Lydia, the jailor and the others in the small church in Philippi.

Church, too many times, we hold grudges against other believers because they did us wrong. Many times, people refuse to go to church because at one time in the past they got burned by someone in the church.

We have to remember that we are still human and therefore we all fall at times.

Charles Spurgeon is quoted as saying,

If I had never joined a church till I had found one that was perfect, I should never have joined one at all; and the moment I did join it, if I had found one, I should have spoiled it, for it would not have been a perfect church after I had become a member of it.

There are no perfect churches.

In verse four,

4 always praying with joy for all of you in my every prayer,

Here is Paul, under house arrest, with a Roman soldier attached to him, letting the church of Philippi know that he is constantly praying for them.

Not only is he constantly praying for them, he is doing it with joy.

Think about that for a moment,

We get so caught up in our own needs, our own trials that many times we forget about one another.

I was taught a few years back the importance of having a prayer journal.

Does anyone have one here? If you don't – I highly recommend it.

As you pray make an entry of your prayers.

When God answers them, you can put a little note next to entry when and how God answered your prayer.

At the end of the month, look back at your entries and count how many prayer entries you have concerning your own needs and how many entries you have concerning others.

As we mature in our walk, we will find that the focus of our prayers shifts from our own needs to the needs of others.

It doesn't mean that we stop praying for ourselves, it just means that you start praying for others even more.

Turn with me to the gospel of John, chapter 17.

In chapter 17 of the gospel of John, we find the real Lord's prayer. Not the Our Father who art in heaven one. That was simply an example that Jesus gave for us.

Look at verse 13,

[Jhn 17:13-15 NKJV] 13 "But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. 14 "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15 "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.

This prayer by our Lord is prayed right before He goes into the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus knows He is about to be arrested and put to death. Yet He is praying for His disciples, thinking of their well-being and praying that they may not stumble.

Make it a habit to lift up one another, church.

Verse six in one of those verses that you better mark in your bible.

This is a life verse.

6 I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

God has tremendous plans for you and me. Notice how He who starts a good work is also the same one that is going to complete it.

God starts and God finished the good work in us.

One of the problems that we face is that we allow God to start the good work and then we decide to take over because it gets too difficult.

“Ok God, I can handle it from here on out.”

The problem with this is we can't do this on our own.

This is what happened to the church in Galatia as they walked away and started returning to legalism.

Paul writes the following,

[Gal 3:3 NKJV] 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?

Listen, we have to let God work in us, we have to go through the trials He sets before us.

There is no other way. All His ways are perfect.

God will continue the work in us until the day that we stand before Him.

Because of the Philippians' past perseverance and present passion, Paul was confident in their future faithfulness.

Because of this, Paul had no doubt that God was at work in Philippi.

Now go to verse 9, I am going to read the last three verses we are covering today.

[Phi 1:9-11 NKJV] 9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, 10 that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, 11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness which [are] by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Paul didn't want the church in Philippi to become overconfident – they were doing well, but Paul wanted them to continue press on – to not let their guards down.

They had demonstrated their love to Paul and to one another, but Paul wanted that love to continue to grow – not blindly but in a godly way.

He also wants them to be sincere regarding their faith and love.

If we really love Jesus, we will be sensitive to his will and his desires; the more we love him, the more we will instinctively shrink from what is evil and desire what is right.

God doesn't want a counterfeit faith or a counterfeit love.

He wants us to come to Him in sincerity.

If we do, then we will bear much fruit.

[Jhn 15:2-4 NKJV] 2 "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every [branch] that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 "You are already clean because of the word which I

have spoken to you. 4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

There is no greater joy than that of obedience and full submission to the Lord.

For Apostle Paul, he is proof that joy is more than a short-lived emotion.

For Paul, joy was ingrained in his character and we will see it not only in the book of Philippians but his other letters as well.

Apostle Paul knew that he had no control over the struggles and strife of life.

But by yielding to the Holy Spirit's work in his soul, God was able to continue to guide Paul and keep him on joy's course regardless of how bad things got.

Ultimately, our joy is measured by the confidence we have in God.

May we experience this joy that Paul had.

Let's pray...

Admit that you are a sinner,

Believe that Jesus Christ died for you

Accept Him as your Lord and Savior

Repent of your sins.

Lord Jesus, I know that I have sinned against you. I know that I am not perfect and that I cannot please you through my own efforts. I know that I deserve to be judged according to my sins. And, I know that I have nothing to offer you.

Lord Jesus, I ask you to forgive me of my sins. Please cleanse me and make me right before you. I trust in what you have done on the cross. I do not rely on myself but only on you and I receive you as Lord of my life and as savior of my soul. Lord Jesus, save me. I look to you alone.

In Jesus name.