

## 4. The Book of Philippians 1:12-18

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### *Joy in Proclaiming The Gospel*

a message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier  
(3-26-23)

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As most of you know, we have started a study through Paul's epistle to the Philippians. But instead of going verse by verse through Philippians (which is the standard style of teaching we do here at Calvary Chapel)—we are doing a topical study through the book.

Every book in the New Testament has a theme and so I thought it might be beneficial to build a series of messages around the main theme of the Book of Philippians—which is joy. What makes that theme so powerful is that—Paul wrote this letter while he was a prisoner in Rome.

It's easy to be joyful when you're in the midst of blessings—but when you find yourself joyful in the midst of adversity and suffering—that is something else entirely. So, I've taken the main theme of Philippians which is joy and I've isolated each place in the epistle where Paul mentions '**joy**' or '**rejoice**' (including '*rejoicing*' and '*rejoiced*').

I then went to each of those verses and studied the passage to determine what the context was in which Paul was using the concept of joy, placing each passage under a specific heading.

These headings will become the main points I want to build this series around.

#### I. Joy in Fellowship—1:3-6

#### II. Joy in Proclaiming the Gospel—1:12-18

##### **Philippians 1:12–18 (NKJV)**

<sup>12</sup> But I want you to know, brethren, that the things *which happened* to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, <sup>13</sup> so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; <sup>14</sup> and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. <sup>15</sup> Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: <sup>16</sup> The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; <sup>17</sup> but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. <sup>18</sup> What then? Only *that* in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached [the gospel is proclaimed]; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.

As we have already stated, Paul wrote this epistle from prison in Rome where he was waiting to stand trial before Caesar to defend himself against the false accusations that were leveled against him by the Jewish leadership in Israel.

Now you would think that these circumstances would have gotten Paul down—but you'd be wrong!

You see, more than anything else, Paul's desire as a missionary was to preach the gospel in Rome (Acts 19:21; Romans 1:15). (**Listen:** All roads leading to and from Rome)

Paul wanted to go to Rome as a *preacher*—but instead he went as a prisoner!

God gets us from point ‘A’ to point ‘B’—but He seldom allows us to go first-class! So, Paul finally makes it to Rome—but not as a conquering hero of Christianity—but as a humiliated prisoner of the Roman Government who was innocent of any crime.

As such, he could have written this letter to the Philippian Christians feeling sorry for himself and complaining about his circumstances—but that wasn’t the mindset of Paul. When your whole life is consumed with a passion to see people saved—he saw every circumstance as an opportunity to preach the gospel—as he says here:

**Philippians 1:12 (NKJV)**

<sup>12</sup> But I want you to know, brethren, that the things *which happened* to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel.

The record of these things is given in Acts 21:17–28:31, and it began with Paul’s illegal arrest in the temple in Jerusalem.

Wiersbe fills in the back-story—

*“The Jews thought he had desecrated their temple by bringing in Gentiles, and the Romans thought he was an Egyptian renegade who was on their “most-wanted” list. Paul became the focal point of both political and religious plotting and remained a prisoner in Caesarea for two years. When he finally appealed to Caesar (which was the privilege of every Roman citizen), he was sent to Rome. En route, the ship was wrecked! The account of that storm and Paul’s courage and faith is one of the most dramatic in the Bible (Acts 27). After three months of waiting on the Island of Malta, Paul finally embarked for Rome and the trial he had requested before Caesar.”*

To many, all of this would have looked like failure—like God had all but abandoned Paul. But when your whole life is laser focused on sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ—Paul praised God for his circumstances. You see, Paul didn’t find his joy in *ideal* circumstances—he found his joy in *whatever* circumstance allowed him to preach the gospel to the lost—and that made it ideal!

Paul practices what he preached—

**Colossians 3:2 (NKJV)**

<sup>2</sup> Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

When we talk about ‘**joy in proclaiming the gospel**’—we all know the joy we feel when we can lead someone to the Lord—or even when we just get the opportunity to share the Gospel with them! A big part of the joy we experience when God opens a door for us to share the gospel with someone who then gets saved—is knowing we have been used to save a soul from eternal destruction in hell.

But listen, the joy of sharing the gospel with others will only become a reality when we begin to see the lost through Jesus’ eyes.

**Matthew 9:35–38 (NKJV)**

<sup>35</sup> Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. <sup>36</sup> But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. <sup>37</sup> Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the laborers *are* few. <sup>38</sup> Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”

The thing that made Jesus so different from the other Jewish religious leaders of His day (on a human level)—was His *compassion*. It was His compassion (rooted in the love of God) for people that made Him so appealing and caused people to be so drawn to Him.

It's interesting how differently Jesus saw people in contrast to how others saw them.

The scribes and Pharisees saw sinners, prostitutes, and tax-collectors—irredeemable rabble. But Jesus saw people made in the image of God filled with emptiness, sadness, despair, and fear.

In other words, Jesus saw, not so much dirty sinners, but lost souls that didn't know where to go for help since their spiritual leaders (scribes, Pharisees etc.) refused to shepherd them.

And yet, even the disciples didn't see people through Jesus' eyes—at least not initially.

- *Jesus saw people—the disciples saw people.*
- *Jesus saw helpless, hurting sheep without a shepherd—the disciples saw only people.*
- *Jesus saw a harvest of souls for the Kingdom of Heaven—the disciples just saw lots of people who were a drain on their time and energy.*

The difference was seeing people through the eyes of the Spirit and seeing through the eyes of flesh. I think that was the biggest reason why Jesus was able to have such compassion for people—He was able to look beyond the outward into their hearts.

#### **Matthew 9:36 (NKJV)**

<sup>36</sup> But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.

**Weary**—*distressed, dejected, troubled.* **Scattered**—*cast down, thrown away.*

It was Jesus' compassion for people that motivated His ministry to them—even when He was hurting and probably (in His humanity) didn't feel like it—

#### **Matthew 14:10–14 (NLT)**

<sup>10</sup> So John was beheaded in the prison, <sup>11</sup> and his head was brought on a tray and given to the girl, who took it to her mother. <sup>12</sup> Later, John's disciples came for his body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus what had happened. <sup>13</sup> As soon as Jesus heard the news, he left in a boat to a remote area to be alone. But the crowds heard where he was headed and followed on foot from many towns. <sup>14</sup> Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

But Jesus was always trying to teach His disciples to see people through the eyes of the Spirit.

#### **John 4:35 (NKJV)**

<sup>35</sup> Do you not say, 'There are still four months and *then* comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!

In other words, Jesus was saying to His disciples—*"Get your eyes off of your immediate surroundings and physical needs and stop being so near-sighted—lift up your eyes and see the big picture!"* (Matthew 6:33)

Jesus said, *“The harvest is truly plentiful...”*—causing many Christians to respond, *“O but there are so many that are lost—what difference can I make?”*

Don’t try to save the world, just start with those closest to you—before God will send you around the world preaching the gospel—He’ll send you across the street.

I saw this story that goes along with what we’re talking about and so I thought I’d share it with you—

*“A businessman and his wife were busy to the point of exhaustion. They were committed to each other, their family, their church, their work, and their friends.*

*Needing a break, they escaped for a few days of relaxation at an oceanfront hotel. One night a violent storm lashed the beach and sent massive breakers thundering against the shore. The man lay in his bed listening and thinking about his own stormy life of never-ending demands and pressures.*

*The wind finally died down and shortly before daybreak the man slipped out of bed and took a walk along the beach to see what damage had been done. As he strolled, he saw that the beach was covered with starfish that had been thrown ashore and helplessly stranded by the great waves. Once the morning sun burned through the clouds, the starfish would dry out and die.*

*Suddenly the man saw an interesting sight. A young boy who had also noticed the plight of the starfish was picking them up, one at a time, and flinging them back into the ocean.*

*“Why are you doing that?” the man asked the lad as he got close enough to be heard. “Can’t you see that one person will never make a difference—you’ll never be able to get all those starfish back into the water. There are just too many.”*

*“Yes, that’s true,” the boy sighed as he bent over and picked up another and tossed it back into the water. Then as he watched it sink, he looked at the man, and smiled, and said, “But it sure made a difference to that one.”*

Jesus commissioned His disciples to—*“Go (actually the Greek is: ‘as you are going’) into all the world, preach the gospel to every creature.”* (Mark 16:15)

This is the greatest work any person can ever be involved in (the saving of an eternal soul)—but passion for it will never happen in the life of a Christian until we learn to see everything in this world in terms of ‘red tags’ (temporal) and ‘green tags’ (eternal).

I believe that if we want to stay on course as Christians and as a church—we need to keep our eyes upon Jesus—He is the author and finisher of our faith.

What did Jesus do when He was on the earth? What did He focus on and what did He command us, as His followers, to do after He returned to His Father?

You could sum up the focus of Jesus’ ministry in one word—**people!** He loved to be with people, to interact with people, to help people.

➤ What was Jesus most concerned about when it came to people?

#### **Luke 19:10**

*“...for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”*

The thought of evangelism scares most Christians to death because they immediately think of going door to door—which is *one* method.

But the New Testament doesn’t record the disciples of Jesus going door to door evangelizing.

If I read my Bible correctly it seems that the Holy Spirit is telling us that the greatest and most effective kind of evangelism takes place through the witness of transformed lives.

**Matthew 5:14–16 (NLT)**

<sup>14</sup> “You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your good deeds [your life] shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

**A. Lifestyle Evangelism**

This is what’s called ***Lifestyle Evangelism***—*opening the door to a person’s heart by being a living witness.*

**2 Corinthians 3:2–3 (NLT)**

<sup>2</sup> The only letter of recommendation we need is you yourselves. Your lives are a letter written in our hearts; everyone can read it and recognize our good work among you. <sup>3</sup> Clearly, you are a letter from Christ showing the result of our ministry among you. This “letter” is written not with pen and ink, but with the Spirit of the living God. It is carved not on tablets of stone, but on human hearts [‘living epistles’].

Lifestyle evangelism must precede any kind of verbal evangelism otherwise people will just label us hypocrites and ignore what we say (if we only talk the talk, but don’t walk the walk).

When it comes to lifestyle evangelism—there are 3 basic forms which go hand in hand with each other:

**1. Transformational Evangelism—Luke 19 (Zaccheus)**

Your life transformed by the power of Jesus Christ where He has delivered you from alcohol, drugs or some other bondage—is a very powerful witness which causes people to take notice.

**2. Relational Evangelism—Mark 5:19**

**Mark 5:19 (NLT)**

<sup>19</sup> But Jesus said, “No, go home to your family, and tell them everything the Lord has done for you and how merciful he has been.”

Build relationships with people at school board meetings and PTA gatherings—invite neighbors over for coffee to get to know them. If your kids are school age get to know some of their friend’s parents—it’s a lot easier to share Jesus with a friend than with a stranger.

*“O but you don’t know my schedule; I just don’t have any time.”* (Remember the ‘red tags’ and ‘green tags’—Explain)

**3. Ministerial Evangelism—Acts 9:36-39 (Dorcus)**

**Acts 9:36 (NLT)**

<sup>36</sup> There was a believer in Joppa named Tabitha (which in Greek is Dorcas). She was always doing kind things for others and helping the poor.

I have found that simple acts of kindness can go a long way in making a person’s heart receptive to the gospel.

**Romans 12:20 (NLT)**

<sup>20</sup> ...“If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads.” [and possibly gain a brother or sister into the Christian faith]

Jesus used this style as a springboard to verbalize the gospel—which brings us to the second kind of evangelism—verbal evangelism.

**A. Lifestyle Evangelism****B. Verbal Evangelism****1. Testimonial Approach**

Another great way to share your faith is through your testimony:

**Mark 5:19 (NLT)**

<sup>19</sup> But Jesus said, “No, go home to your family, and tell them everything the Lord has done for you...” (your testimony)

**John 9:25 (NLT)**

<sup>25</sup> “I don’t know whether he is a sinner,” the man replied. “But I know this: I was blind, and now I can see!”

Paul used this approach 3 times in the book of Acts—just share what God has done in *your* life.

**2. Scriptural Approach**

One of the easiest and most effective ways to evangelize is by using gospel tracts.

Another way would be to let them read the gospel right out of the Scriptures using the ‘Roman’s Road’—

**Romans 3:23 (NLT)**

<sup>23</sup> For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious [perfect] standard.

**Romans 5:8 (NLT)**

<sup>8</sup> But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

**Romans 6:23 (NLT)**

<sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Romans 10:9 (NLT)**

<sup>9</sup> If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

**Romans 10:13 (NLT)**

<sup>13</sup> For “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

**Romans 8:1 (NLT)**

<sup>1</sup> So now there is no condemnation [hell] for those who belong to Christ Jesus.

### 3. Invitational Approach

If all else fails you could simply invite them to church or to a special event like a men's luncheon, a women's Christmas tea or to hear a special guest speaker.

We need to break out of our comfort zones.

One pastor said this—

*"My single greatest concern is the growing inertia I see, inertia born out of our luxury and materialism....Most people think what the gospel needs is more clever, skilled people, when what it needs is more people who are willing to bleed, suffer, and die in a passion to see people come to Christ."*

One of the big problems mitigating against this is—we have isolated and insulated ourselves in our beautiful, comfortable church buildings, from the very people that need us the most.

I see many churches that have lost their way, who have lost sight of their mission where the goal is no longer to go into the world seeking and saving those who are lost. No, the goal is to gather in church with Christians, enjoy their fellowship and even seek to network with them to sell products and services to the Body of Christ.

What you wind up with isn't a vibrant, dynamic soul-winning church—but a 'sanctified' social club—let me read this on the subject:

*"On a dangerous seacoast where shipwrecks often occur there was once a crude little lifesaving station. The building was just a hut and there was only one boat, but the few devoted members kept a constant watch over the sea.*

*With no thought for themselves, they went out day and night, tirelessly searching for the lost.*

*Some of those who were saved, and various others in the surrounding area wanted to become associated with the station and give of their time and money and effort for the support of its work. New boats were bought, and new crews were trained. The little lifesaving station grew.*

*Some of the members of the lifesaving station were unhappy that the building was so crude and poorly equipped. They felt that a more comfortable place should be provided as the first refuge of those saved from the sea. They replaced the emergency cots with beds and put better furniture in the enlarged building.*

*Now, the lifesaving station became a popular gathering place for its members, and they decorated it beautifully and furnished it exquisitely because they used it now as sort of a club also.*

*Fewer members were now interested in going to sea on life saving missions, so they hired lifeboat crews to do this work. The lifesaving motif still prevailed in the club's decoration and there was a liturgical lifeboat in the room where club initiations were held.*

*About this time, a large ship was wrecked off the coast and the hired crews brought in boat loads of cold, wet and half drowned people. They were dirty and sick and some of them had black skin, and some had yellow skin. The beautiful new club was in chaos.*

*So, the property committee immediately had a shower house built outside the club where victims of shipwrecks could be cleaned up before coming inside.*

*At the next meeting, there was a split in the club's membership. Most of the members wanted to stop the club's lifesaving activities as being unpleasant and a hindrance to the normal social life of the club.*

*Some members insisted upon lifesaving as their primary purpose and pointed out that they were still called a lifesaving station. But they were finally voted down and told that if they wanted to save the lives of all those various kinds of people who were shipwrecked in those waters, they could begin their own life saving station down the coast—so they did.*

*As the years went by, the new station experienced the same changes that had occurred in the old. It evolved into a club and yet another lifesaving station was founded.*

*History continued to repeat itself and if you visit that seacoast today, you will find a number of exclusive clubs along that shore. Shipwrecks are frequent in those waters, but most of the people drown.”*

The person who wrote that little story wrote it as an allegory of the church and how that *the Church started out with a very simple mission—to seek and to save those that were lost*. That was the original mission of the Church as our Leader, Jesus Christ, stated in Luke 19:10 was His mission on the earth. He then commissioned us to go into all the world and do the same.

This meant that He had called His Church to be a *lifesaving station*—not a comfortable social club. There is great joy in saving the lost—however, it’s not just joy we receive from sharing the gospel with unbelievers.

Sharing The Gospel with the lost—i.e., imparting the life of God to those we evangelize has a way of returning the life of God back to us.

**Jesus said, “Give, and it will be given back to you...” (Luke 6:38 NKJV)**

As you keep sharing The Gospel with the lost, you will also keep being renewed and revived in your walk as well!

As one famous evangelist has said, “Evangelize or fossilize!”

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If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower— please, reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

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