

5. The Book of Philippians 1:24-25

Joy of Faith-Part 1

a message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
(4-30-23)

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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. So, I've taken the main theme of Philippians which is joy and I've isolated each place in the epistle where Paul mentions the words 'joy' and 'rejoice'.

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—so far we've looked at:

I. Joy in Fellowship—1:3-6

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

III. Joy of Faith—1:24-25

Philippians 1:19–26 (NKJV)

¹⁹ For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, ²⁰ according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. ²¹ For to me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain. ²² But if I live on in the flesh, this *will mean* fruit from *my* labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. ²³ For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, *which is* far better. ²⁴ Nevertheless to remain in the flesh *is* more needful for you. ²⁵ And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, ²⁶ that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.

So here in verse 25 Paul mentions joy again—but this time he connects it to faith.

I checked out several translations and about half of them have it, "joy in faith" or "joy in the faith." But from the Greek, the best translation seems to be "joy of faith."

If Paul had said "joy in faith"—or in other words, the joy that comes from being 'in the faith'—he would have been using 'faith' as a synonym for *salvation*. In that regard, he would have been talking about the joy that comes from being a Christian—of being 'in the faith.' But by talking about the 'joy of faith' Paul is talking about the joy that comes from having faith.

➤ Okay, but what exactly does that mean?

Well, first of all, to properly understand what Paul meant when he said, “joy of faith” or the “joy that comes from having faith”—it’s critical that we understand **what biblical faith is all about.**

We do know that faith is so important, that Hebrews 11:6 tells us without it, it’s impossible to please God.

The word **‘faith’** appears 389 times in the New King James Version of the Bible—**‘believe’** appears 250 times.

So, the subject of *faith* is a rather large and important one to say the least—in fact, it is not an overstatement to say that your Christian life (whether it is fruitful or not, whether it is victorious or not) will rise or fall on whether your concept of biblical faith is right or wrong. With that in mind, we need to understand what biblical faith is—which we’re going to do by first talking about what true biblical faith is not.

REFLECTION: Describe your “faith”:

Biblical faith isn’t a *force* (like the Star Wars force).

- However, those in the Word of Faith Movement believe that that is exactly what faith is—a ‘force’ that functions according to certain laws:

Word of Faith teacher Charles Capps—*“God’s Word in your mouth produces a force called ‘faith’, it generates a spiritual force called faith.”*

Kenneth Copeland—*“Faith is your servant; it’s a force just like gravity that we can use because we are part of God and have all His capabilities.”* (Because they teach that Christians are ‘little gods’.)

Now, these and other **Word of Faith teachers believe that faith is a force that functions according to certain laws**—and once a person learns what those laws are they can harness this force called faith and use it to their advantage.

Kenneth Hagin (the granddaddy of the Word of Faith Movement) in his booklet titled *“Having Faith In Your Faith”*, writes—**“That’s what you’ve got to learn to do to get things from God: Have faith in your faith.”** As a proof text to support this teaching, that faith is a powerful force, Word of Faith teachers will quote Hebrews 11:3—which *actually* says—

Hebrews 11:3 (NKJV)

³ By faith we understand that the worlds were framed (created) by the word of God...

But those in the Word of **Faith Movement** (aka, the 'Positive Confession Movement' or 'PCM') **twist that verse and quote it this way—“We understand that it was by faith that God framed [created] the worlds.”**

- By that little reshuffling of words, faith is no longer man’s belief in God’s power which created the universe—but faith is now turned into a force that God used to create the universe.
- Again, they tell us that this force operates according to certain laws (just like gravity or electricity) and if we learn these laws and how they operate—we to can ‘harness’ this force of faith and use it to create whatever we desire (wealth, health, success etc.).

But even a cursory study of God’s Word reveals that—faith isn’t a force—in fact, faith is nothing in and of itself. In other words, it’s the object faith is attached to that determines whether or not it’s meaningful or meaningless; powerful or powerless.

- One of the favorite proof texts of those in the PCM to prove that there is power in faith to do our bidding is Mark 11:23-24:

Mark 11:23-24 (NKJV)

²³ "For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says [the power of the spoken word] to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. ²⁴ "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive *them*, and you will have *them*.

So, there you have it right out of the mouth of Jesus—I mean, doesn’t this prove their teaching is correct—that faith is a force unleashed through the spoken word?

Well, if we back up a verse in Mark 11, we read—

Mark 11:22 (NKJV)

²² So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God"...

Notice, Jesus didn’t say to them, "*Have faith in your faith*"—He said, "**Have faith in God!**"

If you say to a mountain, "*Take a hike and jump into the sea*" and it happens know this—either God made that mountain move or Satan made it move—but your faith did not make that mountain move!

How do I know that?—I know it because **faith has no power in and of itself.**

Faith is like an electrical cord—an electrical cord has no power in and of itself but is only a conductor of power—and then only when it is plugged into a power source. Even so our faith is a conduit for the power of God—but it doesn’t have any power in and of itself. Again, that’s why Jesus didn’t say to His disciples, "*Have faith in your faith*" He said, "**Have faith in God.**"

REFLECTION: What does Pastor Phil mean by stating: “ faith has no power in and of itself?”:

Having faith in your faith is not only unbiblical—it's illogical!

It's illogical because faith only finds meaning and validity depending on whatever it's attached to.

Maybe you've heard someone say, "It's not important what you believe but only that you believe in something"?

That's ridiculous! Of course, it's important what you believe.

The Bible says what you believe will determine where you spend *eternity*—you can believe a lie with all your heart, but it won't save you—

Proverbs 14:12 (NIV)

¹² There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death.

Biblical faith is a *channel* or *conduit* that connects us to God and allows the power of God to flow from Him into our lives in the form of answered prayers and grace to live for Him. **However, no amount of faith on our part is going to force God to act independently of His will.**

He remains completely sovereign as to *how*, *when*, *where* and *if* He will release His power at all into a given situation:

1 John 5:14-15 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

- Okay, so that's what biblical faith is not (a force).
- So, then what is it?

There are 2 main types of faith that the Bible says a person can exercise—**saving faith** and **practical everyday faith**.

- **To come to Jesus requires one kind of faith**
- **To walk with Jesus requires another.**

Saving faith is the faith of a moment which affects my eternity.
Practical faith is moment by moment which affects my daily life.

Two of the classic verses with regard to *saving* faith are—

Ephesians 2:8–9 (NKJV)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Romans 10:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ So then faith [saving faith] *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

A classic verse on the subject of *practical* faith is found in Habakkuk 2:4 *"the just shall live by faith..."* (It's quoted 3 times in the New Testament; Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, and Hebrews 10:38).

REFLECTION: Think of some examples of "Saving faith" and of "Practical faith":

Faith in the character and promises of God as revealed in His Word is the idea.

Practical faith starts out by God giving each of us a *"measure of faith"* (Romans 12:3) when we get saved—but then the more we exercise it the more it grows and the stronger it gets. **In many ways it's easier to exercise faith for a moment (salvation) than it is to exercise moment by moment faith for a lifetime.**

Okay, as we continue to understand faith—**what is the definition of biblical faith?**

One author defines it this way—

"Faith is confidence in the trustworthiness of God. It is the conviction that what God says is true and that what He promises will come to pass."

Another puts it this way—

"Biblical faith is a confident expectation that grabs the future and drags in into the present so that it governs the way I think, live and view this life".

Oswald Chambers—

"Faith [true biblical faith] never knows where it is being led, but it loves and knows the One Who is leading."

In other words, true faith doesn't seek to control God—it seeks to be controlled by God.

True faith perseveres, it hangs in there—and it sees us through the difficulties of life—as David expressed in Psalm 27:

Psalm 27:13 (NKJV)

¹³ *I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord In the land of the living.*

Biblical faith is so important to our Christian lives that between the principle *"the just shall live by faith"* at the end of Hebrews Chapter 10—and the exhortation *"run with endurance the race set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith"* at the beginning of Chapter 12—the Holy Spirit inserts an entire chapter defining, explaining and illustrating what true faith is—and what it looks like in the lives of those who possess it.

One of the great lessons this chapter teaches us is that just because a person has great faith doesn't mean they won't experience great adversities, persecutions or even death for their faith in Jesus. Yet the point he makes is that true faith trusts God no matter what—as Job said, *“Though He slays me I will still trust [have faith in] Him.”*

REFLECTION: How would you explain “Biblical Faith” to a seeker or a new believer?

What is Faith?

The best definition of faith is the one found in Hebrews 11:1:

Hebrews 11:1 (NKJV)

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Faith is always tied to **“things hoped for”**—never to things that have already come to pass, even as Paul said in Romans 8:

Romans 8:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ ...hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?

Biblical hope is never a “maybe” hope or a “hope so” hope—it is always a certain hope, a settled fact hope, a sure thing kind of hope.

The reason that **biblical hope is a sure thing, a settled fact, is because it's always tied to a promise of God**—and since God cannot lie it means that everything, He has promised He absolutely will bring to pass.

Now we're starting to understand what Paul meant when he talked about the **“joy of faith”** in Philippians 1:25!

There is great joy when it comes to having faith (believing with all your heart) the promises that are ours in Christ—starting with salvation:

Hebrews 6:17-19 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath, ¹⁸ that by two immutable things, in which it *is* impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before *us*. ¹⁹ This *hope* [salvation by faith] we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast...

2 Peter 1:2–4 (NKJV)

² Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, ³ as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and

virtue,⁴ by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises [the main one being that we are saved through faith and not by works], that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.

The only joy to be found in this world is in knowing Jesus as your Savior.

That is ultimately what Paul had in mind when he spoke the words, “joy of faith” in Philippians 1:25.

As we’ll see next time it’s bigger than just salvation—but salvation is where all joy in life begins—in Jesus Christ as your Savior. **A part of the joy of faith is knowing that no matter how badly you’ve lived your life—God will accept you as His child if you come to Jesus by faith and receive Him into your heart as you Savior—**

Romans 10:11-13 (NKJV)

¹¹ For the Scripture says, “*Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.*” ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. ¹³ For “*whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*”

John 3:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

REFLECTION: How might you now define “Joy of Faith”:

The fastest growing religion among young people is Satanism. In fact, a lot of young people believe they’re going to hell—and want to go to hell! *Why?* **Because Satan has deceived them into thinking that heaven will be a boring place filled with hypocrites—while hell will be a party place.**

Young people—if you believe that, you have bought into one of **the biggest lies** ever fed to the human race by the devil.

By the way—are there **hypocrites** in the Church? Of course, there is! **Who do you think put them there?** The devil put them there when he sowed the tares among the wheat—to fool people into believing that Christianity is a farce, and the Church is full of hypocrites so that people write both off and look for *truth* somewhere else.

I’m convinced that the reason hell will be a place of weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth for all eternity is because for all eternity those there will be suffering under the weight of knowing that—they didn’t have to be in that awful place!

REFLECTION: Describe Hell:

God loved them and offered them the gift His Son purchased for them with His own blood—the gift of eternal life but they refused to accept it and at that point it will be too late for them to repent and receive Jesus as their Savior.

However, it's not too late for you here this morning—**accept God's gift of eternal life today**—while there's still time! If you do, the joy of faith will be with you for all eternity—joy inexpressible and full of glory! (1 Peter 1:8)

But if you don't—the weeping and wailing of despair for all eternity!

The choice is yours!

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.

Reach out to us [here](#).

Want to know more? Click [here](#).