

Chapter One

The Believer's Joy is in the Lord

I. Book Introduction

- A. Key verse: Philippians 4:4. Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.
- B. This Book is THE short summary of what Joy looks like, tastes like, and feels like!
- C. Duty --> Love --> Joy!
 1. Some folks do things out of duty – Amen! Thank God!
 2. Some folks do things out of Love – praise God even more!
 3. But some do things out of JOY, and that is the best (and probably hardest way)!
- D. Written from Prison, to a small church in northeastern Greece, this Book is the Believer's remedy for sorrow, and disappointment and even depression!
- E. This is Paul's happiest letter. And the happiness is infectious. Before we've read a dozen lines, we begin to feel the joy ourselves – the dance of words and the exclamations of delight have a way of getting inside us.
- F. But happiness is not a word we can understand by looking it up in the dictionary. In fact, none of the qualities of the Christian life can be learned out of a book. Something more like apprenticeship is required, being around someone who out of years of devoted discipline shows us, by his or her entire behaviour, what it is. Moments of verbal instruction will certainly occur, but mostly an apprentice acquires skill by daily and intimate association with a "master," picking up subtle but absolutely essential things, such as timing, and rhythm and touch.
- G. When we read what Paul wrote to the Christian believers in the city of Philippi, we find ourselves in the company of just such a master. Paul doesn't tell us that we can be happy, or how to be happy. He simply and unmistakably is happy. None of his circumstances contribute to his joy: He wrote from a jail cell, his work was under attack by competitors, and after twenty years or so of hard travelling in the service of Jesus, he was tired and would have welcomed some relief.
- H. But circumstances are incidental compared to the life of Jesus, the Messiah, that Paul experiences from the inside. For it is a life that not only happened at a certain point in history, but continues to happen, spilling out into the lives of those who receive Him, and then continues to spill out all over the place. Christ is, among much else, the revelation that God cannot be contained or hoarded. It is this "spilling out" quality of Christ's life that accounts for the happiness of Christians, for joy is life in excess, the overflow of what cannot be contained within any one person.
- I. Brief Summary of each chapter
 1. The Believer's Joy
 2. The Believer's Example
 3. The Believer's Prize
 4. The Believer's Challenge



II. Chapter One – The Believer's Joy

A. Paul and Timothy's Greetings

1. The Authors – this wonderful team: Paul and Timothy
2. The Audience
 - a. To All the Saints
 - 1) Sanctified people – holy people, clean, washed, God's children!
 - 2) The saints on earth – equal with the saints in heaven!!!
 - 3) These saints lived in Philippi, Ephesus (Eph 1:1), Rome (Rom 1:7), etc
 - 4) They were not loners, but grouped, assembled together into local churches (1Cor 1:2; Rom 16:5)

- b. And to the Church Leaders (Cf 1Tim 3:1-13)
 - 1) Bishops
 - 2) Deacons
- 3. The Purpose of the Letter
 - a. This is a tender letter to a group of Christians who were especially close to the heart of Paul (2 Corinthians 8:1-6).
 - b. To acknowledge a gift of money from the church at Philippi, brought to the apostle by Epaphroditus, one of its members (Philippians 4:10-18).
 - c. To encourage them to stay in an attitude of rejoicing no matter the circumstances – Paul could talk too!
- 4. Grace and Peace from God
 - a. Paul prays that Grace would abound in the life of the believer
 - 1) Through hearing and believing the very words of God
 - 2) This grace does NOT come from a church, or via a prayer but by hearing the words of God
 - a) The Father
 - b) The Lord Jesus Christ
 - 3) More powerful than our Enemies, Problems, Poverty, etc
 - 4) Get God’s grace, and you are saved from hell
 - 5) Live in God’s grace and you are saved from self
 - b. The peace of God

B. Paul’s Remembrance (1:3-8) Reminiscing

3 ¶ I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,
 4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,
 5 For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;
 6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ:
 7 ¶ Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.
 8 For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

- 1. Just thinking of the Christians in Philippi caused Paul to praise God – they were such an encouragement to Paul. Paul was in prison and thought only the good things about these believers!
 - a. Some memories are full of remorse and sorrow
 - b. Some memories are full of pain
 - c. The memories of these Christians only brought joy
 - d. See Heb 13:17 for a pastor’s concern. Think about a pastor’s memory of you!
 - e. Who brings sorrow to your heart just at their remembrance? _____
 - f. Who brings pain to your heart just at the thought of their name? _____
 - g. Who brings joy to your heart? _____
 - h. You can’t ignore the pains, and sorrowful thoughts of what people have done, and how they have “failed you”, so you have to have more joyous thoughts to overwhelm them
 - i. The Joy of a Church Family - That’s what a Church family does
 - 1) Gives you miracles to think about
 - 2) Gives you truths to meditate on
 - 3) Gives you loving family to fellowship with
 - 4) Why would you waste your time with anyone else?
 - j. Every prayer for them and their needs was a joy – never a burden
 - k. Their fellowship was tops! That is what Church is supposed to be:
 - 1) Family – being with like minded and like hearted people
 - 2) Fellowship – caring for each other
 - 3) Focus – learning to live like Jesus commands us

2. One of the greatest promises in the Bible (Philp 1:6)
 - a. Confidence – thank God for a Christian’s confidence
 - 1) Once saved always saved
 - 2) God will work all things together for good
 - 3) That Christ will never leave or forsake us
 - b. One thing (Paul likes boiling things down to one truth)
 - 1) Christ’s faithful work in the life of the believer (Philp 1:6)
 - 2) A Christian’s main effort – forgetting, and reaching ahead (Philp 3:13)
 - c. Jesus began a good work IN them! What did Jesus begin in the life of the believer?
 - 1) Salvation - A new life, abundant life
 - 2) Sanctification – cleansing
 - 3) A new direction – heaven
 - 4) Maturing – making you more and more like Himself (Ps 17:15; 1John 3:2)
 - 5) Restoration – putting your mind and heart back together
 - 6) A new love – for everything good, and clean
 - 7) A new purpose – to glorify Himself
 - 8) Enabling them to serve Him and bring forth much fruit
 - d. Everything that Christ invests in us is supposed to bear fruit – He does His best to produce fruit/results in us
 - e. But know that at the moment that a person enters heaven, everything that is lacking will be finished! Why? Because Jesus is committed to finishing that work! Amen!
 - 1) THAT’S why we preach eternal security – because it is HIS work
 - 2) THAT’S why we don’t worry and fret – because if we yield to God, He only works every thing out for good!
 - f. The day of Jesus Christ is the rapture of His people!
3. Paul boasts about this church and its people!
 - a. Paul loves these people “I have you in my heart” – even though he hadn’t seen them for years!
 - 1) Keeps them as part of his joy – part of the reason why his joy is always full
 - 2) Church is all about people that we take into our heart
 - 3) BEWARE! When people leave, a part of our heart is ripped away! You can’t stop it
 - b. Paul knows these people - that they stood with him through every trial – in prayer and even financial support (Philp 4:16)
 - c. Paul longed to be with them with the emotions (“bowels”) of Jesus Christ!
 - 1) How is your heart on Monday, Tuesday, etc? I long to be here or in a Discipleship study, or just being with other believers!
 - 2) How are YOUR emotions?
 - 3) Do you only cry while watching movies?
 - 4) Do you never feel someone else’s pain
 - 5) Pray for this empathy! It is Christ’s emotion! Quit being so proud of your hardness!
4. Paul Prays for this church family
 - a. You pray for those you love
 - 1) I have you in my mind (1:3) – think about you
 - 2) I have you on my heart (1:7) – love you
 - 3) I have you in my prayers (1:9) – pray for you

9 ¶ And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and *in* all judgment;
 10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;
 11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

C. Paul's Philippian Prayer Requests (Philp 1:9-11) – things to pray for in OUR church!

1. That their LOVE would grow
 - a. As your “knowledge grows” – personal relationship with Christ (Philp 3:10; 2Pet 3:18)
 - b. As your discernment grows – judgment
 - 1) Not as a judge, but as someone who can discern right and wrong
 - 2) People have no “little voice” inside them – been burned out a long time”
2. That their enjoyment would be of excellent things, not worthless things
 - a. Excellent thing: the perfection of the word of God
 - b. Worthless thing: the head on a beer
 - c. Excellent thing: your son or daughter getting saved
 - d. Worthless thing: winning the lottery
 - e. Excellent thing: preaching
 - f. Worthless thing: political speeches
 - g. Excellent thing: Giving
 - h. Worthless thing: a sale on new clothes
 - i. Excellent thing: Doing something just for Jesus
 - j. Worthless thing: getting praised by man for selfish accomplishment
3. That they would always be real – sincere
 - a. Oh the need for real Christians
 - b. Allow people to see us for who we are
 - c. But be a people that don't compare ourselves amongst ourselves
4. That they would not fall away, and instead remain faithful until the rapture!
5. That they would always be FILLED with the fruits, the benefits, of righteous living
 - a. Long life
 - b. Joy
 - c. Little stress
 - d. No regrets
 - e. Good friends
 - f. Family
6. Conclusion:
 - a. Christian Greetings
 - b. Remembering One Another – Reminiscing
 - c. One of the greatest promises in the Bible (Philp 1:6)
 - d. Praying for Our Church:
 - 1) That our love would only grow – towards God, and towards each other
 - 2) That we would enjoy excellent things
 - 3) That we would always be real and sincere
 - 4) That we would be faithful
 - 5) That we would be filled with the blessings of right living

12 ¶ But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;

13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other *places*;

14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will:

16 The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:

17 But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.

18 What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

20 According to my earnest expectation and *my* hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but *that* with all boldness, as always, *so* now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether *it be* by life, or by death.

21 ¶ For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain.

D. Paul's Explanation of Recent Events (Philp 1:12-20)

1. What happened to Paul? (1:12)

- a. He was put in jail for going directly against paganism and idolatry – exposing it
 - 1) What is a pagan culture? All cultures that honour any other god (including self)
 - 2) How to expose it correctly
 - a) Preach the truth – present what is real, and true according to the Scriptures
 - b) Pry open blinded eyes
 - c) Press for decisions
 - d) Do it all in love
 - 3) What you will possibly face?
 - a) Reprimand by boss
 - b) Rejection by fellow employees, and fellow students
 - c) Possibly firing – it happens to Christians all the time!
 - d) Over in East Timor people die for becoming a Christian!
- b. He got Christianity in trouble with the authorities – they had a bad name as far as religions were concerned
 - 1) Not accommodating – not universal – but rather exclusive!
 - 2) Replacement theology – not Syncretism (the attempt to merge different ideas and theologies into one theology). Instead, the Gospel called for people to leave their religion, and follow only Jesus according to only the Bible!
 - 3) Said there were no casts in society – no rich, no poor, no bad, no good – just that ALL had sinned and come short of the glory of God – even nero (who thought of himself as a god)
- c. Principles:
 - 1) No good deed will go unpunished – those who attempt to live Godly shall suffer persecution (2Tim 3:12)
 - 2) Suffering as a Christian is to be expected (1Pet 3:14; 4:12-16)
 - 3) It is a choice of a different way of life – not chosen because less trouble – just a different kind of trouble

2. What happened to the Gospel? (1:12,13) But it didn't defeat the Gospel – it only helped it reach further

- a. God's word cannot be destroyed
 - 1) Forever settle in heaven (Psalm 119:89)
 - 2) Jesus promises for it to outlast this universe (Mt 24:35)
 - 3) During the Dark Ages, countless millions of people were tortured for preaching, witnessing, reading the Bible
 - 4) During those same Dark Ages, millions of copies of the Bible were burned

- b. God's word cannot be "bound" (2Tim 2:9)
 - c. Our trials are actually open doors (Luke 21:12-15)
 - d. Caesar's palace had now heard the Gospel – there was no other way unless Paul was in the prison
 - e. There was therefore no place immune to the Gospel because of faithful Christians
 - 1) Faithfully speaking up about Christ
 - 2) Never quitting in hard circumstances – that is the main theme of this Book!
 - f. Principles:
 - 1) No troubles should stop a Christian – just redirect them in new directions
 - 2) Just keep letting your light shine
3. What Happened to Christianity? (1:14-17) The Effect of Paul's Imprisonment
- a. Encouraged some confidence in people
 - 1) They saw Paul as a hero – a good example
 - 2) They preached more boldly because of Paul's boldness
 - 3) They knew Paul was at the forefront of the battle, actually defending the work of the Gospel. The Gospel does not survive by hiding, but by preaching, everywhere, and to everyone!
 - b. Provoked some contention
 - 1) They blamed Paul for the persecution against Christians
 - 2) Had a bad attitude, thinking Paul was getting what he deserved
 - 3) Preached against Paul while preaching about Jesus
 - c. But Paul was thankful because both groups were at least preaching the truths of Christ
 - d. Principles:
 - 1) It does not matter what people think of you, as long as you are doing what GOD told you what to do
 - 2) The only people to worry about are those that should be preaching – Paul did not worry at all about what Nero, or the Jews, or lazy Christians thought of him
 - 3) Paul just couldn't help but rejoice that people were preaching the Gospel
4. Paul's Attitude Through it All (1:18-21)
- a. One of Rejoicing – no matter how people treated or talk about him – I'm not there yet!
 - b. One of Expectation – he was not a fatalist – he really believed he would be delivered ("saved") from prison, just through their prayers – he wasn't, but that is what faith is!
 - c. One of Contentment – he knew that the Spirit of Jesus Christ would supply his every need, even in prison!
 - d. One of Determination – that he would never let himself be ashamed of what he was doing, or what he believed, or what he experienced
 - 1) Paul was not ashamed of what God had done for him, nor what he had done for God!
 - 2) Jesus despised (was not embarrassed, but instead rejected) the shame of the crucifixion! What a way to live! (Heb 12:2,3)
 - 3) Throughout history, people have been tortured and humiliated in order to get them to recant of their life for Christ – yet they stayed true
 - 4) As far as Paul was concerned, life to him was great if he went through what Jesus went through, and death was best! Why? Because it was not a defeat, or an end, but victory (1Cor 15:53-58)
 - e. Principle: An attitude is a choice made based on Christ's view of the situation – not YOUR view!
5. Conclusion – Review Principles:
- a. No good deed will go unpunished – those who attempt to live Godly shall suffer persecution
 - b. Suffering as a Christian is to be expected
 - c. It is a choice of a different way of life – not chosen because less trouble – just a different kind of trouble
 - d. No troubles should stop a Christian – just redirect them in new directions
 - e. Just keep letting your light shine

- f. It does not matter what people think of you, as long as you are doing what GOD told you what to do
- g. The only people to worry about are those that should be preaching – Paul did not worry at all about what Nero, or the Jews, or lazy Christians thought of him
- h. Paul just couldn't help but rejoice that people were preaching the Gospel
- i. An attitude is a choice made based on Christ's view of the situation – not YOUR view!

- 21 ¶ For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain.
- 22 But if I live in the flesh, this *is* the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not.
- 23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:
- 24 Nevertheless to abide in the flesh *is* more needful for you.
- 25 And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith;
- 26 That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.
- 27 ¶ Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;
- 28 And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.
- 29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;
- 30 Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear *to be* in me.

I. Introduction

- A. Attitudes are strange things – we never know what kind of attitude we have until we are tested: pressure, stress, frustration, disappointments
- B. Could it be that the Lord wants to mould our attitudes into one, powerful one – into an attitude of Joy? I believe so
- C. If you had met yourself last week, and got a good look at yourself, would you have seen joy, or anger? Joy or bitterness? Joy or revenge? Joy or sorrow? What would you have seen?
- D. Joy is an attitude. It is the most important Christian attitude
 - 1. Not happy, no cares kind of feeling
 - 2. But an inner confidence that everything is going to work out for good, and this set back, this problem is controlled by a loving God
- E. Wouldn't it be awesome to respond to all of life with joy? That doesn't mean not having some tears, and some sorrows, but never letting those tears and sorrows become bigger than God!
- F. King David had lost his joy, and he prayed earnestly to get it back! We should do the same!

II. Lesson

A. The Christian's Attitude (1:21)

- 1. Everybody has an attitude – a spirit about them
- 2. The Christian can easily get the wrong attitude, and can accumulate a load of wrong attitudes
- 3. Paul shows us the right kind of attitude about life
 - a. To live is Christ – For me to live is FOR Christ (Luke 6:40)
 - 1) It will be hard, lonely, misunderstood
 - 2) But it is all for Jesus
 - 3) NOT to earn His forgiveness, and to earn heaven
 - 4) But simply to please Him, and earn His appreciation (Philp 3:7-8)
 - b. To die is gain – for me to die is going to be gain for ME – for the Christian, it only gets better
 - 1) There is no loss in death for the Christian
 - 2) Not a sorrow like an unsaved man or woman
 - c. There ought never be a day that a Christian does not look forward to dying, and going to be with Jesus! It is not just about streets of gold, and mansions, and eternal life – it is about being with Jesus (1Thes 4:17)

4. So, the next time your attitude starts to rot and stink, start giving your experiences as a gift to Jesus, and start thinking about heaven, and how you don't deserve it, and how wonderful it is going to be, and how the Lord will make up for all the loss and struggle of this life!

B. The Christian's Dilemma (1:22-26)

1. A dilemma between life here, and life in heaven
 - a. This is a life of labour, and sorrow
 - b. To depart and go to be in heaven is easily, FAR better
2. Paul decides to stay around for others
 - a. Paul was needed – and so are you!
 - b. He was needed even though other people didn't think so (1:16)
 - c. Don't you believe for one minute that you are not needed by this world
 - 1) Your family needs you – needs you to love God, and love them, and stay right with God, and stay soft, and stay on course (Act 20:24) with joy!!!
 - 2) Your grandkids need you
 - 3) Your church needs you – to be a pillar, a stone that stays, and supports (1Pet 2:5; Eph 2:20-22)
 - 4) Your workmates and school mates need you
 - 5) People need to see what godliness and character, and faithfulness, and the Gospel, and light looks like! They know what darkness looks like!
3. So, plan on staying around as long as possible – as long as the Lord will allow you. Suicide is the devil's lie!
4. Live so that others grow and mature and experience the "JOY OF FAITH" (1:25)

C. The Christian's Life (1:27-30)

1. Our "conversation" – all of our behaviour
 - a. The way we live and talk
 - b. It ought to be as citizens of a different country – of heaven, not of this world
 - c. Jesus deserves the surrender of our behaviour to His hands
 - d. This is our culture that we live – and it ought to be heavenly!
2. Stand fast – get consistent in your Christian life (James 1:5-8)
3. In one spirit – seek to be spiritual together
4. In one mind (1Cor 1:10) – thinking the same kind of thoughts
 - a. I hate hidden agendas, and so do you
 - b. One mind means having the mind, the thoughts of Jesus Christ (Philp 2:5)
5. Striving together – never against each other – like in a rowing ship
 - a. What we could do if we strove together – worked hard together
 - b. Too many churches have just a few people putting out all the efforts
6. Never terrified by our adversaries
 - a. Spiritual adversaries – powers of darkness
 - b. Physical adversaries – enemies
 - c. Their actions only portray the damnation of hell
 - d. Our response must always portray salvation by God!

7. Troubles in a Christian's life are allowed, and designed by God, not just by the devil (1:29)
8. Our troubles will cause us the same dilemma as Paul had in 1:23 – a desire to leave, but the need to stay

III. Conclusion

- A. What are you willing to allow into your life to reveal your attitude?
- B. How do you view your problems and struggles?
- C. Has the world influenced you to think about quitting, and dying, instead of living, and staying?
- D. This life needs to be given to the Lord, with all its problems and heartaches
- E. Heaven will be for us!
- F. Stay faithful for others! Stay around for others! Stay right with God for your kids and grandkids, and for souls, and for Christ above all!
- G. How is your behaviour lately? Is it like the citizen of heaven, or only of Ireland?
- H. Take every suffering as a gift from the loving hands of your Saviour, and develop the only Christian attitude that can exist in suffering... JOY!