

Sermon Notes
Good News Church
Joy in the Journey
“The Focus of Joy”
Philippians 3:12-16
Drue Warner
3-15-26

PHILIPPIANS OVERVIEW

Theme: “The Joy of Lord”

Outline by Warren Wiersbe:

CH. 1 The Single Mind

- 1/4 “The Increase of Joy” (Phil. 1:1-11)
- 1/11 “The Power of Joy” (Phil. 1:12-26)
- 1/18 “The Community of Joy” (Phil. 1:27-30)

CH. 2 The Submissive Mind

- 2/1 “Philippians 1 Overview” (Snow Zoom)
- 2/8 “The Humiliation of Joy” (Phil. 2:1-11)
- 2/15 “The Fulfillment of Joy” (Phil. 2:12-18)
- 2/22 “The Friendship of Joy” (Phil. 2:19-30)

CH. 3 The Spiritual Mind

- 3/1 & 3/8 “The Fellowship of Joy” (Phil. 3:1-11)
- **3/15 “The Focus of Joy” (Phil. 3:12-16)**

CH. 4 The Secure Mind

REVIEW (last week was Phil. 3:8-11) The Fellowship of Joy

- **Key Verse - “I want to know Christ in the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow attaining to the resurrection from the dead.” – Philippians 3:10-11**

Power of His resurrection – the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is available to us, through God’s Spirit in us and enables Believers to:

- gain victory over sin
- endure suffering (with purpose and joy)
- have wisdom in difficult circumstances

Fellowship of sharing in his sufferings

“I think the whole purpose of suffering is to press us up against the Lord Jesus, to hear His heartbeat, and to identify with Him in His sufferings. It’s not about what suffering does for me. It’s about knowing Jesus better.” - Joni Eareckson Tada

Paul is saying that “life is hard!” But when we come **to know Jesus, everything else in comparison is like dung.** In fact, when we come to know Jesus, all of our other worldly

possessions and accomplishments become offensive to us (because they were counterfeits standing in the way to true joy).

And so, we begin walking a different path - a path that requires we carry a cross of self-sacrifice, service, and suffering. And because that's where Jesus is, even there we find joy!

SERMON NOTES

SCRIPTURE TEXT: Philippians 3:12-16 The Focus of Joy

¹² Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. **But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,** ¹⁴ **I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.** ¹⁵ All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. ¹⁶ Only let us live up to what we have already attained.

“Be Joyful” (Wiersbe) Ch. 9 – “Let’s Win the Race!”

In Paul’s letters, he used many illustrations to communicate the truth of the Christian life. Four prominent illustrations are from the areas of:

- 1) Army /Military – “Put on the whole armor of God” (Ephesians 6)
- 2) Architecture – “You are the temple of God” (1 Corinthians 3)
- 3) Agriculture – “Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.” (Galatians 6)
- 4) **Athletics – “Reaching forth to win the race” (Philippians 3:12-16)**

¹² **Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.**

- In Philippians 2:12, when Paul tells us to *“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you,”* he’s saying...
 - 1) **Work out YOUR salvation**
 - Don’t worry about anyone else / stay focused on yourself)
 - *“Comparison is the thief of joy.”*
 - 2) Remember, your work is a result of God first working in you.

Q: How do we run the race (of the Christian life) to win the prize (of knowing Jesus)?

- 5 Things Needed: 1) Dissatisfaction 2) Devotion 3) Direction 4) Determination 5) Discipline

1. **Dissatisfaction** - **“I have not already taken hold of it.” – Philippians 3:13b**

- **“Dissatisfaction is the first essential to growth in faith (i.e., the race).”**
 - Paul was satisfied with Jesus, but he was not satisfied with his Christian life.

- **Many Christians are self-satisfied because they compare their “running” with that of other Christians, usually those who are not making much progress.** Paul compared himself, not with other people, but with himself and with Jesus Christ.
- Paul’s “perfection” had a dual meaning. He was, at the same time, perfected (declared righteous) and also still having a long way to go to achieve perfection (demonstrating righteousness).
- **“The mature Christian honestly evaluates himself and strives to do better.”**
 - Self-evaluation can be a dangerous thing, because we can err in two directions: 1) making ourselves better than we are
 - 2) making ourselves worse than we really are.
 - Per Martin Luther, the best is to remember that we are “Simul Justus et Peccator” (Latin for “simultaneously just / righteous and sinner”).
- **“A divine dissatisfaction is essential for spiritual progress.”**
 - **“As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God.” – Psalm 42:1–2**

2. **Devotion** – **“But one thing I do.” – Philippians 3:13b**

- **The Bible has a lot of places where the phrase “One thing” is used.**
 - “One thing you lack.” - Jesus to the rich young ruler (Mark 10:21)
 - “One thing is needful.” (Martha was distracted and distressed. Mary was focused and at rest.) – Jesus to Martha (Luke 10:42)
 - “One thing I know, I once was blind but now I see.” – the man who received sight (John 9:25)
 - **“One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple. – Psalm 27:4**
- **“Too many Christians are too involved in “many things,” when the secret of progress is to concentrate on “one thing.”**
 - Olympic athletes are successful because they focus and specialize on one thing.

3. **Direction** - **Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead.” – Philippians 3:13c**

- **Followers of Christ should be future-oriented, “forgetting those things which are behind,” which means that we break the power of the past by living for the future.**
 - Joseph was able to “forget the past” and forgive his brothers, because he knew that God was working out His plan for his life.

4. **Determination** – “I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” – Philippians 3:14

- “I press on...” carries the idea of intense endeavor (i.e., *getting after it!*)
- **The 2 extremes to avoid here are:**
 - 1) I must do it all.
 - 2) God must do it all.
 - **The proper perspective is to realize that “God works in us that He might work through us.”**
- “Some Christians are so busy ‘dying to self’ that they never come back to life again to run the race. And others are so sure they can make it on their own that they never stop to read the Word, pray, or ask for the power of the Lord.” – Warren Wiersbe

5. **Discipline** – “All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. Only let us live up to what we have already attained.” – Philippians 3:15-16

- **It’s not enough to run hard and win the race; the runner must also obey the rules.** Any infringement of the rules can disqualify the athlete.
 - “No contestant in the games is crowned, unless he competes according to the rules.” – 2 Timothy 2:5
- **If you break the rules, you may not lose your citizenship (heaven) but you will lose your rewards.** It happened to
 - Lot (Genesis 19)
 - Samson (Judges 16)
 - Saul (1 Samuel 28; 31)
 - Ananias & Sapphira (Acts 5)
 - and it can happen to us.
- **When we “break the rules,” our relationship with Christ suffers, and that’s the reward we lose.**

Are there rewards in heaven? If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward.”
- 2 Corinthians 3:14

FINAL THOUGHTS - The pressure’s off!

Braden’s conversation with Jude Pruitt

- BRADEN: “How did you overcome the obstacles you’ve faced and end up doing so good in wrestling?”
- JUDE: “I realized that whether I win or lose, my parents are still gonna love me. So, I was free to wrestle my heart out, no matter what.”

The same is true for us. We can forget what is behind, strain towards what is ahead, overcome obstacles, press on, and win the prize *“for which Christ Jesus took hold of me (Phil. 3:12b).”*

You can take hold of the prize (of knowing Jesus) because Jesus has taken hold of you. And once Jesus takes hold of you, He will never let you go.

And THAT’S Good News!