

Series – Joy in Christ, a study of Philippians

Joy in Chains

Philippians 1:12-18

Another title – Joy in Suffering

Christ is being preached – so I rejoice, and I will continue to rejoice

Do Christians suffer and struggle? Simple answer YES

Does it mean that the Bible is wrong? Simple answer NO

Jesus predicted it - *I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.” John 16:33*

Paul pronounced it - *Yes, and everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. 2 Timothy 3:12*

Peter preached it -*So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while.*

James praised it - *Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. James 1:2*

Paul’s situation

His desires fulfilled - see **Acts 19:21** and **Romans 1:15**

Not as he imagined – prisoner not preacher

Paul’s summary – **2 Corinthians 11:23-27** Read

Isolated from friends and family

Unable to do what he felt called to do and loved

No freedom World’s Evaluation-Failure, but Paul rejoiced in:

I. Progress – the spreading of the Gospel

A. Praetorian Guard – evangelized (1600 best of the best soldiers)4

4 guards a day (or 8) two years

B. Court officials – knew why he was there

C. Believers were encouraged to speak up for the truth

D. We received at least three of his best letters to churches

Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians +Philemon to an individual

II. Problems overcome –the message about Christ is being preached

A. Chains could not stop the Word of God

And because I preach this Good News, I am suffering and have been chained like a criminal. But the word of God cannot be chained. 2Timothy 2:9

B. Critics could not destroy the truth

Jealousy and rivalry used by God

Selfish ambition and false motives did not hinder

C. Contention could not cause Paul trouble *1Peter 3:16-17*

III. Prevailing Attitude – I rejoice, and I will rejoice

A. The motives of man are overcome by the plan of God

They mean it for evil – God means it for good

Example Joseph of Old Testament - *Genesis 50:20*

B. God’s plans cannot be stopped by man

Not even your failures can stop God *Job 42:2*

No human wisdom or understanding or plan can stand against the LORD. Proverbs 21:30

We face the same opposition today

Chains (that which prevents or hinders our freedom)

Parenthood – Mothers sometimes feel chained at home

Suzanne Wesley -John Wesley and Charles Wesley

Physical limitations – handicaps

Fanny Crosby – born blind Joni Tada –paralyzed

Job – or poverty

William Carey, Edward Kimble -DL Moody

Even Death - cannot stop the progress of the Gospel

1956 4 killed by Auca tribe

How can we rejoice in the face of such opposition?

1. Understand that we cannot control our circumstances, but we can control our response to them
2. Look for opportunities to share the Gospel rather than complaining about the problems
3. Remember that even though other people (or we ourselves) will disappoint us, God will never disappoint.
4. Yield everything to God in order to spread the Gospel
What kinds of answers could we give to the questions?
 - 1) I will be willing to give up _____ to show Christ to others
 - 2) I would be willing to endure _____ if it resulted in the furtherance of the Gospel.
5. Rejoice that no person or problem can steal your joy.
So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again; then you will rejoice, and no one can rob you of that joy. John 16:22

Next week: Joy in Suffering **Philippians 1:19-30**