



Philippians

Living in the Joy of Knowing Christ!

The Joy of Knowing His Good Work!

Philippians 1:1-7

Message #1 of 16 – S984

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Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

The Joy of Knowing His Good Work!

Philippians 1:1-7

Opening Comments

- Turn to **Philippians**
- Today, we begin a new series through the book of **Philippians – Living in the Joy of Knowing Christ!**
- On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was signed
- Our Founding Fathers broke free of the oppression of the British Empire
- Early on in that document were these words...

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

- They believed that God had created people and given them certain rights that are unalienable

Unalienable: not transferable to another or not capable of being taken away or denied.

- They believed that life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness were God-given rights that no one had the right to interfere with
- Biblically speaking they were right
- ‘all men are created equal’ – rests in the truth that God is the Creator of all people – and that he created them of equal value and importance
- Right to Life – from the moment of conception every person has a right to be born and live
- Right to liberty – every person has a right to be free to do what is right in relation to their Creator – government exists to deal with those who choose to do what is wrong
- Right to pursue happiness – Our founding fathers believed that it is a God-given right for people to go after what makes them happy
- This is where some people get themselves into trouble
- They believe that whatever makes them happy or whatever they think will make them happy is right
- Our happiness is not the standard for determining what is right or wrong

- God is the standard – He determines what is right and wrong
- And sometimes what is right does not make us happy **James 1:2-3**
My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.
- It doesn't make me happy to experience trials and the testing of my faith
- But God uses them to grow my faith and patience – that is right
- It doesn't make me happy, but I can rejoice because my faith based on God's Word tells me that God will make good from it
- The book of Philippians is a letter written by the Apostle Paul that is rich with the tone of joy and calls to rejoice **Philippians 4:14**
Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!
- Paul is not talking about some fickle sense of happiness that is dependent upon our circumstances
- We know that because Paul wrote this letter while in a Roman prison where one of the possible outcomes was death
- Paul had a different lens that he viewed the world and life

Philippians 1:21

For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

- Paul viewed the circumstances of his life through the reality of Christ
- For him, knowing Christ was everything **1 Corinthians 2:2**
For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

- Joy is a function of faith that is founded upon the person of Jesus Christ
- My goal through this series is that we would all get to know Christ better and as a result of that knowledge experience more of the joy that knowledge promises
- Let's pray and then get into this awesome book
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **The Joy of Knowing His Good Work!**
- Let's begin
- **Philippians 1:1**
- Timothy was with Paul when he wrote this letter

- Timothy was also with Paul when he first visited the city of Philippi and presented the gospel – Read about it in Acts 16
- Philippi was a Macedonian city – today Southern Greece
- It was a Roman city – founded by Philip II – father of Alexander the Great
- A thriving church developed out of Paul's ministry there and they were exceedingly helpful to Paul's ministry of taking the gospel to places Christ had not been preached before
- Paul will refer to their generosity later in the letter
- Next comes the greeting
- **Philippians 1:2**
- Grace and peace appear in this form 17 times in the NT – always in this order – Grace and then peace
- Without the grace of God there can be no peace with or from God
- Peace is defined as the absence of conflict
- Jesus said there is a different kind of peace **John 14:27**
Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.
- The peace of Christ is an internal peace – a peace that persists even when there is no peace in the world around us
- Paul will talk about that peace later **Philippians 4:6-7**
Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷ and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.
- If we want the peace of God, we must first experience the grace of God
- **Philippians 1:3-5**
- This is one of the things a deeper knowledge of Christ can do for us
- As our faith in Christ grows, our vision expands
- Paul is in a Roman prison and rather than thinking of himself and his circumstances he is thinking of others, like the Philippians.
- Not only did Paul think about them but he prayed for them
- One thing he mentioned specifically that Paul was thankful for was the Philippian's 'fellowship in the gospel'
- Fellowship carries the idea of sharing, specifically sharing life.

- When Paul refers to fellowship in the gospel He is referring to sharing in the grace and in the labor of the ministry of the gospel.
- True fellowship is sharing in the community and in the labor, whether it be physically, spiritually, emotionally, or financially.
- True Christianity can only be experienced in community with other believers
- Though sometimes that can be messy because no Christians have finished the ‘good work’ God is doing in them
- Part of Paul’s joy over the Philippians came from his faith that God would continue to work in this good church to finish the work
- **Philippians 1:6-7**
- ‘the day of Christ Jesus’ is the Second Coming
- The question is, what is the ‘good work’ that Paul is confident God is going to complete in the Philippians?
- The Philippians had experienced the grace of the gospel – they were saved – but they weren’t done yet
- Salvation is just the beginning of the work God does in the life of His people **John 8:28-29**

Then they said to Him, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?”
29 Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”

- God’s plan for each of includes so much more than that **Romans 8:29**
For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.
- The ‘good work’ that God is doing in you and me is making us more like His Son Jesus Christ
- That work happens in three stages: Salvation, Sanctification, and Glorification
- First Stage – **Salvation**
- This is a one-time event – when we yield our heart to Christ and repent of our sins
- Through faith in Christ, we are covered by the righteousness of Christ
1 Corinthians 1:30

But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption...

- When we are saved, all our sins are forgiven, and we are right with God – the doors of heaven are open to us, and we can go to God anytime to seek mercy and grace
- But practically, we are not much different than we were before we were saved
- We still think mostly the same way, we act mostly the same way
- God expects us to be different – to be holy – as holy as Christ is
- The second stage of God’s good work in us is progressive –

Sanctification

- This stage is the process of changing believer’s thoughts, attitudes, and behavior to more reflect the perfection of Christ.
- It is a gradual, moment-by-moment process
- The more we cooperate in the process, the more good comes into and out of our lives. **Romans 12:1-2**

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

- The third and ultimate stage is **Glorification**
 - Once we leave this earth, we will be perfected **1 John 2:2-3**
- Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.**
- That verse also has the idea of our cooperation with the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
 - If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, God is doing a ‘good work’ in you
 - And you can be confident, just as Paul was confident, that God will finish what He starts – He always does
 - Even though Paul was in chains – his faith was not
 - He was experiencing the grace of God and Paul’s response to that grace was joy – even in chains
 - What an encouragement that must have been to the Philippians
 - There is a sense in this letter that they truly cared for Paul and were concerned about his circumstances

- Paul may have been in chains, but his faith made him free
- And not just free within himself, but also free to minister to others
- The gospel of grace through Christ is pure, perfect, and powerful
- Jesus said something at the temple that fits here **John 7:37-38**

On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸ He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”

- Imagine, someone comes to you and tells you that they know of a lake where the purest water on earth exists.
- This water refreshes and satisfies and heals even into your soul.
- Our response might be, ‘Take me to this lake so that I might taste it and be satisfied.’
- He responds and tells you that he can’t take you to the lake, but he can take you to one of the streams and rivers that flows from this lake.
- You go to first one, dip in a cup and lift it up to the light and see that it is swimming all forms of creatures. You wouldn’t drink it.
- He takes you to another, in goes your cup and the water is an orange color – not very appealing.
- The next stream contains water that smells nasty.
- Stream after stream has water that is not drinkable. You would quickly doubt that the perfect lake exists.
- Sin in our lives corrupts and pollutes the living waters of Christ.
- God is calling us all to live lives that help others to taste and see that God is good **Psalm 34:8**

Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!

- The Lord is good – all the time!
- He is doing a good work in us to purify us both inside and outside
- As we learn to love God with our whole being and allow the Holy Spirit to make us into the image of Christ the living waters flowing out of our lives become purer, blessing anyone they touch, and manifest the power of God to change people’s hearts and lives
- Rejoice, God is doing a ‘good work’ in you, and He will complete it
- **Pray**