



Philippians

Living in the Joy of Knowing Christ!

The Joy of Knowing God's People!

Philippians 2:1-4

Message #6 of 16 – S992

Sermon given on April 10, 2022



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

The Joy of Knowing God's People!

Philippians 2:1-4

Opening Comments

- Turn to **Philippians 2**
- Today, we continue our series through the book of **Philippians – Living in the Joy of Knowing Christ!**
- Today's text is an exhortation to God's people
- Being in Christ has both benefits and responsibilities
- And walking in those can help you to experience the joy of the Lord regardless of where you are or what you are going through
- Let's pray and then look at a few verses
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **The Joy of Knowing God's People!**
- Paul has made it clear what his primary focus is **Philippians 1:21**
For to me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain.
- For Paul the gospel of Christ was everything
- And then last time he told his readers about their relationship to the gospel **Philippians 1:27a**
Let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ...
- What is your salvation worth? What did it cost to obtain your salvation?
- It didn't cost you anything, but it cost God His Son Jesus
- It is reasonable for God to expect you to live in a manner that is worthy of the sacrifice that Christ made to save you
- And this is not a one-sided deal – God gives much more than He will ever ask from you
- Paul opens this text with some of the benefits of being one of God's people
- **Philippians 2:1**
- Before we examine the benefits, we need to understand what it means to be 'in Christ'

- In the simplest of explanations, it means you are saved **2 Corinthians 13:5**

Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.

- If you have repented of your sins and received Christ's sacrifice on the cross, you are saved – you are in Christ
- It is conditional on faith, but once you are in Christ, you are all the way in and all the benefits of that are available to you
- Paul lists five **Benefits of being in Christ**
- First benefit of being in Christ – **Consolation**
- This has the idea of coming alongside someone to encourage them
- If you are in Christ, He is in you – and it is His desire that you let your conduct be worthy of His sacrifice
- Not only that, the Holy Spirit dwells within us to help us do that
- The second benefit – **Comfort of Love**
- All of God loves us – the Father loves us and sent His Son – Jesus loves us and died for us – the Holy Spirit loves us and helps us
- It is very comforting to know we are loved
- The third benefit – **Fellowship of the Spirit**
- The word fellowship includes the idea of sharing life
- In Christ we are never alone – God the Holy Spirit doesn't just live in us, He lives with us
- The fourth benefit – **Affection**
- God cares about us – He has kind feelings toward us
- Even when we are being obnoxious children
- Not only does God care about us, He cares for us
- Another word that could be used here is compassion
- The fifth benefit of being in Christ – **Mercy**
- Of all the benefits we should probably be most thankful for this one
- Mercy is not getting what we deserve
- Every believer, whether they have been saved their whole life or within the last five minutes has these benefits available to them
- I have been a member of AAA for over 25 years
- With the annual membership I am entitled to certain benefits

- I have no idea what all the benefits are, and I rarely use the ones I know about
- Mainly it is there in case I get in trouble with my car away from home
- Many Christians are like that in their faith
- They are saved but they are missing out on the benefits of being in Christ **2 Peter 1:3-4**

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, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.

- Now, don't get me wrong, we are not in a relationship with Christ for what we can get out of it – that's a wrong attitude
- We are in a relationship with Christ because God created us for that purpose and because Jesus died to make a way for us to do it and because God is glorified when we walk with Christ in relationship
- But since we are in a relationship with Christ, we ought to partake of every promise and benefit available to us
- Paul goes on in the next verse to tell us how to activate these benefits
- If a business offers a discount as a benefit to AAA members, to activate that discount I need to show them my card
- In a similar way, we experience the benefits of being in Christ when we do certain things
- **Philippians 2:2**
- Paul has already told them to let their conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ
- Then he told them about the benefits of being in Christ
- Then he says something that I think is remarkable
- He says 'fulfill my joy' – this is what will make me happy
- Remember where he is – chained to a Roman soldier accused of a capital offence
- He doesn't say, 'fulfill my joy by getting me out of here'
- In fact, Paul's joy is not focused on himself at all – but on them
- Paul's joy would be fulfilled if they were experiencing the benefits of their relationship with Christ

- Why? Because they would be living in a way that was worthy of the gospel of Christ – God would be glorified – others would be blessed – and faith would grow, theirs and others
- Paul then lists four things needed for **Activating the Benefits**
- First activator – **Being Like-minded**
- All four of these activators speak of one overriding need to experience the benefits of being in Christ – unity
- If you are in Christ, then you are already one with Him
- The unity Paul is referring to is within the church **Colossians 3:15**
And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.
- ‘one body’ = all true Christ-followers – believers in Jesus
- Unity can only be practiced in community
- Being like-minded is more than just agreeing on certain things
- It is more than just loving someone’s post on social media
- It is about getting to know how people think, what they believe, what attitudes they hold – and then working to come to a place of unity based upon the truth of God’s Word
- I meet with a number of men throughout the week – my goal is help them to align their thinking with what God’s Word says
- It is interesting how often God is working on my thinking at the same time
- The second activator – **Having the same Love**
- The New Testament is filled with exhortations for believers to love one another **John 13:34**
A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.
- We have been commanded to love one another as much as Jesus loves us
- You cannot do that except with a community of unity – the church
- The third activator – **Being of one Accord**
- ‘one accord’ - one souled adj. — being united in the same character, affections, and especially mindset as another.
- God is at work within each of us, not to make us into the best us we can be **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.

- God doesn't want you to be like me, to think like me, act like me
- He wants you to be like Jesus
- But it might not always be easy to know how to do that in your everyday life
- When you need help, find someone in the church who is more like Jesus than you are **1 Corinthians 11:1**

Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

- Fourth activator – **Be of one Mind**
- We do the monthly Worldviews message because the world is working to change the way you think
- God gave us His Word so that we would know how to think
- Thinking leads to doing – think right = doing right **Romans 12:2**

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.

- Life is complicated, and untangling the mess of life is not something we can or should do alone
 - We need each other
 - Paul said his joy would be fulfilled if the Philippians were experiencing all the benefits of knowing Christ
 - Paul's joy was tied to their faith – he was radically others-focused
 - He expresses the key to that kind of attitude
 - **Philippians 2:3**
 - 'selfish ambition or conceit' are facets of pride
 - 'lowliness of mind' is an expression of humility
 - Next time Paul will use Christ as an illustration of this truth
 - Andrew Murray in his book on Humility says that pride is the root of all sin and that humility is the root of all the virtues
 - God's Word is very clear on that topic **James 4:6**
- God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.**
- One of the things I have discovered is that it is often hard to see our own pride
 - That's one of the reasons we need to be connected to other believers in a way that encourages us to get past the surface level of our lives

- Paul closes this text with that thought
- **Philippians 2:4**
- The Greek word that we get the word fellowship from means to share life together
- And what Paul is suggesting is that you connect to the body, not for what you are going to get out of it, but for what others will get out of it
- And don't believe the lie that you have nothing to offer
- God made you to be a part of the body of Christ
- That means He also gave you something that the body needs to be stronger than it is
- But you might not discover what that is until you get connected
- And when we put others interests before our own, God makes sure that our interests are taken care of
- The benefits of knowing Christ are best activated by humbling ourselves and putting others interests before our own
- And we do that best by being connected to other people who are trying to do the same thing
- How do you get started?
- Every Sunday Pastor Randy tells you during the announcements to go to CCFV.LIFE
- That is a page on the website that tells you everything that is currently going on in the church and all the ways you can get connected to the body
- If you want to experience more of the benefits of knowing Christ – find something and get connected
- Don't wait to be invited – Do it because it is what God wants you to do – But it is up to you
- Are you connected? – invite someone to something
- Speaking of inviting – invite someone to Good Friday
- Together we can grow in our knowledge of Christ and experience more of the joy that knowledge brings
- Together is the key
- **Pray**