

50 – Philippians: Joyful Mind, Joyful Life

- Philippi was a special “planted” city by Rome, more like a **Roman colony**. Residents were encouraged by several perks (including exemption from taxes) to live there. They had full Roman citizenship, and Paul referenced this in one particular place where he encouraged the church to live as “citizens of heaven.” (3:20) This was a large city in the region of Macedonia.
- Many people trusted Jesus as Savior, including Lydia and her family (Acts 16:13-15), and the Philippian jailer and his family (Acts 16:30-34), as a result of **Paul’s second missionary journey there**. Soon after that visit, the church in Philippi was born. This church helped Paul in many ways. He writes to thank them and encourage them.
- **Paul is a prisoner at this writing**, probably around 59-64 AD. The church at Philippi sent Epaphroditus to minister to Paul and bring him a financial contribution. This church had ministered to Paul several times before as well. This serves as a thank-you letter to them.
- This is both a **personal and a practical letter**. Paul talked about the need for believers to rejoice in the Lord. The word for “joy” is used 4 times; “rejoice” 8 times, and “glad” 3 times. A joyful believer is one who is so first in his or her mind, and what occupies our thinking is what shows what creates either joy, or something else. This book is more about the Christian’s “inner life.”
- The main theme of this book is **Christian living and living a joyful life**. However, there may have also been some issues to deal with, as he addressed some problems such as rivalry and ambition (2:3-4; 4:2) and the Judaizers (3:1-3), and a tendency not to obey God’s guidelines for living (3:18-19), just the opposite of trying to obtain salvation through works. He did not spend a great deal of time correcting them, however. This is not like the letters to the Corinthian church where they needed immediate and serious correction. One commentator wrote that the letter to the Philippians was **“...the experience of Christian life in its highest and most perfect expression — say, rather, its normal condition under the power of the Spirit of God.”** (Darby)



Highlights

<p style="text-align: center;">Ch 1</p> <p>Encouragement The Believer’s Life Rejoice in Trials No matter what, Christ</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ praise for the saints at Philippi, 1:1-8 (their constant witness, concern for the gospel, his love for them) ▪ prayer for them, 1:9-11 (for love, fruit of righteousness) ▪ Paul presents himself, his steady testimony, his convictions, and solemn exhortations – we don’t just believe, we suffer for his sake
<p style="text-align: center;">Ch 2</p> <p>Living the Christian Life Rejoice in any service Christ is the pattern for living</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sharing Jesus’ attitude, 2:1-18 (living in unity, humility, exalting Christ in everything) ▪ Timothy and Epaphroditus praised, examples of good service, 2:19-30
<p style="text-align: center;">Ch 3</p> <p>Everything we do is for Him Rejoice in everything</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rejoice in the Lord ▪ Careful not to fall back into the Law ▪ Press on for the goal ▪ Our citizenship is in heaven, and we await Jesus’ return
<p style="text-align: center;">Ch 4</p> <p>Rejoice! Don’t be Anxious Meditate on good things</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be of the same mind, get along ▪ Keep rejoicing ▪ Don’t be anxious, pray for everything ▪ What to think about, what to put in our minds

- This book is all about Jesus living in and through us. It is about rejoicing at all times, no matter what. A key verse and theme for this letter is given right up front: **“For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”** (1:21)

- This is a short, but very sweet, letter to a group of people that Paul obviously admired and loved. He is near the end of his ministry, and it appears that he knows it. He wants to leave with them some last words of encouragement and things he has learned in how to live the believer's life. This little book is full to overflowing with beloved scriptures that have blessed not just the Philippians, but millions of believers through the ages. There is no better way to summarize this book than to highlight exactly what Paul said to this little church group. Here are just a few of those that are well known and well-loved:
 - ***“And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”*** (1:9-11) Can you think of a better prayer for your fellow believers?
 - ***“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.”*** (2:3) Simple instruction for how to relate to others.
 - ***“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*** (2:5-11) This is the entire Gospel in a nutshell, including past and future.
 - ***“But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.”*** (3:7) Nothing, no material things, no power, no fame, no nothing, can compare to the glory of knowing Jesus.
 - ***“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”*** (3:12-14) Encouragement we all need to press on to the goal of reunion with Jesus.
 - ***“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”*** (3:20-21) This thought alone should keep us pressing on!
 - ***“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!”*** (4:4) How many times have we heard this? Do we do it?? This is repeated in each of the chapters in this letter. In all things, we are to rejoice.
 - ***“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;...”*** (4:6) Again, how many times have we heard this? Don't fret...PRAY! (and give thanks!)
 - ***“...and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”*** (4:7) Oh, what a blessing this is!
 - ***“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.”*** (4:8) Put good things in, and get good things out. What we think about and what we put in our minds, will dictate how we act, and how we feel.
 - ***“Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:...”*** (4:11) If only all of us had learned this, how much heartache we could spare ourselves.
 - ***“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”*** (4:13) How many times have you repeated this verse to yourself, or to others? It's time to really live it.
 - ***“And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”*** (4:19) Notice it says “need” not want. If we could only fully trust Him, we would see that this is always true.