



## **“JOY” - Philippians - Week 6**

### **April 7th**

What ideas come into your mind when you think of the word “priority”?

Do you often associate the idea of joy with the word “priority”? Why or why not?

The priority of joy highlights the God-centered nature of the gospel and the Christian faith. We honor most whatever delights us the most. If God is of highest worth and value, then it follows that we enjoy Him above all other things. Joy is thus a worship issue. If we aren’t finding joy in God, then we aren’t truly worshiping God. Our joy in God—a joy that can exist even in the midst of sorrow—should transcend all other delights in this life.

What should drive us to proclaim the gospel to every sinner we can is not only that they might be spared from the wrath to come (1 Thess. 1:10) but also so that their joy might be full (1 John 1:4; cf. Rom. 15:13). Proclaiming the gospel to our friends, family, acquaintances, and apparent enemies is but the application of the two greatest commandments—to love God and to love neighbor (Matt. 22:34-40). We love God by finding our joy in Him through how He has revealed Himself in the gospel of His Son. We love our neighbors by extending to them the possibility of finding true and lasting joy in the God who made them through the gospel. Joy is our top priority because worship, the Greatest Commandment, and the Great Commission are top priorities. The message matters too much not to share it with our friends, family, strangers, and enemies!

### **Read Philippians 3:1-11.**

Philippians 3 begins with an exhortation to joy (v. 1) following the apostle Paul’s call to humble, Christ- like service in chapter 2. Philippians 3:1-11 shows a shift in thought and tone with Paul’s warning about false teachers (i.e. Judaizers). The passage can be arranged in three smaller sections: 1) the command to rejoice in the Lord (v. 1); 2) the call to refrain from trusting in the flesh (vv. 2-6); and 3) the confession of Christ’s supremacy in all things (vv. 7-11).

Look at verse 1. What stands out to you about the apostle Paul’s command to “rejoice”?

Does it seem fair to you to receive an obligation that involves your emotions? Why or why not?

Look at verses 2-6. Why does Paul follow his command for the Philippians to rejoice with a warning about false teaching? How does false teaching deprive us from finding joy in God?

How do the autobiographical details that Paul includes speak against the apparent false teaching and trusting in the flesh?

Look to verses 7-11. What do verses 7-9 tell us about how the gospel radically changes how we view our good works and religious identity?

How does verse 8 enhance how all things—not only our religious achievements or good works—are to be considered subservient to knowing Christ and making Him known?

How does the Christian life and experience reflect the pattern of Christ's suffering followed by His resurrection (vv. 10-11)? How does the gospel speak to our sufferings and to our triumphs?

## **APPLICATION**

Why should we be concerned, like Paul in verse 1, about our fellow believers' joy in the Lord? What can we draw for ourselves and for others from his intentionality of including this exhortation and concern?

Christian apologist Ravi Zacharias stated, "Jesus does not offer to make bad people good but to make dead people alive." How can Paul's denouncement of his own religious heritage in verses 4-9 help us communicate this clearly when we explain the gospel and Christianity to others?

## **PRAYER**

Pray as a group that we would have the same mind as Paul when he says "everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" and that we would abandon it all in our pursuit of Jesus.