

REJOICING IN LIFE AND DEATH
(Philippians)

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. It is only when we study the New Testament in detail that we discover it to be a book of joy. In the New Testament the verb, χαίρειν, Chairein, which means to rejoice occurs seventy-two (72) times, and the word χαρά, Chara, which means joy occurs sixty (60) times. *The New Testament is the book of joy.*
1. χαίρειν, Chairein, is the normal Greek greeting and is usually translated, "Greetings," or its full literal translation, "Joy be with you!"
 2. χαρά, Chara, is the Greek root word for Joy which means delight, joy or gladness.
 3. Joy defined by Webster is, "the emotion evoked by well-being, success, or good fortune or by the prospect of possessing what one desires."
- B. The letter to the Philippians written by the apostle Paul in about 63 A.D. while he was imprisoned in Rome, is indeed a letter encouraging joy in life even though one is suffering and the threat of death is ever present.
1. The author of this epistle is well qualified to teach us how to rejoice no matter what our circumstances may be.
 2. During his second missionary journey, about 52 A.D., the church was established in the city of Philippi. (Read Acts 16:11-40)
 3. The church was not established without persecution and suffering. The apostle Paul and Silas were beaten and jailed. (Acts 16:22-25)
 4. One great purpose for writing the epistle to the Philippians was to encourage a "life of continuous rejoicing." Paul had learned this great lesson and uses the words joy and rejoice at least fifteen (15) times in this letter. (1:4, 18, 25; 2:2, 17, 18, 28, 29; 3:1; 4:4, 10)

- C. The Need Of Our Neurotic Age Is To Find The Joy Of Inward Peace. The Philippiian Letter, Studied And Applied, Answers This Need. (*Phil.* 4:4)
"Rejoice in the Lord always."

II. AIM.

- A. To Teach Christ As The Meaning And Center Of Man's Life Which When Realized And Practiced Results In A Life Of Continuous Rejoicing. (*Phil.* 4:13)
- B. To Familiarize The Student With The Letter To The Philippians, Or "*The Epistle of Excellent Things*," or "*The Epistle of Joy*," by which it is also known.

III. OUTLINE.

- A. REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS: THE CHURCH IN PHILIPPI.
(*Phil.* 1:1-11)

1. The church in Philippi was established by Paul and Silas, with persecution, but they rejoiced in their suffering.
 - a. *Acts* 16:22-25 - They were praying and singing. cf. *Acts* 5:41; *James* 5:13 - "Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praises."
 - b. There was great rejoicing in the home of the Philippian jailor because of their great salvation. (*Acts* 16:30-34)
2. The church in Philippi wanted to share the gospel message, which had brought them great joy, and they did so by helping care for Paul's needs while he preached. (*Phil.* 1:4-5; 4:10-19)

- B. REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS: IN THE PLACE WHERE YOU ARE. (*Phil.* 1:12-26)

1. This section seems to emphasize the person of Paul. Notice the usage of "I," "me" and "my".
2. Paul at this writing was in a Roman prison, his own hired dwelling (*Acts* 28:30-31), and prior to this had been in prison in Caesarea for at least two years. (*Acts* 24:27)
3. Paul believed his imprisonment to be providential and with a purpose, i.e. to preach. (*Phil.* 1:12-13)

- a. He rejoiced because the gospel was being preached. (1:18)
- b. He was getting the gospel into the picked imperial guard; the elite regiment of Rome was being evangelized from a room. The chain that deprived him of his liberty, gave him opportunity - an opportunity to further the gospel message. (1:13)

4. Practical application of this principle.

- a. Not everyone has learned to rejoice and sing in the midst of difficulties.
- b. Some say: *"That's fine for you, BUT..."*
 - 1) "You don't work where I work."
 - 2) "You're not in the ward where I'm on duty."
 - 3) "You're not in the school where I teach."
 - 4) "You don't live in the town where I live."
 - 5) "You don't have the boss that I have."
 - 6) "It's very well for you to talk about living a life of continuous rejoicing, but you wouldn't rejoice if you were where I am." (Phil. 4:4-7)
- c. Phil. 1:20-26.
 - 1) No shame for a Christian.
 - 2) Exalt Christ in your body whether by life or death.
 - 3) "To live is Christ, and to die is gain."

5. Rejoice always no matter where you are. *"Any-where with Jesus I can safely go!"* Help others where you are to find the purpose for rejoicing. (Phil. 1:25)

C. REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS: WITH THE PEOPLE YOU ARE WITH. (Phil. 1:27 - 2:30)

1. Conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel. (1:27). This section deals with human relationships. Christian joy and rejoicing are very closely tied up with these human relationships.
 - a. *Phil.* 1:27-28 - Relationship to Christians and the world
 - b. *Phil.* 2:2-4 - Relationship to brethren.
 - c. *Phil.* 2:5-11 - Relationship to Christ.
 - d. *Phil.* 2:14-15 - Relationship between light and darkness.
 - e. *Phil.* 2:20 - Concerning Timothy.
 - f. *Phil.* 2:30 - Concerning Epaphroditus.

2. In the back of your mind you may be thinking, "How is it possible to live a rejoicing life with certain people, as well as in certain places?"
 - a. When teaching in Madras, India, as well as Nigeria, the writer's work took him to many church of Christ mission points around the world which revealed a shocking problem, the problem of human relationships. The big difficulty on the mission field is not:
 - 1) The relationship of the missionary to the nationals whom he seeks to serve.
 - 2) The indifference of the local people to the gospel message.
 - 3) The difficulty of learning the language.
 4. The difficulty of, or the hardship of, a different climate or diet.
 - b. Problem number one on the mission field is the problem of human relationship, i.e. missionary-to-missionary (a person-to-person problem).
 - c. This is not only a missionary problem, it is a problem with every Christian. When we

do not live in a right relationship with other people it often takes away the joy and the song from our hearts.

3. Note *Phil. 2:1-11*. This section of scripture applied will insure right relationships.
 - a. "Be of the same mind."
 - b. "Have the same love."
 - c. "Being of one accord."
 - d. "Each counting others better than himself."
 - e. Have the mind of Christ - "obedient and humble."
 - f. Bow in submission to Christ and you will serve one another. (*cf. John 13:12-17*)
 4. Joy is the result of right relationships. (*Phil. 2:17-18*)
 5. Note the joyful relationship of Paul, Timothy, Epaphroditus and the church at Philippi.
- D. REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS: BECAUSE OF THE PERSON YOU ARE. (*Phil. 3:1-21*)
1. We are studying this great "*Epistle of Joy*" trying to find some of the secrets (which are revealed) of the life of continuous rejoicing.
 - a. Our joy is not only determined by where we are and who we are with, but also, and most important, the Christians that we are.
 - b. Rejoice in the Lord. (*ver. 1*). Our glory is in Christ and we do not rejoice or have confidence in the flesh. (*ver. 3*)
 2. Paul's personal joy in Christ is seen and magnified as it is compared to what he had been as a dedicated Jewish Pharisee.
 - a. Paul begins and ends this chapter discussing those whose views are different from his. (*Phil. 3:1-2, 18-19*)
 - b. The heart of this chapter centers upon Paul's

personal experience of giving up everything which he held as dear that he might receive the righteousness which is from God by faith. (Phil. 3:7-9)

3. Paul had not become satisfied with his accomplishments as a Christian. (Phil. 3:12-16) He was "pressing forward." This is a principle of Christian joy.

a. Living on yesterday's work or relying on the past to satisfy us today, is trying to have real Christian joy while living on stale grace, (if there can be such a thing). It was wonderful, but now it is no longer new and refreshing.

b. Compare Exodus 16:20 - Some tried to keep their manna from one day to the next. It rotted! It putrefied! Some Christians are like that:

1) They talk about joys of past Christian service.

2) Their Christian experience is old.

3) Some are not singing and rejoicing because their Christianity is so old and moldy and unrefreshing that it "stinks."

4) Yet we were called to walk in "newness of life." (Rom. 6:5; 2 Cor. 5:17)

5) Some are trying to reverse the order of this text - 2 Cor. 4:16 - trying to live longer physically and are rotting inside. (cf. Matt. 23:27-28). Beloved be "renewed daily!"

4. Rejoicing comes to the truly converted person who is totally dependent upon God, pressing on toward the "heavenly goal" confident that the promise of God will be waiting for us.

(Phil. 3:20-21 cf. 1 Pet. 1:3-7)

E. REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS: AGAIN I SAY REJOICE.
(Phil. 4:1-23)

1. "My joy and crown." Phil. 4:1 (cf. 2 Jn. 4; 3 Jn. 3-4. "Greater joy have I none than this...")

2. "Whose names are in the book of life" - a reason to rejoice. (*Phil. 4:3-4 cf. Luke 10:20*)
3. Christian happiness is not enjoyed out of the Lord, but "in the Lord," in His body, in His presence, in His service.
4. We are to rejoice in those things related to Christ:
 - a. In the salvation which He gives. (*Acts 8:38-39*)
 - b. In the fellowship He provides. (*1 Jn. 1:3-7; Philemon 7*)
 - c. In the triumph of His truth. (*1 Cor. 13:6*)
 - d. In the hope that He imparts. (*Rom. 12:12; Heb. 3:6*)
 - e. In the grand and glorious fact that our names are written in heaven. (*Luke 10:17-20; Rev. 3:5; 21:27*)
5. A continuous command: Rejoice in the Lord always. (*Phil. 4:4*)
 - a. He who rejoices in the Lord always rejoices:
 - 1) In prosperity or adversity. (*2 Cor. 6:4-10*)
 - 2) Among friends or behind prison bars. (*Phil. 1:18*)
 - 3) In sickness or in health. (*Matt. 9:2*)
 - 4) Favored by men or persecuted. (*Matt. 5:11-12; Acts 5:41*)
 - 5) In life or in death.
 - b. "Again I will say rejoice." An emphasized command.
6. The results of a rejoicing church:
 - a. Dissension will disappear - a command given to remedy personal strife. (*Phil. 4:2-4*)

- b. Murmuring will stop. (*Phil. 2:14 cf. 1 Cor. 10:10*)
- c. Health and efficiency will be preserved. (*Prov. 17:22*). It's psychologically unsound to be hypercritical. (*Matt. 7:1-3*)
- d. Others will want to be a part of a loving community of God's people. (*1 Cor. 13:34-35*)
- e. Souls will be brought to Christ by those who know the joy of their great salvation.

IV. CONCLUSION.

- A. We Are Eternal Beings, Spiritual Creations Of God. We Have The Capacity To Know God In Fellowship, To Worship Him, To Follow After Him.
 - 1. As such you are much more than a Social Security number, a cog in the corporate wheel, a housewife on the block of look-alike houses, a student in the milling masses being taught by professors from dog-eared notes.
 - 2. Looking into God's Word, we see ourselves as sinners lost and damned. (*Rom. 3:11-18*). Even so, God loved us (*Rom. 5:8*) and sent His Son to die for us (*Jn. 3:16*) so as we read the glad story of joyful tidings, we believe and turn to God. Coming up out of the waters of baptism we sing, "*Glory To God, I'm A Child Of The King.*" (*1 Pet. 2:9-10*)
- B. The Christian Life Is One Of Continuous Rejoicing, Whether In Life Or Death, No Matter What Place, What People Or What Our Circumstances May Be. (*Phil. 4:12-13*). We Are The Lord's "*Rejoice And Be Exceedingly Glad For Great Is Your Reward In Heaven.*"