

>>>>>> *Philippians - Lesson 06* <<<<<<<

- 1) We finished last time with a discussion of some questions that were a result of Paul giving the Philippians the command to rejoice in the Lord.

Philippians 3:1a (NASB 2020)

The Goal of Life

¹ Finally, my brothers *and sisters*, rejoice in the Lord.

- 2) We looked at definitions for Joy and Rejoicing and decided that joy was not to be equated with happiness.
- 3) We considered the quote from the LABC about joy.

Often happiness is mistaken for joy, but the two are very different. Inward joy comes from knowing and trusting God; happiness comes as a result of pleasant circumstances. Inward joy is lasting; we can feel joy in spite of our deepest troubles; happiness is temporary because it is based on external circumstances.⁷

- 4) I think we also came to agree that joy as Paul refers to it is always the joy which is a fruit of the Spirit as mentioned in Gal 5.
- 5) I think we also agreed that rejoicing was not exclusively an inward or outward thing but actually both.

Have I got it all right up to this point?

- 6) As I was reviewing the start of this lesson, another question occurred to me.
 - a) The LABC blurb that I just read tells us about joy but does not describe joy.

If joy is NOT happiness, then how does one describe joy?

- 7) We then began to discuss specifically Paul's rejoicing.
- 8) To really bring this into focus, we must remember that Paul was able to rejoice in spite of his suffering.
- 9) And the reason for that ability is simply that he knew God was in charge.
- 10) He trusted God in every personal circumstance – not that the situation would turn out the way he wanted it but that it would turn out the way God wanted, which would always be better.
 - a) Intellectually we know that we should have that attitude but I dare say we all struggle with it on occasion.
 - b) So, a couple of questions about the situation I just described that we should try to answer.

⁷ Bruce Barton et al., [*Life Application New Testament Commentary*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 2001), 855.

Do we always believe in our hearts that when things do turn out God's way they are better?

11) This is exactly what James is saying in James 1:2 and following:

James 1:2–4 (NASB 2020)

² Consider it all joy, my brothers *and sisters*, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

12) So many times, we quote the first bit, verse 2, without thinking about the rest of the passage.

13) It is that testing of faith that we are talking about here – faith that says the situation will turn out okay because it will turn out the way God wants – again, not necessarily the way we want.

a) Regardless of how we see the outcome, it will be better.

b) Many times, it takes deep faith to see these outcomes that way and that is exactly what Paul is saying.

The second question is do things always turn out the way God wants them?

14) If we have to give an absolute answer then I think the answer has to be NO.

15) If the answer is absolutely YES in all circumstance I think we set ourselves on a path that leads perhaps to at least some form of predestination?

a) Everyone, Christian or not, still has free will. God has not taken that away from us.

b) This means that bad actors can influence our lives in ways that God would rather they didn't.

c) We can still trust God for protection and to assure that the situation for us personally turns out the way He would have it but not necessarily the way we expect.

d) I think that Rom 8 says for us personally the answer to the question is Yes.

i) Unless we override God's will with ours, things will turn out the way God wants

Romans 8:28 (NASB 2020)

²⁸ And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

16) Going back to the “rejoicing” idea, this interactive situation with bad actors and bad circumstances makes this sometimes a difficult task.

17) It is interesting to note here that verse 1 has really two basic and differing thoughts and purposes.

¹ Finally, my brothers *and sisters*, rejoice in the Lord.

18) Which we just discussed, then, he begins a new idea by saying:

^{1b} To write the same things *again* is no trouble for me, and it is a safeguard for you.

Philippians – Notes – 2024

- 19) In my opinion, the idea of rejoicing which we just discussed is tied to Paul's previous comments.
- a) It is a fitting conclusion to his explanation of sending Epaphroditus, the letter, and later Timothy followed by himself to them.
 - b) That is the reason for his imperative "rejoice."
- 20) The idea of being a "safeguard" does not really apply to saying for them to rejoice.
- a) It also does not apply to any of the information he has relayed concerning his plans to send the letter, Epaphroditus, Timothy, or come himself to Philippi.
- 21) However, if he had (and he probably has) told them about these men who he is about to tell them to watch out for, it makes sense for that statement to be made here.
- 22) Equally obvious is that telling them before must be outside the scope of this letter because looking back over what he has covered so far, he really makes no similar reference to what we are getting ready to hear.
- 23) So, as we continue, we read what will be the safeguard for them?

Philippians 3:1b–3 (NASB 2020)

² Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision;
³ for we are the *true* circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and take pride in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh, ...

- 1) Paul begins with a list of three imperatives.
- 2) Each "beware" points out a characteristic of folks the Philippians should be on the lookout for and to avoid.
- 3) All three are referring to the same group of people – just highlighting different characteristics.
- 4) Actually, warnings ...
 - a) First of dogs.
 - i) Sometimes this term is used by the Jews to refer to Gentiles in general.
 - ii) However, here, since Paul is addressing predominately gentiles.
 - iii) In the overall context, this is a warning against Judaizers.
 - (1) Probably Jewish Christians who are trying to bind circumcision and obedience to the Mosaic Law on these Christians in Philippi.
 - iv) As we know, this is not a new situation for Paul to address.
 - b) Second – evil workers.
 - i) These are folks who, even though they may be Christian, are performing works for the wrong reasons or with wrong motives.
 - ii) Again – keeping the Law as a means to an end – salvation or some twisted view of it.

- iii) Trying to bring others to the same wrong point of view.
 - c) Finally, those “of false circumcision.”
 - i) Again, we must assume here that, as in other places Paul is talking about those who are trying to convince the Philippians that they must be circumcised to become Christian.
 - ii) The word for false circumcision is unique to this letter. It appears no where else in all the New Testament.
 - iii) Some of you may have translations which use the term ***mutilation*** instead of false circumcision.
 - d) The meaning and intent are truly the same, to let these folks know who he is talking about.
- 5) Verse 3 stands alone as bringing the proper perspective to and highlights the absolute difference between them (and us) and these Judaizers.
- ³ for we are the *true* circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and take pride in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh, ...
- 6) Continuing...

Philippians 3:4–7 (NASB 2020)

... ⁴ although I myself *could boast as* having confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he is confident in the flesh, I *have more reason*: ⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. ⁷ But whatever things were gain to me, these things I have counted as loss because of Christ.

- 7) Paul is saying, if you want to compare anything you might think you have with what it means to be a member of the circumcision, then here’s what you might compare to.
- a) In other words, if you buy into what these folks are selling, this is where you must go.
- 8) BUT!! – even all that means nothing to me.
- a) At the time, before Paul met Christ, they were gain.
 - b) After meeting Christ – they are loss because of Him.
 - i) This comment is not made to pass those things off as unimportant to Paul – not just something he shrugged off.
 - ii) To the contrary, it says that they were very important to him and he felt the loss deeply.
 - iii) But it was a necessary loss because Christ was far more valuable.
- 9) And, continuing,

Philippians 3:8–11 (NASB 2020)

⁸ More than that, I count *all things* to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of *all things*, and count them *mere* rubbish, so that I may gain Christ, ⁹ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹ if somehow I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

- 1) Again, Paul is contrasting the loss he suffered and the values of the things against value of gaining a relationship with the Son of God.
- 2) Before Paul met Christ on the road to Damascus, all of the knowledge of and keeping of the Law was the most important thing in his life.
- 3) By persecuting the Church, he was protecting that very way of life that was so important to him.
- 4) Yet, now, after meeting Christ, that all changed in a way that is profound – all things become loss – he still felt that.
- 5) But, then he then expands this by saying when he compares these “things lost” to gaining that relationship with Christ, the “things lost” become as rubbish or trash.

What do you think the difference is between the first “all things” and the second “all things”?

- 6) It is possible that first “all things” were the things he described as his credentials in the last set of verses.
- 7) At the same time, the second “all things” may refer to the life he had before.
 - a) The prestige, the acceptance by all his fellow Pharisees and other Jewish leadership.
 - b) As part of this, there was the friendship and relationship component that was undoubtedly lost.
 - c) Likely his family no longer accepted him as he was before (if at all).
 - i) We know about his sister and nephew who helped him at one point in the book of Acts verse 23:16-22 but beyond that we do not really have any good data.
 - d) He was a man who was not accepted by those he once was held in high esteem.
 - e) Nor was he accepted by those he was previously persecuting.
 - i) He was a man without a fellowship base so to speak.
- 8) A couple of commentaries take this even a step further and say that in the second statement he makes here he is actually talking about raising the bar.

Philippians – Notes – 2024

- a) In other words, he would give up anything else that might be appropriate for him to give up.
 - b) Things mean nothing to him in comparison to what he does have.
- 9) What he has is Christ – and he obviously understood how important that was and how the pieces fit together now. Verse 9 clearly states that.
- a) Before, he was righteous because of what he did – keeping the Law, persecuting the Church, being a Pharisee, and on and on with those qualifications.
 - b) Now, he was righteous because of faith in Christ.
 - i) And that faith was counted by God as righteousness – NOT FROM WHAT HE DID!.