

The Joy of Living the Jesus-Way

Philippians



PART 1: THE JOY OF JOINING GOD'S GOOD WORK

By David Fields

Philippians 1:1-11

Eulogy Virtues vs. Resume Virtues

"A new command I give you: Love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." - John 13:34-35

"Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." - Psalm 90:12

I. The Joy of Partnership in the Gospel

"³I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." - Philippians 1:3-6

"I have told you this so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete." - John 15:11

1. The joy of what Jesus has done for them. Their own salvation and the resulting connection to each other through Jesus.

2. The joy of what Jesus will do through them; that is, their purpose, their shared mission.

II. The Joy of Confidence in God's Good Work

"...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." - Philippians 1:6

Paul switches into that "front-ground", "exclamation point" of the perfect tense with the phrase "being confident" about God's good work. We would need to write it like this:

*"...**BEING CONFIDENT of this** that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."*

Paul's joy is rooted in this deep confidence that God is at work; a good work in this community.

NOTES

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What is the “Good Work”?

Paul is anticipating what he’ll say in Philippians 2:12-13:

*“Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to **work out** your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is **God who works in you** to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.”*

III. The Joy of Shared Affection

⁷ It is right for me to feel [**phroneo**] this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God’s grace with me. ⁸ God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

- Philippians 1:7-8

What’s he doing? He’s using his own life as an example. He’s looking at this community of believers with the same kind of “eyes” that Jesus looks at them. And it’s ridiculously affectionate. And expressive.

Because he doesn’t just feel a certain way about his friends. He takes the time to say it to them. Verse 8: “God can testify how **I long for all of you** with **the affection** of Christ Jesus.”

“We must not be cold, abrupt, indifferent, and harsh with one another. More than that, we must be willing to actually talk about our love for one another.”

- Tim Keller, *Gospel in Life*

IV. The Joy of God’s Transformative Work

⁹ And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God. - Philippians 1:9-11

Love, in the Christian view, is not sentimentality. It’s grit. It’s choice. It’s “your best, even at deep cost to me.” It is not just ‘positive vibes.’

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Discussion



Open Up

1. What comes to your mind when you hear the word “joy”? Why is that?

Dig In - Read Philippians 1:1-11

1. What kinds of words does Paul use to speak of himself and Timothy? What about the church in Philippi? Why might that matter? What would you take from it in terms of your identity, or the identity of our church community?
2. Pay attention to vv.7-8. What are the main barriers we might face in being expressive about our affection for each other in Christian community?
3. How does Paul's example of his emotions and expression inspire you? With whom do you need to express your affection more openly?
4. Look again at Paul's prayer in vv.9-11. What's Paul's big concern that he's praying into the life of that church?
5. Notice: just as it is *God* who is working to complete his good work as Paul notes in v.6, it is God whom Paul is relying on to provide this deepening, thoughtful love and discernment. How does his *praying* in this way inspire how you might be praying for your family? Your Life Group? Our church community?
6. Where do we as a church, or you personally, need discernment in this moment?

Prayer:

Take the prayer of Paul in vv.9-11 and use that to ask God for the same in our community; that our love would abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight so that we might be able to discern what is best and be filled with the fruit of righteousness, all to the glory of God. Pray into those specific areas that were shared.