

The Joys of the Faith

Philippians 4:4

INTRODUCTION

1. There are so many today who would say that the title of this sermon is a contradiction in terms, because Christians are miserable and can't have no fun
2. My brothers and sisters **there is no greater joy than being a servant of our Lord and looking forward to our eternal reward of heaven.**
3. Even as we live this life, and may have difficulties and trials we find so many joys in the faith (or at least we should), that all of life's burdens seem so insignificant.
4. Today we will be examining some of those wonderful joys of the faith, that continue to encourage us day by day until we stand face to face with the Lord.
5. **How many of you here today are in the Lord? (raise hands). Paul said to rejoice in the Lord always** and yet we often find ourselves doing the exact opposite by getting into a funk (as Cal calls it) or allow the pressure of this life get us down.

I. The Kingdom Of God Is Joy.

A. Romans 14:17

1. The kingdom or church of our Lord is not made up of those earthly things, but all of those spiritual blessings.

---Adam Clarke making a comment on this beautiful picture of a Christians joy states:
righteousness: Pardon of sin, and holiness of heart and life.

peace :In the soul, from a sense of God's mercy; peace regulating, ruling, and harmonizing the heart.

joy in the Holy Spirit: Solid spiritual happiness; a joy which springs from a clear sense of God's mercy; the love of God being shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit. In a word, it is happiness brought into the soul by the Holy Spirit, and maintained there by the same influence.

---This is a genuine counterpart of heaven; righteousness without sin, PEACE without inward disturbance, JOY without any kind of mental agony or distressing fear.

---To adopt the puritanical idea that it is sinful to smile or have joy in the Lord is ridiculous, because that it what it is all about.

---Paul said "rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice"

- B. To say that Christians have no joy in life is from the devil, because our joy is unmatched.

II. There Is Joy In The Fellowship Of Christians.

A. **Philippians 1:3-5**

1. The church is the largest and greatest fraternal order on earth.

---Brotherly love, kindness, friendliness, a comradeship that is incomparable to any other.

---Members of the church share the same faith and salvation in our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. (Jude 3)

---Members of the Lord's church care for one another, sincerely.

- I Corinthians 12:25-26; **Hebrews 13:1**; **Galatians 6:1-2**.

---Those who truly understand the joy that we have in the fellowship of the saints will come to a full appreciation for their brothers and sisters in Christ.

---Paul longed to be in fellowship with the saints in many locations, the same Paul who at one point was a persecutor of these same Christians, who now comprehended the real joy of fellowship with the saints.

---May we all see the joy in being together with one another in fellowship.

III. There Is Joy In Worshipping God Together.

A. **Psalm 122:1**

1. This is the Joy we have when we partake of the opportunity to worship God with one another.

---We clear our minds and enter into worship in spirit and in truth to our God and Father in heaven, that we might please Him in every way.

B. **Isaiah 2:2-3**; Micah 4:1-2.

1. These prophecies tell us of the establishment of the house of the Lord, where all nations will come to worship Him.

---The house of the Lord is established today and it is the church of the living God, (I Timothy 3:15) where we come in humble adoration of our Lord.

C. **Philippians 3:3**

1. We must remember who we are, and rejoice for the blessings that God has given to us, and worship Him for those things.

---Keep in mind that we are not living after the flesh, but after the spirit, therefore our minds must be focused on spiritual things. (Romans 8:1-10)

---When we come together to focus our minds on spiritual things, we free our minds from the things of this world and unite in worship like those in the first century. (Acts 2:40-47).

---they praised God and had favor with all of the people.

---The church of our Lord has always had great joy in worshipping God, and we should find that joy also.

---We have a pattern in the New Testament of a church that was pleasing to God, and that had

favor with all the people, and strived for the common salvation and the faith that was once delivered unto the saints.

---Let us worship with that same joy and gladness that the church was meant to have.

IV. There Is Joy In Persecution As A Christian

A. I Peter 4:12-19

1. Christians realize that even though they suffer as a Christian, they will be rewarded for their laboring in the Lord.

-We are told not to suffer as a thief, murderer, or an evil doer, even as a busybody, because if the righteous scarcely be saved the ungodly and the sinner are going to be lost?

-When we suffer as a Christian we glorify God, which should bring great joy to each and every one of us. The text says "Happy are ye"

B. Matthew 5:10-12

-One of the reasons we should not think that it is strange to suffer as a Christian, is because Christ told us it would be so.

-Our Lord Jesus Christ tells us to Rejoice in suffering, always keeping in mind that our reward in heaven will be great.

-Jesus told us we would have to take up our cross daily and follow Him, and sometimes that can be difficult but Peter tells us that we share Christ's sufferings. The joy set before him helped him to endure such pain and shame. What about you?

-If we have to bear these little burdens in this life for the painful death that our Lord went through on the cross, we have nothing to complain about... and so we REJOICE. (Matthew 5:40-42)

C. I Peter 2:19-20

1. Many times when we think we are doing every pleasing thing for God, and we are trying help others and live a faithful life in service to God, it is hard to handle those trying times because, we don't think we deserve it

---Something that will help us in these struggles is to read verses 21-24

---When we realize the reward that we will receive and the insignificance of the troubles that we have to bear, we will have the same attitude and be able to say his exact words. (Romans 8:18).

---We need to continually be faithful and rejoice, no matter the circumstances, because it is those that endure to the end that will be saved. (Revelation 2:10; Matthew 24:13) The joy is set before you!!!

V. There Is Joy In Hearing The Word Of God, And Receiving Salvation.

A. Acts 8:5-8

1. When Philip taught these people about Christ and shared his message with them, the text tells us that there was great joy in that city.

---If this world would only receive the word of God today, the way that they did here for Philip, the Lord's church would grow in leaps and bounds. (Acts 13:47-49)

B. Acts 8:29-39

1. If you would recall in the same chapter the story of the Ethiopian eunuch, that Philip had preached to, and his great joy in receiving the gospel message.

---Here is a man who did not know Christ, but was ready and willing to hear the word of God.

-The text tells us that Philip preached Jesus to him, he believed, and wanted to be baptized into Christ, so they stopped the chariot and went down into the water, and the Ethiopian eunuch was baptized washing away His sins.

-The point that we really want to establish is found in verse 39:

The text tells us that the eunuch "went on his way rejoicing," and had a wonderful reason to rejoice, because he was now saved from sins (I Peter 3:21), and had become a child of God. (Galatians 3:26-27)

C. Acts 16:29-34

1. Just a few chapters later we find the Philippian jailer rejoicing over his salvation.

-Here is a man who saw nothing wrong with putting just Christians in jail, and He did not know the Lord and His saving plan, but was eager and ready to learn.

-In Acts 16:30, we find that age-old question "What must I do to be saved?" ---This is a question that we all must ask at some point in our life, and we must find a biblical answer and not an answer from man which many accept today.

-The Bible said he was told to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and he would be saved with those of his house who believed.

---Many of our denominational friends stop here and say "all that you have to do is believe to be saved." We won't stop here today, because the Bible doesn't stop here.

-The text tells us that they heard the word of the Lord, and after hearing that word they washed their stripes and were baptized into the Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts 16:33)

---Once again this is an excellent example of another humble individual who obeyed the gospel, but this is not the main point we are looking for today.

---Notice the joy in the jailer who realized he and his house had been saved (Acts 16:34)

---If there is someone here who has not obeyed the gospel to become a child of God why not do it today, and rejoice with countless others who have received the washing away of their sins, and look forward to a home in heaven?

---We must realize the power that is in the gospel message and share the joy of salvation with as many as would hear its truths, and obey unto salvation. (Matthew 28:18-20)

VI. There Is Joy In Seeing Others Obey The Gospel.

A. Acts 15:3; 21:19-20

1. When the church had heard of the recent conversions it caused great joy among them.

-We have a good reason to rejoice when one is converted especially when we have had the opportunity to aid them in their progression toward salvation. (James 5:19-20) How can we help? (I Timothy 4:16)

---Jesus spoke 3 parables in a row signifying the great joy there is in someone returning to the Lord in obedience and repentance.

-The Lost Sheep (Luke 15:4-7)

-The Lost Coin (verses 8-10)

-The Lost Son (verses 11-13, 18-24, 32)

---Whether a sheep as a shepherd, a coin as a citizen, or a son as a Father, when the lost have been found and have returned to the Lord, it is cause for great rejoicing.

---May we rejoice with you today? Are you willing to come to the Lord if you are not a child of His and obey the gospel? Is there someone here who is lost and needs to be found?

---It is vitally important that you return to the Lord and share the joy of your repentance before it is everlastingly too late (II Thessalonians 1:8-10)

-There will be joy for the obedient, because they are going to be with the Lord for eternity.

-The disobedient, on the other hand, will be punished with eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

VII. There Is Joy In Hope For Eternal Life.

A. I Thessalonians 4:13-18

1. Notice that this wonderful blessing of being ever with the Lord, will only come to those that are dead in Christ. (Revelation 14:13).

-Those who are not dead in Christ are described as having no hope.

---What does it mean to be dead in Christ? See Romans 6:3-8

-We can rest assured that we will be resurrected with Christ, if and only if we have been baptized for the forgiveness of sins to live a faithful life unto God.

-Even our Lord Jesus Christ told us what to do to be saved (Mark 16:16)

---It is only those that heed the teachings of God's word that will enter into that eternal rest with the Lord, so as Christians we feel an enormous sense of joy knowing that we are destined for a city whose builder and maker is God, into a mansion that has been prepared for the faithful.

---What it all comes down to is this:

- We can have the assurance of eternal life as a Christian OR we can have the terror of uncertainty

as we approach the judgment as an unbeliever.

-Consider these passages: Hebrews 9:27; John 5:28-29; II Corinthians 5:10

-we will all come into judgment

-we will all be judged for the deeds that we have done.

-we will all be given a final verdict.

-WHERE WILL YOU SPEND ETERNITY? IT IS UP TO YOU!

---Why would you leave here today, if you thought for one second that you might not be in heaven, when the Bible gives you the chance to be fully assured that you will.

---If you have already obeyed the gospel, you should know the joy that I am talking about. If you have forgotten to rejoice in the Lord, be committed to renewing your joy in Him.

---If you have obeyed the gospel, but have fallen away, you know what joy you have lost if you do not repent and make your life right with God.

---But, friend if you have never obeyed the gospel, you have yet to experience the greatest hope and joy known to mankind.

CONCLUSION

1. The reason we continue as Christians, is because we all want to enter into a place of never ending JOY, where all of life's burdens have passed, and we will be forever with the Lord. (Revelation 21:4, 24)

2. The reason we exhort you today to be saved and join us as we press on to this place of Joy is because we know who will fall short of this promise of eternal life. (Revelation 21:8, 27)

3. Is your name in the book? Are you keeping God's commands and working righteous deeds? Notice two more passages (Revelation 20:12, 15; 3:5)

4. Will you enter that place of Joy, or will you yet leave this place today unsure about where you will spend eternity.

--- Whatever you need to do to prepare yourself for that place of Joy, we are ready to assist you.