

I've got the Joy

Phil. 1:1-14

Are you a thermostat or a thermometer?

[Are you one who impacts your world, or merely an indicator of what the climate is?]

In today's ever changing culture we as Christians must decide if we will be mere indicators of climate or God ordained reformers.

[Our world is forever attempting to press us into its mold and mindset. We are told to wear our values loosely; there are no absolute truths. Anyone who disagrees is a right-wing religious fanatic...

Everyone lies a little to get ahead...because that is what is going to make you happy

Who wouldn't steal if they had the chance...I mean...I really it

What's the harm with a little pornography....

What I do in the privacy of my own home is my business, as long as it doesn't hurt anyone else and brings me some temporary form of happiness

What's the big deal about a few four letter words; our kids hear worse at school anyway

Everybody steals business supplies...Of course I'd keep that spare change...I could always use the spare change

I wouldn't tell them I broke the returned product...The Lord helps those that help themselves.....]

Are you a thermostat or a thermometer?

I have one other question for you before I start to tie things together here.

Who went to children's camp as a child?

Who went to youth camp?

Who had to wait until they were an adult to go to camp? (That's me!)

I've got a song that I'm sure if you have been to camp, you may know...

sing "I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy

Down in my heart,

Down in my heart,

Down in my heart,

I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy

Down in my heart,

Down in my heart to stay.

And I'm so happy,

So very happy;.....and this is where I stop

I've got the love of Jesus in my heart.

And I'm so happy,

So very happy,

I've got the love of Jesus in my heart.

That is where I have a problem

Difference between being happy and being joyful

I think the one shortcoming here is that there is no distinction between the two...One is choice and the other is an outpouring of your circumstance

This is where I tie in my original thought. Are you just a measure of the environment in which you live or your circumstances (thermometer) or

through your choice to live joyfully are you changing the environment around (thermostat).

Where does happy come from? The first records of happy come from around 1350. It comes from Middle English and is a combination of the word hap, meaning “a person's luck or lot,” and the suffix –y meaning “characterized by.”

Joy comes not from luck, but from God...Gal. 5:22-23

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

We are beginning a new series today that I’m ecstatic about...called “The Pursuit of Joy”.

A 4 week study of Philippians.

Written by Apostle Paul around 62 AD...sitting in a Roman prison.

Not like US prisons where you are innocent until proven guilty...you are arrested and held until a charge is created that would more than likely lead to your death.

24/7 he was attached to a member of the Praetorian Guard, the private security of Caesar.

Yet if you read Philippians what you will find is a book that is about joy...it is overflowing with joy!

Think about it, if you were in jail for any reason...especially for a crime you didn’t commit, what would your attitude be?

Maybe you’re singing “I hear a train a coming...”

Not with Paul, he had joy and he wanted the church in Philippi to experience it and the Holy Spirit wants us to experience that today.

So, let's begin by reading Phil 1:1-14...and then pray.

When I was in my first year of college, as a young Christian, I learned an acronym for Joy...that if you wanted to have joy you just needed to spell it out:

Jesus First...

Others Second...

Yourself Third...

Meaning, if you want to have joy in your life, you need to think about the will of God and Jesus first and then...

Well, I'm going to borrow that acronym this morning for our outline if you want to follow along in your bulletin.

So, if you want joy, first think about...

1. Jesus

Read vs. 1-3

Notice this...the name of Jesus is mentioned 3 times and the name of God is mentioned once in this passage.

And the last thing Paul says in verse 3 is, "I thank God..."

He was writing this from a jail folks!

He was sitting with an armed guard secured to him waiting for him to mess up and give him a reason to kill him.

He had no rights and to the average person he would seem to have no hope.

Yet on the front of Paul's mind is God.

His desire remains doing and keeping the will of God.

And he is thanking God for where he is!

Let me ask you...when you are at your wits end, do you think about God and thank God?

When things are not going your way, is the will of God your desire?

We'll touch on this more in a moment, but for now know that if you want to have joy, you need to consider Jesus first.

Second, you need to think about...

2. Others

Read verse 3.

Do you realize how extraordinary this is?

Not all pastors can say that...

- Some say "Why me God!"
- Some say, "My blood pressure goes up..."
- Some say, "I thank God for Prilosec OTC..."

I can honestly say though, I thank God ALMOST every time I think of you.

Don't let that bother you though, I don't always thank God when I think of my kids...sometimes I think about putting them on Ebay.

I know October is considered Pastor Appreciation month...but I want you to know I appreciate you.

I am thankful for you.

Let's look at our text and see 5 reasons why Paul was thankful for the Philippian believers.

A. Prayer (vs. 4)

B. Partnership (vs. 5...not about programs, but people working together)

C. Perseverance (vs. 6...letting God do it, not about us; we can't earn our salvation and God does it through us.)

D. Passion (vs. 8...love for each other)

E. Pledge (vs. 9-11...their commitment to things of God)

Let me ask you, would Paul be thankful for the Lakeville Church of the Nazarene?

Do you think of others?

Are you experiencing the joy that can come when we are committed to prayer, partnership, perseverance, passion and our pledge?

You want joy in your life, you've got to think about Jesus first, Others second and then third...

3. Yourself

Just a reminder, Paul was a prisoner...in a Roman prison.

He was chained 24/7 to a member of Caesar's own personal security force.

They had no intention of letting him go, so they just wanted to make his life miserable until they could kill him...at the very least they were at least keeping him and that Gospel message he was preaching quiet, right?

WRONG!

Read verse. 12-14

Paul saw the fact that he had this soldier attached to him as a captive audience.

He didn't back off and feel sorry for himself...he saw it as yet another opportunity to advance the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

How do we know this? *Read Phil 4:22.*

Those in Caesar's household are those guards who were appointed to guard Paul.

He used his imprisonment as a chance to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ...the same one that changed his life.

As a result the lives of these soldier's were changed.

Is that you?

When things are tough and life seems to be coming against you with all that it has...do you use that as an opportunity to share the Gospel?

Chances are, no.

Let's be honest...woe is me is more accurate.

Feel sorry for me.

And then we make excuses...

- I can't possibly teach that Sunday School class...I have too much going on in my life.
- There is no way I can be part of that ministry, I've got family issues.
- Nope, no way I can attend that Bible Study, my job is way too stressful.

We make excuses and we put ourselves first...and we lack joy.

But Paul shows us that it is possible, no matter how bad things are, to put God first and have joy.