

Study 8: Continue to Rejoice

Philippians 1:18-26

Fellowship in the Spirit Phil. 2:1

What is a creature comfort or shortcut you would feel lost without?
(i.e., an app, a service, or household appliance)

Encouragement in Christ Phil. 2:1

We invite you to be still, give thanks, write a prayer, or release any concerns to Jesus.

You planned evil against me; God planned it for good
to bring about the present result—the survival of many people.
Genesis 50:20

My last breath
will be my first gasp of eternal life.
Washed white by the blood of the Lamb.
Raised to stand in the presence of the holy I AM.
Tanner Olson Continue: Poems and Prayers of Hope

Holding Firm to the Word of Life Phil. 2:16

Philippians 1:18-26

[18] What does it matter? Only that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is proclaimed, and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice [19] because I know this will lead to my salvation through your prayers and help from the Spirit of Jesus Christ. [20] My eager expectation and hope is that I will not be ashamed about anything, but that now as always, with all courage, Christ will be highly honored in my body, whether by life or by death.

[21] For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. [22] Now if I live on in the flesh, this means fruitful work for me; and I don't know which one I should choose. [23] I am torn between the two. I long to depart and be with Christ—which is far better— [24] but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. [25] Since I am persuaded of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, [26] so that, because of my coming to you again, your boasting in Christ Jesus may abound.

Growing in Knowledge Phil.1:8

In the verses we considered last week, Paul ends with rejoicing. He declares that regardless of a person's motives, what matters is that "Christ is proclaimed." It seems as long as the gospel is advancing, Paul will rejoice! While the foundation of Paul's rejoicing is Christ and the gospel, in today's passage, we see another reason that Paul is rejoicing.

Before moving forward with this scripture, it's helpful to take a moment to remember the circumstances in which Paul is writing. Physically, Paul has been chained to an imperial guard for months and is helpless to do anything about his conditions. Also, Paul is a traveling missionary whose ministry depends on his ability to travel freely. Suddenly, his entire ministry is halted. He is experiencing physical hardship and what looks like the end of his career and passion and, yet, these verses open with Paul rejoicing. How is Paul illustrating for the Philippians, and us, what it means to live in light of God's truth?

Dwell on These Things Phil. 4:8

If there is anything praiseworthy—dwell on these things…
And the God of peace will be with you. Philippians 4:8-9

1. In verse 18, what is Paul doing?

2. Besides the spreading of the gospel, according to verse 19, why else does Paul rejoice?

    a. The Greek word for "salvation" in verse 19 is *soteria*, which also means deliverance, safety, preservation. What does Paul say is powering this saving, delivering, and preserving work?

3. Paul's confidence calls to mind the words of Job in the Old Testament. Read the following verses from Job 13:

    [13] Be quiet, and I will speak.
    Let whatever comes happen to me.
    [14] I will put myself at risk
    and take my life in my own hands.
    [15] Even if he kills me, I will hope in him.
    I will still defend my ways before him.
    [16] Yes, this will result in my deliverance,
    for no godless person can appear before him.

    a. In Job's story, he suffers great loss of his children, property, and health. He is left to ponder: What has happened to him? How will He interact with the Lord? In verses 15-16, what does Job say he will do and what will be the result?

    b. Paul's words in Philippians 1:19 echo Job's words. How do you think this shift in perspective happens, where we come to see *all* circumstances as working toward God's good will in our life?

    c. How does prayer and the help of the Spirit impact you in difficult circumstances? Share together.

4. Even though he is rejoicing, Paul is neither ignoring nor minimizing his situation. According to verse 20, what does Paul hope and expect?

    a. Why might Paul need to hope that he will not be ashamed?

    b. What do you think it means that Christ will be "highly honored in my body"?

    c. Recall when Paul was in jail in Acts 16, he and Silas prayed, sang hymns to God, and remained in their cell. How might Paul's bodily experiences inform what he means by "Christ will be highly honored in my body"?

    d. Share where you have seen Christ honored in your body or someone else's. What was that experience like?

5. In verse 21 Paul says "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain." From all that Paul has said, why might Paul have arrived at this place of confidence?

    a. Can you think of an example of something, that if you accomplished it, would feel like life to you? (i.e. running a marathon, being able to afford a new car, nailing a work presentation, etc.)

    b. Alternatively, what kinds of circumstances feel like death to you? (i.e. a broken relationship, uncertainty, a failed project, loneliness, etc.)

    c. How can Paul say "to die is gain"? What would be advantageous for a believer about death?

    d. How could trusting that "to die is gain" give us courage or freedom to live for Christ? Talk together.

6. Paul proceeds to work out this idea further in verses 22-24. Between what two situations is Paul torn?

    a. No matter what happens, Christ is at the center of Paul's circumstances. How does being in Christ release us from the fear and uncertainty of what might happen to us?

    b. Is there a situation, relationship, or unresolved area of your life in which you are struggling to trust God with the outcome? How would you ask your sisters to pray for you?

7. J.A. Moyter describes Paul in these passages as characterized by *certainty* and *uncertainty.*

    a. Of what is Paul **certain**?

    b. Of what is Paul **uncertain**?

    c. How does Paul's **certainty** affect his experience with **uncertainty**?

    d. How do you feel about uncertainty in your daily life? What is your natural response to uncertainty?

8. Paul is confident that God's purpose cannot be thwarted and he is certain of what will happen to him in death. Why was Paul able to be so confident in his circumstances?

    a. How does Paul's perspective feel when you consider your own circumstances? Faithful? Scary? Impossible?

    b. Is this confidence available to all believers, do you think? Where do you desire to see confidence grow in you?



Praying with Joy Phil.1:4

Please join us in praying together Philippians 4:4-7 **in BOLD.**
Use the pause after each prayer to pray silently, even writing your prayers.

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your graciousness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.

Practice Rejoicing! The Lord is near you right now.

Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Practice presenting your requests to God. What are they?

Practice thanking God. For what?

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

You are guarded and safe in God's peace! You can rest in it.

Let the glory of the Lord endure forever
Let the Lord be glad in His works.
I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live;
I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.

Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—if there is any moral excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy—dwell on these things. Do what you have learned and received and heard from me, and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you. *Amen.* Philippians 4:8-9