

27 GEMS - A Survey of Philippians

Pastor Jason Dennett's Notes

The MESSAGE of Philippians:

Philippians is the 12th shortest book in the New Testament - **1,629** words in the Greek language.

Philippians is one of the 4 "**Prison Epistles**" written by Paul the Apostle.

Philippians is widely regarded as the **warmest and friendliest** of Paul's epistles.

Philippians contains one of the greatest descriptions of **the Deity and Incarnation of Christ**.

Philippians contains the words "**joy, rejoicing**" 19 times; "**mind**" 15 times; "**remember**" 10 times.

"Joy is the music that runs through this epistle, the sunshine that spreads all over it. The whole epistle radiates joy and happiness." - R. Lenski

The MEGA-THEME of Philippians:

"Having Joy in Difficult Circumstances" - Phil 3:1

The MEGA-STRUCTURE of Philippians:

Paul tells us "**4 Secrets of Joy**", even in the midst of difficult circumstances:

Chapter 1 – Have a Mind that is "**SINGULAR**"

Chapter 2 - Have a Mind that is "**SUBMITTED**"

Chapter 3 - Have a Mind that is "**SELFLESS**"

Chapter 4 - Have a Mind that is "**SETTLED**"

Chapter 1. Have a Mind that is "SINGULAR" (the Lord's Kingdom!)

A. ...and rejoice in the fellowship of the Kingdom (1:1–11)

*"Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 **I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, 5 for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete [it] until the day of Jesus Christ; 7 just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace. 8 For God is my witness, **how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.** 9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, 10 that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, 11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness which [are] by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."***

Due to his SINGULAR FOCUS on the Kingdom of Christ, in spite of the great difficulty of his imprisonment, and the circumstances in which he came to the Philippians, Paul was still able to rejoice in the beauty of his fellowship with these Christians. This is how Paul maintained deep inner joy, despite his trials and pain.

Paul here expresses some of his warmest and friendliest affections towards these believers, and it shows the great love and bond that was forged between them through suffering and ministry. (Read John 13:35; 1 John 4:7,8)

B. ...and rejoice in the furtherance of the Kingdom (1:12–26)

12 *"But I want you to know, brethren, that **the things [which happened] to me have***

actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, 13 so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; 14 and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. 15 Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: 16 The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; 17 but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. 18 **What then? Only [that] in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.** 19 For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, 20 according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 **For to me, to live [is] Christ, and to die [is] gain.** 22 But if [I] live on in the flesh, this [will mean] fruit from [my] labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, [which is] far better. 24 Nevertheless to remain in the flesh [is] more needful for you. 25 And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, 26 that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again."

Another aspect of God's work that Paul could rejoice in, was the furthering of the Kingdom, in spite of his circumstances. Because Paul's SINGULAR FOCUS was the Kingdom of God, he rejoiced that the gospel was continuing to be preached (v.12) people were coming to salvation (v.13) and the Word of God was going forth with power (v.14)! This is the perspective of maturity and spirituality: regardless of what happens to me, if the cause of the Kingdom is advanced, then it is good and well! (Read Matt 11:12)

Paul reveals the holy passion and magnificent obsession of his heart: To live is Christ! (v.21) Paul embodies what Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount - he is a man who was recklessly, sacrificially, obsessively living for the Kingdom of God! (Read Matt 6:33) This is how Paul maintained deep inner joy, despite his trials and pain.

C. ...and rejoice in the *faith* of the Kingdom (1:27-30)

27 "Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, **with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel,** 28 and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God. 29 For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, 30 having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear [is] in me."

Finally, due to his SINGULAR FOCUS, Paul was also concerned with the Faith being defended and spread throughout the world of his day. He wasn't obsessed with SELF as we so often are, but rather he was obsessed with the SAVIOR and the spreading of His Name and His Kingdom into the hearts and minds of men everywhere! (Read Mk 16:16; Matt 28:18-20) This is how Paul maintained deep inner joy, despite his trials and pain.

Chapter 2. Have a Mind that is "SUBMITTED" (the Lord's Authority!)

I. Follow the example of *our Master* (2:1-11)

1 "Therefore if [there is] any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, 2 fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, [being] of one accord, of one mind. 3 [Let] nothing [be done] through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others

better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 **Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,** 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but **made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, [and] coming in the likeness of men.** 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He **humbled Himself** and became obedient to [the point of] death, even the death of the cross. 9 **Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,** 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and [that] every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Paul also challenged the Philippians to follow in the example of their Master and have mind that is SUBMITTED. Here Paul gives us one of the greatest and most important Christological passages in the entire Bible, and describes for us some of the mysterious and wonderful aspects of Jesus' incarnation, when He was became a Man.

We see numerous virtues and spiritual qualities exemplified in our Saviour in this passage:

Submission (v.7) - Submit is the Greek word "hypotasso" and is a military word meaning to stay in rank and under proper authority. Jesus willingly chose to submit Himself to the will of God the Father, and come to the earth in human flesh! (Read Matt 26:39; Luke 2:52; Heb 13:7, 17)

Humility (v.8) - This has to do with honesty. Though He is God the Son, Jesus willingly chose to "empty Himself" of His Divine privileges and became a Man, to save us from sin. (Read 1Pet 5:5)

Obedience (v.8) - Even as the eternal Son of God, Christ was obedient to God the Father, and obediently fulfilled His plan of coming to earth as our Redeemer. (Matt 7:21-23)

Will of God (v.8) - It was the will of the Father for the Son to die upon a Cross for the sins of all humanity. Jesus' passion in life was simple and singular: pleasing His Father and fulfilling all of His will and desire. (Read John 8:29)

Service (v.8) - Though He is God the Son, and deserves to be served by all, Christ came and served us in His DEATH on the Cross. This was the greatest act of service that would ever be accomplished in human history, and Jesus foreshadowed this at the Last Supper with his disciples. (Read John 13:1-20)

II. Follow the example of **3 Ministers:1.Paul (2:12–18)**

12 "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for [His] good pleasure. 14 Do all things without complaining and disputing, 15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, 16 holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain. 17 Yes, and if **I am being poured out [as a drink offering] on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.** 18 For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me."

Paul the apostle also exemplifies submission by pouring his life out for Christ and His Church like a drink offering by his sacrificial service to them. Paul lived his life in great submission to Christ as a minister of the Gospel.

2. The example of Timothy (2:19–24)

19 "But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. 20 For **I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state.** 21 **For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.** 22 But you know **his proven character, that as a son with [his] father he served with me in the gospel.** 23 Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me. 24 But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly."

Timothy, the protoge of Paul, also displayed a submitted mind in his ministry with Paul. Timothy was focused on the needs of others, and he submitted himself to the care, guidance, and mentorship of Paul for years.

3. The example of Epaphroditus (2:25–30)

25 "Yet **I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger** and the one who ministered to my need; 26 since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. 27 For indeed he was sick almost unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. 28 Therefore I sent him the more eagerly, that when you see him again you may rejoice, and I may be less sorrowful. 29 **Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem;** 30 **because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life,** to supply what was lacking in your service toward me."

Epaphroditus, who was a ministry companion of Paul, was the one who delivered this letter to the Philippian congregation. In order to do so, he would've had to undertake a long journey from Rome in Italy, and go all the way into Greece. This would've taken him about 8 weeks and definitively shows his submission to the will and Kingdom of Christ, as well.

Chapter 3. Have a Mind that is "SELFLESS" (the Lord's Cross!)

I. As you look to your **past (3:1–11) ("I count")**

1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you [is] not tedious, but for you [it is] safe. 2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! 3 For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, 4 though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, [of] the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; 6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. 7 **But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.** 8 **Yet indeed [I also count all things] loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which [is] from the law, but that which [is] through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by 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, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Here Paul has a SELFLESS mind, especially as he looks back upon his past. Paul no longer sought to establish his own righteousness based upon his performance of keeping the Laws of God, but rather he looked to Christ's finished work upon the cross. He was SELFLESS in that he looked not to his self-righteousness, but to the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. This enabled Paul to remain joyful in the midst of tribulation and trials. (Read Romans 7:24-8:2)

II. As you look to your **present** (3:12–16) (“I press on”)

12 *Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but **[I press on], that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.*** 13 *Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing [I do], **forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,*** 14 ***I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*** 15 *Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.* 16 *Nevertheless, to [the degree] that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.*

Paul also made a conscious choice to be SELFLESS in terms of his present condition.

He made a mental choice to not look to himself, but rather to the purpose for which Jesus had saved him years before. Paul chose to focus on the goal of Heaven, and the goal of fulfilling his heavenly mission of preaching the Gospel! (Read Eph 2:10) This enabled him to maintain his joy, in the midst of difficult circumstances.

III. As you look to your **future** (3:17–21) (“I wait”)

17 *Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.* 18 *For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, [that they are] the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 whose end [is] destruction, whose god [is their] belly, and [whose] glory [is] in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things.* 20 ***For our citizenship is in heaven, from which [we also eagerly wait] for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body,*** according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

Finally, as Paul looked to his future, Paul continued to keep the focus off of himself and squarely on Jesus. His intense and earnest desire was to see Jesus return for his church, the citizens of His Kingdom. This was a constant motivation and inspiration for him, and practically enabled Paul to maintain deep quiet joy, despite very difficult situations and trials in the present.

Chapter 4. Have a Mind that is **"SETTLED"** (the Lord's Plan, Power, Provision)

1 *"Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.* 2 *I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.* 3 *And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, **whose names [are] in the Book of Life.***

Because you're resting in the PLAN of Christ: One of the greatest reasons why Christians can maintain their joy in the midst of trials, is that they are going to Heaven! This should give them a SETTLED mind as they walk thru life. Their names are recorded, the places are reserved, and destinies have been permanently altered. That should bring peace and joy into any situation for the follower of Christ! (Read John 14:1-3; Col 3:1-3; Rev 4:4-7)

4 *Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!* 5 *Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord [is] at hand.* 6 *Be anxious for nothing, but **in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.***

Because you're resting in your PRAYERS to Christ: Another reason Paul gives for believers having a SETTLED mind, is that Jesus hears their prayers, and will answer them in His own timing. Paul wants the Philippians to pray and release their concerns to Christ, knowing that He has heard them and will answer them,

according to His will and timing. (Read Matt 7:7-8; 1 Peter 5:7)

8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things [are] noble, whatever things [are] just, whatever things [are] pure, whatever things [are] lovely, whatever things [are] of good report, if [there is] any virtue and if [there is] anything praiseworthy--**meditate on these things.** 9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you."

Because you're resting in the PRECEPTS of Christ: A third reason for the believers to be SETTLED in their thinking, is that they are meditating on the solid and wholesome truths of God's Word. When we make sure to choose good things to feed our minds with, it will bring a more tranquil inner peace and joy, regardless of outward circumstances. (Read Prov 23:7a; Mark 4:24,25)

10 "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. 11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 **I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**"

Because you're resting in the POWER in Christ - A fourth reason a believer can have a SETTLED mind in life, is the fact that the power of Christ is operation inside of them. Paul here states that the power of Jesus is present in his prison circumstances not to deliver him OUT of the trial...but rather to make him content IN that trial. Jesus' power may not always deliver us, but it will always empower us and change us...so that we can have a SETTLED mind in a difficult situation! (Read Acts 16:22-25; Josh 1:1-9)

14 "Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress. 15 Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. 16 For even in Thessalonica you sent [aid] once and again for my necessities. 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. 18 **Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things [sent] from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.** 19 **And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.** 20 Now to our God and Father [be] glory forever and ever. Amen. 21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. 22 All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household. 23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

Because you're resting in the PROVISION thru Christ -The final reason why a believer can have a SETTLED mind and a deep inner joy, is that they are resting in the dependable provision of Jesus. We often say "Where God guides, God provides!"and it's absolutely true! If Jesus has ordained it, He will sustain it. Whether it be with financial, spiritual, or practical provisions, the Lord will keep alive and provide for the servants he has called, and the works of ministry that He has ordained. (Read Gen 22:1-14)

As a third-century man was anticipating death, he penned these last words to a friend: "It's a bad world, an incredibly bad world. But I have discovered in the midst of it a quiet and holy people who have learned a great secret. They have found a Joy which is a thousand times better than any pleasure of our sinful life. They are despised and persecuted, but they care not. They are masters of their souls. They have overcome the world. These people are the Christians--and I am one of them."

-Today In The Word, June, 1988, p. 18.