

A ROADMAP TO JOY

Philippians 1:27-2:8

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Note: The following are the pastor's notes used in preaching this message. This is not a complete, word-for-word transcription of what was preached. These notes serve as a companion to the complete message, which is available by listening to the audio version. Bible quotes are primarily from NASB and ESV, respectively.

People are consumed with a search for joy. Self-help books, motivational speakers, etc., are everywhere you look to help you find the keys to the kingdom of happiness. At the same time, people are under the control of their circumstances, whether that be the job, school, marriage, non-marriage, fixing the house. All of that gets in the way of what we all want, that is happiness, which at best is short-lived and shallow. However, where happiness is shallow, joy is deep. Joy is there when you truly believe that God loves you and is in control of all of life's events, working them all out for your good and His glory. This kind of joy is the theme of the book of Philippians, where we are today.

All in favor of joy?

Great invention is Google Maps. It provides us with street directions.

Philippians 1:27-2:8 provides us with a roadmap to joy by with three exhortations and one perfect illustration. Turn with me to Philippians 1:27

While you're on your way there, let me give you a little background:

- Author is Paul, while in his fourth year of prison
- Up to this point, Paul had already been
 - Beaten many times
 - Lashed 39 times on five different occasions
 - Imprisoned many times
 - Pelted with stones and left for dead at Lystra
 - Shipwrecked
 - Forced to flee, being chased by a riotous crowd because of what he was preaching
 - Mocked, ridiculed, robbed
 - Battled with Jews, Gentiles, and false believers
 - In the country and in the city
 - Often in danger of losing his life
- To the church at Philippi, which was the first church he founded in Europe. In this church,
 - They were being persecuted
 - Attacked by false teachers
 - There was a feud between two prominent women in the congregation, which threatened the unity of the church, which could rob of them of joy.
- Paul had a deep affection for this church as did they for him.
- Paul wrote the letter to let them know:
 - That his imprisonment was causing the gospel to progress
 - The guards were coming to Christ
 - Other believers were speaking more boldly, though not all with good motives. He didn't care either way as long as the gospel was being spread.
 - Explain why he was sending Epaphroditus back to them
 - Warn them about the danger of false teachers
 - Thank them for their generous gift.

- Most importantly, to encourage them to continue in their walk with Christ and to walk excellently.
- Paul believed he would get out of prison soon, but was fine if he didn't as long as the gospel was progressing. He didn't care if he lived or died, as long as the gospel was progressing and they were experiencing joy.
- Major themes of joy and contentment run through the letter
- The pursuit of unity is of utmost importance for Paul and the Philippians

Paul gives three exhortations intended to move the church towards unity, growth in Christ, and joy. Look with me in Philippians 1:27 where Paul gives first direction/exhortation in this letter, manifesting itself in three ways:

I. DIRECTION #1 (an imperative) – CONDUCT YOURSELVES WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL

“Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent [live or die in prison], I will hear of you that you are [two things] standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; in no way alarmed by your opponents—which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God.”
Philippians 1:27, 28

A. At least five questions came to my mind when looking at these two verses:

1. What is meant by “Only”?
2. What does a manner worthy of the gospel look like?
3. What is meant by standing firm, striving together, with no fear?

B. Answering the questions:

1. “Only” (above all-the importance) like 1 Corinthians 13:1-4
2. Conduct yourselves (imperative) more than a passing thought
3. A manner worthy? Ephesians 4-6
 - Moral behavior (Ephesians 5:3)
 - Behavior that pleases the Lord (Ephesians 5:10)
 - Walking wisely
 - Being filled with the Spirit
 - Singing
 - Giving thanks
 - Submitting your will to others
 - Being a good wife and husband and child and boss/employee
 - Ephesians 6:14 – standing firm

Only (above all), conduct yourselves (imperative) in a manner worthy, further described.

- Standing firm in one spirit (firm-attitude)
 - Like a soldier who holds his ground no matter what, to the death
 - Holding onto your beliefs, standards, convictions (what drives you)

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- Striving together with one mind (psuche)
 - *Sun + athleo* (where we get the word athlete), great team analogy. You see college basketball players locking arms at the ends of games while their teammates are shooting free throws.

It's always bugged me that we sit so far apart from each other. Why? We should have our arms locked with each other, facing the enemy/life together.

- Having no fear (they were being persecuted)
 - Philippians 1:29-30

“For to you it has been granted [charis] for Christ’s sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me.”
 - “Granted”, as in gifted, not only to believe, but to suffer (this is what you signed up for) the conflict you are experiencing is what you saw in me. Expect it and don't be afraid of it. Remember what Paul experienced. Faith and persecution – they go together. This is what we signed up for when we counted the cost.
 - It's easy to be discouraged by persecution, but rather Christians should be encouraged about it because it is a sign from God that you really are saved.

Being part of the body of Christ means we stand firm together, strive together, and go through all the same trials and sufferings together. Let's not be so distant. Build a bridge. This brings us to our passage this morning and Paul's second exhortation.

II. DIRECTION #2 (Imperative) – MAKE MY JOY COMPLETE

Look with me again in Philippians 2:1.

Therefore if [better since] there is any encouragement in Christ [union with Christ], if there is any consolation of love [agape], if there is any fellowship of the Spirit [if He has any effect on your life at all], if any affection [splaighnon-tenderheartedness] and compassion [oiktirmos], make [imperative] my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.

The exhortation here is “make.” But, before we get to the imperative, Paul gives us four incentives of what ought to motivate us to do as he is commanding. Let's look back at Philippians 2:1 again and break that down a little.

“If” is a curious word there. That “*therefore if*” is there not as an “*if*” but more of a “*since*”. What he is really saying here is that since you're standing firm, striving and suffering together, there *is*. It's not hypothetical. It's reality.

So we see four incentives then to do what he's commanding them to do.

1. Encouragement (parakleises-calling alongside) in Christ –

Walk down the aisle and put arm around someone. Have them come together and put arms around people. While they're there, remind them what it means to be in Christ.

In Christ,

- United in His death and resurrection – we have new life (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- We were dead; now we're alive
- He is our God and we are His people-family
- Many/most did not have a family that was united and really cared – now you do. Connected by a different blood. It's part of why we love to come to church.
- The Holy Spirit is with us all the time, moving in us to change
- Blessed with every spiritual blessing
- We have the promises of God, so we have the hope of God.

Does it not motivate you that you are in fact *in* Christ. Has that done anything to your soul? Has that any effect on you at all?

2. Consolation (paramythion-comfort) of love (agape) – similar to encouragement; do feel God's love of you? Did you feel it when he gave you eyes to see/faith to believe, even while you were yet a sinner (Romans 5:5)? This is what motivated Paul (2 Corinthians 5:14-15) *"For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf."*

"For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf."

Basically, if you get any help from being a Christian, then

- There should be no bickering.
- Broken relationships would be patched up.
- Hard feelings would go away. It is when we have forgotten our position in Christ that we sink into our fleshliness.
- If you're truly a believer, prove it (John said, John 13:35 - *"...By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*)

God's love for you at salvation and every day should be so real to you that it explodes out of your heart and into the lives of others. No more pettiness, anger, irritability, etc.

Many of you popped the bubbly a few days ago (New Year's Eve), let the bubbly of God's love explode from your heart.

You can always tell when a person is in love: there's a smile on their face! There should be one on yours.

3. Fellowship (koinonia) of the Spirit –

- We were baptized into one body by the Spirit
- We were sealed together by the Spirit

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- We are indwelt by Him. He walks with us every minute of every day
 - He causes growth in us
 - He fills us
 - He gave us our spiritual giftedness, which is to be used for the benefit of the body.
 - 2 Corinthians 13:14, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.”
 - Ephesians 4:3, “being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

Knowing what you have has to motivate you to walk in a manner that is worthy of your calling!

If there be any encouragement in Christ; any consolation of love; fellowship of the Spirit, and if . . .

4. Affection (splanchnon-tenderheartedness) and compassion (oiktirmos) (Colossians 3:12) – the same deep affection he felt for them (Colossians 1:8), they ought to have for each other. Where did this affection for them come from? See Colossians 1:8. It came from the love of Christ in him. It can't help but pour out on others.

Imagine the opposite. Unbelievers

- Aren't part of a body like you are
- They have no assurance of an afterlife like you do
- The Spirit is not living within them. All they have is their emptiness.
- There's no hope for growth for them.
- They don't feel the love of Christ in their life
- They can't walk in the Spirit
- His mercies are not new every morning

So, if:

- You are encouraged at all by your salvation
- You feel Christ's love for you
- You are walking in the Spirit
- Christ's affection for you has welled up enough in you,

Let these motivate you to Paul's curious imperative: Philippians 2:2

“make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.”

Make my joy complete. That's an odd command. Can I make that request, too? Where does he get off doing that? Isn't that opposite of his next exhortation, “do nothing from selfishness?” Well, let's look at that.

1. If you were in prison for four years, what would your request be? A great meal (Häagen-Dazs), get me out of here? Can you send someone to see me? Not Paul's. What was most important to him was not himself, but the church and its unity. This is what brings joy to Paul's life. This is consistent with Paul's heart elsewhere:

2 Corinthians 11:28, “*Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches.*”

“*make [imperative-complete] my joy complete by being of the same mind [think the same thing, seen in three ways--], maintaining the same love [agape], united in spirit [sympsychos-with soul-affections, feelings, desires], intent on one purpose.*” [of one accord]

Though Paul had much joy (Philippians 1:4), his joy was incomplete due to the infighting between a few church members. It doesn't take much, in this area, to steal a pastor's joy. It is perfectly right and acceptable for anyone to long for unity among believers and the joy that comes with that. David wrote (Psalm 133:1), “*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!*”

It is good for him to long for it and us to strive after it. Paul gives us one directive (make my joy complete), expressed in three ways:

- Thinking the same thing, which leads to
- Loving – an act of the will, not out of some emotional or personal attraction, but truly exercising your will for the betterment of others, all others, not just though you have a natural attraction to.
- United in spirit – (deep affection and desire for each other); can't have this without the others. Rules out self-centered thinking.

Think the same thing about each other

Love each other (do what is beneficial)

Have the same affections and desires for others that Christ has for them.

This will ensure not only joy in your leader's lives, but in your lives as well, which was his real concern.

You can be sure that if you are controlled by and walking in the Spirit and loving towards others, there will be unity. And that if you are not doing these things, there will not be unity.

Where there is a lack of harmony there is simply a lack of love and overemphasis on self (Romans 12, don't think too highly...)

Part and parcel to your own joy is bringing joy to the lives of others

I. Conduct yourselves worthy of the gospel

II. Make my joy complete

This brings us to the third exhortation which gives us a practical roadmap to unity. Look with me again in Philippians 2:3-4

III. DIRECTION #3 (Imperative) – CHANGE YOUR ATTITUDE (Philippians 2:3-5)

Do (verb does not exist) *nothing* (emphasis here) *from* (through - indicating motive) *selfishness* (do for self to detriment of others)

Selfish people:

- Crave honor and prestige for self
- Strive against someone or try to gain advantage over at the loss of another

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- Take breaks while others continue to work
 - Leave the dishes for someone else to do because you're tired
 - Don't care that their life makes other people's lives harder
 - Look to be served, not serve
 - Don't ask selfish people to set aside their personal checklist
 - They want what they want . . .

James 3:16, *"for where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing."*

Do nothing from selfishness or,
empty conceit (vain or empty glory, groundless pride-highly exaggerated view of self),

Two words – Vain – meaning empty, nothing to it; glory (doxa) – praise, majesty, fame. . Never more evident than on the football field:

It is the professional athlete who does his job and pounds his chest for doing it.

Galatians 6:3, *"For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself."* Empty conceit aims at personal glory for self

Empty conceited people:

- It's the guy who thinks laundry is beneath him
- It's the person who thinks they deserve better than the spouse they have
- It's person who is upset because no one notices them
- Or the person who thinks they deserve the promotion instead of the person who got the promotion
- Or the one looking for appreciation for doing what God has called you to
- Or the one who complains about how bad others are
- The gossip, the slanderer
- The critical person
- It's the boss who thinks they get to leave whenever they want
- Or the person who plays favorites and excludes others because they don't like them

I could go on, couldn't I?

Empty/conceited people are all around you. You locked arms with them earlier today.

Let's not look for personal glory. Let's look to be servants.

Walter Payton used to give the ball to his lineman to let them spike the ball.

Summary:

Selfishness is getting all you can to the detriment of others while empty conceit is thinking way too much of yourself than you ought to think.

"...but [in contrast] with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves..." – Philippians 2:3

Humility of mind?

- Lowliness of mind – thinking low about yourself as opposed to highly about yourself. Opposite of our cultural mores today where self-esteem is the rage of the age.
- Its enemy and opposite is pride – which always goes before a fall and which led to the first and greatest fall, Adam and Eve.

God's view of pride? He hates it.

Proverbs 6:16-17, *“There are six things which the LORD hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood...”*

Do you hate anything? What do you hate? Things I hate:

- Being put on hold
- Being late-DMV
- Lines
- Traffic
- Paying to fix things in the house
- Disunity

Imagine the feeling of hatred and then multiply that –

- Thomas Watson said, “pride seeks to ungod God.”
- Andrew Murray said, “It is the root of every sin and evil.” And, “Pride must die in you, or nothing of heaven can live in you.”¹
- Where pride is a life set on self-recognition, exaltation, and a desire to control all things for the benefit of self, humility is a life set on the advancement of others.

What pride and humility have in common – blindness.

- By definition, one cannot be humble if he is aware of his humility. Humble people are blind to their humility. Raise your hand if you're humble.
- Prideful people have no idea how prideful they are. In fact none of us do. Even the most humble of you are most prideful.

Manifestations of pride:

- Lack of gratitude
- Anger
- Perfectionism
- Talking too much (especially about self)
- Being consumed with what others think about you
- Degrading sarcasm
- Lack of compassion

¹ Murray, Andrew. *Humility*

29 out of 30-which one did you forget you had?

Manifestations of Humility:

- You pray a lot
- Gentle and patient
- Good listener
- Gladly submissive
- Teachable spirit

Philippians 2:3 - "...regard one another as more important than yourselves..." Here is the key!

Do you regard other people as more important than you?

- Your rights, time, aspirations, enjoyment, come after others'. You first. Me, second.
- You must not just *feel like* others are more important, but actually *view or consider* them as more important.
- You cannot have an inflated view of yourself and an inflated view of others at the same time.

It's not just thinking about it or wishing it were so. It's really believing others ARE more important than you.

Acts 20:22-24, "*And now, behold, bound by the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. "But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God."*

Is it possible? Yes, but only if you consider your own sinfulness first and then with intentionality think about the needs of others.

Can I ever think about myself? Yes, Philippians 2:4 continues, (Giving it some balance)

"do not merely [meaning it is okay to look a little] look [to fix your attention] out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."

We're not talking about asceticism. By all means, do some things for yourself. Brush your teeth and take a shower. Go to a game. See a movie. Have coffee with a friend.

But, don't forget when you come back to the house, there are other people (roommates) who are more important than you are, right?

How far do we take this thing about regarding others as more important?

Anticipating that question, Paul gave us the perfect illustration:
Let's just read that and remember, and then answer the question.

"Have this attitude [imperative] in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of

men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” Philippians 2:5-8

How far do you take this? To the death.

You want to live? All in favor of joy? Then, die.

This is the path to joy.

- **Conduct worthy of the gospel!**
- **Bringing joy to the lives of others.**
- **Regarding others more important than yourself.**

May this be a year when you target that every day, living your life on purpose for God and for each other.