



**Date:** 12-28-2025

**Text:** Philippians 1:1-19 NLT

**Sermon Title:** Joy That Holds Under Pressure

*Is it possible to experience real joy when life doesn't cooperate?*

**A Study of Philippians 1:1-19 NLT**

**Intro:**

**Philippians 1:1-2 NLT**

1 This letter is from Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus. I am writing to all of God's holy people in Philippi who belong to Christ Jesus, including the elders and deacons. 2 May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

## **1. Joy \_\_\_\_\_ in Gospel Partnership.**

### **Philippians 1:3-8 NLT**

3 Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. 4 Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy, 5 for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now. 6 And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns. 7 So it is right that I should feel as I do about all of you, for you have a special place in my heart. You share with me the special favor of God, both in my imprisonment and in defending and confirming the truth of the Good News. 8 God knows how much I love you and long for you with the tender compassion of Christ Jesus.

Notes:

## **2. \_\_\_\_\_ in God's Ongoing Work**

### **Philippians 1:9-11 NLT**

9 I pray that your love will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding. 10 For I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until the day of Christ's return. 11 May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation--the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ--for this will bring much glory and praise to God.

Notes:

### **3. \_\_\_\_\_ on Adversity**

#### **Philippians 1:12-18 NLT**

12 And I want you to know, my dear brothers and sisters, that everything that has happened to me here has helped to spread the Good News. 13 For everyone here, including the whole palace guard, knows that I am in chains because of Christ. 14 And because of my imprisonment, most of the believers here have gained confidence and boldly speak God's message without fear. 15 It's true that some are preaching out of jealousy and rivalry. But others preach about Christ with pure motives. 16 They preach because they love me, for they know I have been appointed to defend the Good News. 17 Those others do not have pure motives as they preach about Christ. They preach with selfish ambition, not sincerely, intending to make my chains more painful to me. 18 But that doesn't matter. Whether their motives are false or genuine, the message about Christ is being preached either way, so I rejoice. And I will continue to rejoice.

Notes:

### **Joy \_\_\_\_\_ in God's Sovereignty**

### **Philippians 1:19 NLT**

19 For I know that as you pray for me and the Spirit of Jesus Christ helps me, this will lead to my deliverance.

Notes:

### **Questions to consider:**

- 1.** Where is your joy currently anchored?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2.** What circumstances are threatening your confidence?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3.** What area of your life do you need to trust God with?

## **Next Steps:**

1. Pray with confidence, not anxiety.
2. Reframe adversity through a gospel lens.
3. Shift joy from outcomes to obedience.

## **EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS**

One of four shorter epistles written by the apostle Paul while he was in prison. The others are Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon. Paul founded the church at Philippi (Acts 16:12–40). Throughout his life the Philippians held a special place in his heart. Paul writes to them with affection, and the epistle breathes a note of joy throughout. When Paul first came to Philippi, he was thrown in jail. In the deep of the night, bound and beaten, he sang a hymn to God (Acts 16:25). A decade later Paul was again in prison, and he still was celebrating the Christian's joy in the midst of suffering, "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!" (Phil. 4:4).

***Structure of the Epistle.*** Paul begins the epistle by giving thanks for the love of the Philippians and by praying for its increase (1:1–11). Even though Paul is in prison, the gospel is not confined; on the contrary, it is increasing. Whether Paul lives or dies, "Christ is preached" (1:18); and this results in salvation (1:12–26). Following these reflections, Paul introduces a series of exhortations: to remain faithful in suffering (1:27–30); to remain considerate of others, as Jesus Christ was (2:1–11); and to avoid evil and live blamelessly (2:12–18).

Paul then turns to news of two companions. Once a decision has been reached about his trial, Paul will send Timothy to the Philippians with the news (2:19–24). For the present, he is sending back Epaphroditus, who had brought the Philippians' gift to him and who in the meantime has been critically ill (2:25–30). In chapter 3 Paul discusses the difference between true and false righteousness. Whereas the JUDAIZERS would say, "If you do not live rightly you will not be saved," Paul teaches, "If you do not live rightly you have not been saved."

The final chapter summarizes several miscellaneous matters. Paul exhorts quarrelsome church members to rise above their differences (4:1–5). He also leaves two important lessons, on substituting thankful prayer for anxiety (4:6–7), and on the characteristics of a noble and godly life (4:8–9). He concludes with thanks for the Philippians' gift and includes final greetings (4:10–23).

**Authorship.** There can be little doubt that Philippians comes from Paul. The entire epistle bears the stamp of his language and style; the setting pictures Paul's imprisonments; and the recipients correspond with what we know of the church at Philippi.

During his second missionary journey, in A.D. 49, Paul sensed the Lord calling him to visit Macedonia (Acts 16:6–10). At Philippi he founded the first Christian congregation on European soil (Acts 16:11–40). A lifelong supportive relationship developed between the Philippians and Paul (Phil. 1:5; 4:15). He visited the church again during his third missionary journey (Acts 20:1, 6).

At the time he wrote Philippians, Paul was in prison awaiting trial (Phil. 1:7). The Philippian Christians came to Paul's aid by sending a gift, perhaps of money, through Epaphroditus (4:18). During his stay with Paul, Epaphroditus fell desperately ill. But he recovered, and Paul sent him back to Philippi. He sent this letter with him to relieve the anxiety of the Philippians over their beloved fellow worker (2:25–30).

**Historical Setting and Date.** The location of Paul's imprisonment has been long debated. Much can be said for Ephesus or Caesarea but still more for Rome. Paul refers to "the whole palace guard" (1:13), and he even sends greetings from "Caesar's household" (4:22). These references suggest Rome, as does the description of his confinement in 1:12–18. This description is similar to Clement's description of Paul's Roman imprisonment written near the close of the first century. Paul also considers the possibility of his death (1:23). This prospect was more likely toward the end of his life in Rome than earlier. The epistle, therefore, should probably be dated about A.D. 60.

**Theological Contribution.** The focus of Paul's thoughts in this epistle is the Christcentered life, the hallmark of which is joy. Paul has surrendered everything to Christ and can say, "For to me, to live is Christ" (1:21), "to be a prisoner for Christ" (1:13), "to live and die in Christ" (1:20), "and to give up all to win Christ" (3:7–8)." Christ has laid hold of Paul (3:12), and Paul's sole

passion is to glorify Christ (3:8–9). Paul longs for his experience of Christ to be repeated in the lives of the Philippians. He prays that they will abound in the love of Christ (1:9), will lay hold of the mind of Christ (2:5–11), and, like himself, will know the experience of Christ—His sufferings, death, and resurrection (3:10–11).

Because Paul's only motive is to "know Him" (3:10), he shares in the power of Christ and "can do all things through Christ," who is his joy and strength (4:13).

Several times in the epistle Paul exhorts the Philippians to translate their relationship with Christ into daily life by being "like-minded" with Christ or "setting their minds on Christ." In the face of opposition, Paul tells them to "stand fast . . . with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (1:27).

Differences between Christians can be overcome when the parties have "the same mind in the Lord" (4:2). Paul exhorts the believers to set their mind on the high calling of God in Jesus Christ (3:14–15) and to meditate on whatever is true, noble, just, pure, lovely, and of good report (4:8). To have the mind of Christ is to see life from Christ's perspective and to act toward other people with the intentions of Christ.

***Special Considerations.*** Nowhere is the mind of Christ presented to the Christian more strongly than in Philippians 2:1–11. Appealing to the Philippians to be of "one mind" (2:2) in pursuing humility, Paul cites the example of the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (2:5), urges Paul. Unlike Adam, who sought to be equal with God (Gen. 3:5), Christ did not try to grasp for equality with God. Instead, being God, He poured Himself out and took upon Himself the form of a slave, to the point of dying the death of a common criminal. "Therefore," glories Paul, "God . . . has highly exalted Him, and given Him the name which is above every name" (2:9).

This is the Christ whose attitude and intention all believers must share. To be identified with Christ in humility and obedience is the noblest achievement to which anyone can aspire.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ronald F. Youngblood, F. F. Bruce, and R. K. Harrison, Thomas Nelson Publishers, eds., [\*Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary\*](#) (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1995).