

Victory over the Joy Stealers
Overview of Philippians
July 17, 2022
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Good morning. My name is Larry Jordan, and I am an Elder here at Cornerstone Community Church. If this is your first time here today, I want to welcome you. It is our practice to tell our new visitors three things. First, we are grateful that you have chosen to be with us here today. We consider you to be God's gift to us and we want to thank you for joining us in worship of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Second, we want you to know that you are in a place where the ground is level; this means no one is any higher, better, or more significant than anyone else. Truly, the ground at the foot of the cross is level ground and we are all sinners in need of a Savior. We want you to know that Jesus is that wonderful Savior; He is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. Also, while your salvation may be a personal matter, God never designed it to be a private matter. His desire is for us to live as brothers and sisters in the family of God and that is why we gather here today to celebrate and worship Him. This leads us to the third thing we want you to know; we love you enough to speak the truth to you and that is truth with a capital T. The truth from God's Word, about Jesus, His person, His works, and His words and how He can change your life from the inside out. Jesus, and Jesus alone, is the Cornerstone of our faith.

We are nearing the end of Pastor John Marc's sabbatical and, Lord willing, he will be continuing in our study of Revelation when he returns on August 7th. During his absence, you have had the opportunity to hear from two of our former associate pastors, Shane Sander and just last week Curtis Solomon. You have also heard several times from each of our current associate pastors, Dan Burleson, Jesse Howard and Adrian Garcia as well as from Cole McDaniel, the Chairman of our Elder Board. If you are like me, you have come away with a sense of just how richly we are blessed here at Cornerstone to have such godly men who accurately divide the Word of truth and are so accomplished at preaching God's Word to us. I have sensed that each time any of these men have preached it has been from a passage of Scripture that God has worked into their lives before they preached it to us. Adrian has been teaching through the book of Ephesians to our youth group and was able to present meaningful messages to us regarding the wisdom of God through the church and God's design for the church. Dan Burleson was able to put together a sermon at the last minute when Jesse missed a Sunday due to illness. His sermon on guilt and repentance, taken from a presentation he had made at a biblical counseling conference that prior week was a glimpse into what God had placed on his heart. I give him my Magician's award for "pulling a sermon out of a hat". Both Dan and Cole McDaniel have taught from the book of Psalms messages of how to be satisfied in God, how to praise God and how to bless God's Holy Name. And finally, Jesse Howard, who has been studying and teaching from the book of Hebrews in the men's and women's Bible studies for the last two years and was able to summarize that teaching for all of you in three short weeks of sermons. To Jesse, I give my "Speed Preaching" award which is kind of like "Speed Dating" where, in a short period of time, you try to tell a person everything they need to know to pique their interest about a topic (you) so they will want to follow up to learn more. Unfortunately, we have reached the proverbial "bottom of the barrel" and for the next two weeks you will, graciously I hope, listen to me share what God has been working into my life from the book of Philippians.

At least 19 times in the 4 chapters of Philippians, Paul mentions joy, rejoicing, or gladness. Yet, when Paul wrote this letter to the Philippian church, he was in a situation that most would not find joyful, nor would it move them to rejoice or be glad. Paul was a prisoner in Rome and awaiting his trial. He was chained 24/7 to a Roman soldier and not permitted to preach in public. The outcome of his trial could lead to his acquittal, or he might be found guilty and executed. On top of all that, the believers in Rome were divided about Paul and his ministry. Yet Paul overflowed with joy in his life and sought to encourage the Philippians to share in his joy by writing this letter to thank them for their generous gift to him and to encourage them to be joyful in spite of the trials and troubles that life brings them.

We live in a sad world—a world of despair, depression, division, and dissatisfaction. So then, what is this joy that Paul encourages the Philippians to show in their lives? Joy is a difficult word to define unless we separate what worldly joy is from biblical joy. The world defines joy or happiness as an attitude of satisfaction or delight based upon present circumstances. It is primarily related to favorable external happenings in our lives and to happenstance or chance that put them there.

By contrast, John MacArthur states that “Biblical joy consists of the deep and abiding confidence that all is well regardless of circumstances and difficulty. It is something very different from worldly joy. Biblical joy is always related to God and belongs only to those who are in Christ. It is the permanent possession of every believer, not a whimsical delight that comes and goes as chance offers it opportunity.” Steve Hoppe states, “Joy is deep, unshakeable, soul-level contentment rooted in the love of God and one’s identity in Christ.”

What does the Bible say about this biblical joy? Nehemiah 8:10b, “Do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”; Psalm 4:7a, “Thou, O Lord, has put gladness in my heart...”; Psalm 16:11b, “...In Thy presence is fulness of joy...”; John 15:11, Jesus says. “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.”; Romans 14:17, “For the kingdom of God is not eating or drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”; Galatians 5:22-23b, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control”. That is why I asked that Psalm 100 be our Scripture reading for today. I want us to consider how we can “shout joyfully to the Lord,” and “...serve the Lord with gladness” in spite of all we must face in this fallen world.

One of the main themes in Philippians then is the believer’s joy. Paul wrote to a church that He loved and that loved him. This deep and special love of Paul for the Philippians can be seen in Philippians 1 where Paul says in verse 3, “I thank my God in all my remembrance of you” (I have you in my **mind**), verse 7, For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel you are all partakers of grace with me.” and, in verse 9 where he says, “And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment.” (I have you in my **prayers**). Paul wrote this letter while he was a prisoner in Rome; he wrote because of their deep concern for him and because of his deep concern for them. They were concerned about his current condition because they themselves had difficult circumstances in their life; they were troubled by those who opposed Paul and his ministry

because they had to deal with difficult people themselves; they were saddened that he lacked the necessary resources due to his extended imprisonment because the attraction of worldly things was a struggle for them as well; and finally, they were anxious for Paul and what would happen to him, and for the persecution that the church was experiencing, and also for what the future held for each believer. In their mutual concern for each other, they identified **four joy stealers**, circumstances, people, things and worry and in Paul's missionary letter to them he spent a chapter addressing each of these **joy stealers** in order to encourage and challenge the Philippian believers.

Now, since John MacArthur took nearly two years to preach through Philippians, my goal for this week is certainly not to do present a comprehensive theological dissertation on the entire book of Philippians. That is impossible because the teachings in Philippians are too deep and too rich to cover in one 40-45 minute sermon. Rather, today I am presenting an overview to show how Paul identified each of these **joy stealers** and then provided certain key thoughts and verses to help them to have joyful victory over circumstances, people, things and worry. Basically, I am going to attempt to win back the "Speed Preaching" award that I gave to Jesse earlier.

To accomplish this overview, I am presenting an outline to you this morning of Philippians that was first published by Warren Wiersbe back in 1974. His book on Philippians had just come out just after I had finally committed my life to Christ in my early twenties, and Philippians was the first book I studied and also the first book I taught in a Bible study to a group of people. I was raised in the church and had acquired a good knowledge of who God was and what was taught in the Bible but the tipping point for me was when I encountered individual believers who exuded an inner joy in their lives that I had never seen before. Seeing the joy of the Lord expressed in their lives made me curious to know how I could also express such a joy in my life and that led me to a true profession of faith and the start of my lifelong journey to know God and to make Him known. I have used this outline on numerous occasions since then. Although I am doing an overview this week it is my prayer that you will hear something or several things that will strike at your heart in such a way that you will be compelled to dive into a more in-depth study of Philippians for yourself.

So, let's start this overview by looking at Philippians 1, which is my favorite chapter of the book. In Chapter 1, Paul teaches the Philippians and all believers "How to have joy in spite of circumstances—and that is to have a single mind".

Now, I know circumstances can be real joy stealers. You lose your job or don't get that promotion; the car breaks down; the weather is bad; traffic backs up and makes you late; the doctor gives you bad news; inflation causes you to fall behind on the bills. Circumstances can hit us from all sides and usually at the most inopportune time. If our joy depended on ideal circumstances, most of us would be miserable much of the time. But the circumstances of life are real; that's why we are instructed in James 1:2-3 to, "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance." James recognizes that circumstances can bring out negative feelings and emotions in us, but he wants us to dig deeper and to express our heart attitude of joy because our faith, our trust and our hope is in Christ and Christ alone. Paul's joy was unrelated to his circumstances. If his joy had been tied to pleasures on earth, possessions, freedom, prestige, outward

success, or a good reputation, he wouldn't have had any joy. Paul's joy was centered on serving Christ and he was indifferent toward all other things. That's why he can say later in Philippians 3:8, "More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish so that I may gain Christ."

The key verse here in chapter 1 is Philippians 1:21 where Paul says, "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." So, Paul's single-mindedness was centered on the work and person of Jesus Christ and seeing the gospel message proclaimed in any and all situations. Christ is named eighteen times in Philippians 1 and the gospel is mentioned six times to emphasize that truth.

To bring this goal of single-mindedness into focus we need to ask ourselves what does Paul mean when he says to live is Christ? Paul gives us the answer to this question, I believe, in Romans 6:8-11 which says, "Now, if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death is no longer master over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin, once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Even so, consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus." While that is our true standing before God, we must grow in our experience of the reality of that standing, so that in our daily lives we live in fellowship with Christ, communing with Him and depending on Him for everything. The writer of Hebrews 12:2 instructs us that the way to do this is by, "fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and has set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Of course, being single-minded and exhibiting a heart of joy during circumstances that come into our lives does not always lead to the results we hope for and is never fully realized in this life; we are successful sometimes but other times we are overwhelmed by our emotions and feelings and lose sight of the inner joy that is a fruit of the Holy Spirit in us by God's grace. Paul says in Philippians 3:12, "Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus." Our goal in life should be as Philippians 1:20b states, "...but that with all boldness, Christ shall, even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death."

This is where God's Word has been working on my heart lately. How can I show joy by having a single mind that allows me to be an encouragement to others in spite of the circumstances in my life? As many of you know, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2018 and had surgery in December of that year. The surgery did not get all the cancer cells and I have had two subsequent rounds of radiation treatments to try to eradicate the cancer that remains in my body. My most recent tests show that the cancer is still in my body and is currently growing in a rib bone, in my spine and in several lymph nodes. I am continuing treatments designed to slow the growth of these cancerous cells and the doctors are hopeful that some promising advances in treatment protocols that are currently in clinical trials will be available soon for individuals in my condition.

When the diagnosis first came in 2018, I prayed that no matter what medical procedures I needed to go through I would do it with an attitude of joy, trusting God that each day I wake up He will direct me and allow me to be a blessing to those around me; to my family, to the members of my church, to my co-workers, and especially to the medical personnel with whom I would come in contact. I didn't want

to be seen by anyone as a victim but, rather, as a victor in Christ as I travel through this trying circumstance. Cancer is just something that I have, it is not who I am. I am a child of God and a joint heir with Christ and I want people to know that is where my mind is set. Now, I am not sharing this with you because I want you to be sad for me. On the contrary, I want you to understand that as believers we can face the worst of circumstances and still consider it all joy, knowing that our faith, hope, and joy is in the Lord who has saved us and promised each of us an eternity in His presence. Of course, if you feel led to add me to your prayer list I certainly will not object.

So, Paul, in chapter 1, not only instructs the Philippians in how to have joy in spite of **circumstances** by having a **single** mind, but he was also writing to me and to you so that each of us can have that same victory and confidently say, “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.” We can respond to life’s trials with godly joy if we know that the Lord has a purpose for why He would allow those difficult circumstances to befall us.

Continuing on to Chapter 2 of Philippians, which is, by the way, my favorite chapter of the book, Paul next tells the Philippians how to have joy in spite of **people**—and that is to have a **submissive mind**. In Chapter 2, the key verses are 3-5, “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.”

Let’s face it, people can steal our joy from us. Many years ago, an ad appeared in the Lawrence, Kansas newspaper that promised, “We will oil your sewing machine and adjust the tension in your home for only \$1.” Who cares about oiling the sewing machine, today, in some homes, I am sure people would pay 100 times that amount for the tension to be adjusted. We all desire to have harmonious relationships, but they often seem to be a rare commodity. I remember as a newlywed, whenever there was disagreement in our home, either Lorraine or I would playfully lament, “Oh, the honeymoon is over.” Yet, by God’s grace here we are going on 53 years of wedded bliss! We desire harmonious relationships with our children yet alienation between parents and their teenagers is proverbial, and probably inevitable. We seek to get along with co-workers and yet sometimes find ourselves in situations where we are “thrown under the bus” by a co-worker so they can advance their own career. We seek harmony at church but sometimes find that to be difficult because of difficult people (Don’t worry, I am not naming any names; but you know, don’t you?).

Alexander McLaren states in Exhibitions of Holy Scriptures, “To live to self is the real root of every sin just as it is of all loveless life.”

Aren’t you glad that the Bible was written to real people with real problems? The Philippian church, as healthy and as missions minded as it was, had people problems. Paul says to the church in Philippians 4:2-3, “I urge Euodia, and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord. Indeed, true companions, I ask you also to help those women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel...” So, in chapter 2, Paul gives some principles for harmonious relationships that can apply in every situation

where you encounter **those** difficult people. Here are three things we should consider in order to maintain a joyful, submissive mind as we deal with people:

1. Look first to your relationship with Christ. Philippians 2:1-2 says, “Therefore, if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.” The word “if” which begins each clause in verse 1, is not translated in the original text as a word of uncertainty or doubt as it is used today. Rather, that word could be better translated as “since”. An amplified paraphrase of these verses could be, “Therefore, in light of our mission to proclaim Christ, if you have ever received encouragement at a time of need because of your union with Christ, and I know you have; if Christ’s love has ever given you comfort in trials, as I know it has; if you’ve known that common bond with God and others that comes from the Holy Spirit, something I know we have shared together; if you’ve ever felt deep down in you the tender concern Christ has for you, as every Christian has felt; then, top off my joy by working through conflicts with other people so you come to have the same mind, the same love, the same Spirit and the same purpose.”

Humility (the submissive mind) is that grace that, when you know you have it, you have lost it. I often joke with my Community Group that I am proud of my humility to point out how fleeting a humble and submissive mind can be. Someone said, “humility is not thinking less about yourself, it is thinking about yourself less.” Even the non-Christian philosopher, Allan Bloom saw this as a problem in modern society when he wrote, “Everyone loves himself most but wants others to love him more than they love themselves.” An acrostic that many people use for JOY is Jesus first, Others second, Yourself last. In 1 Peter 5:5, younger men are instructed to “Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” So, the first thing we need to do to nurture a submissive mind is to be sure we are in a proper relationship with Christ.

2. Second, be sure that you have a proper attitude. Paul says in verse 2, “...make my joy complete by being of the same mind...” 10 of the 26 times this word “mind” is used in the New Testament are here in the book of Philippians. Paul’s joy would be filled to the brim and overflowing not if he got out of prison, but if he heard that the Philippians minds were turned toward love and harmony. There is a correlation between attitude and relationships. We often mistakenly think good relationships happen by accident. We see a happy couple or a family where everyone gets along, and we think “They’re sure lucky”. Or a couple in conflict think, “Maybe we ought to just find someone more compatible. But harmonious relationships aren’t a matter of luck or natural compatibility. They are built on a mind-set that works at seeking unity. Again, four building blocks for strong and harmonious relationships are identified in verse 2, “being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.” Thus, in any conflict, I must first look to my relationship with Christ: Am I motivated by His love? Then, I look to my attitude: Am I oriented toward love or am I intent on getting my own way?
3. Third, you need to have a proper view of yourself. Philippians 2:3 says, “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important

than yourselves;” The world’s way for resolving conflicts is to teach you to stand up for your rights, to be aggressively assertive to the point of combativeness, to push hard to get what you want, and most importantly build up your own self-esteem. This is what modern psychologists and school educators are advocating, but the problem is that the world’s ways do not deal with the root problem, which is pride or selfishness. The key goal in the world is self-fulfillment, whether it be in one’s marriage or in their work or even in the church. The first question in the Westminster Shorter Catechism is “What is the chief purpose of man? The answer is, “Man’s chief purpose is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever. In 2 Corinthians 4:5, Paul makes a clear statement of how we should view ourselves and how we can have a mind that is joyfully submissive, “For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus our Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Christ’s sake. And, in Galatians 5:13, Paul warns the church, “For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” Steve Flaten and I were talking about this sermon after golf on Tuesday afternoon and he said something profound (yeah, our Steve Flaten, go figure). To summarize, he said that you cannot experience a heart of joyful submissiveness until you recognize that your salvation is entirely a work of God—He did everything; you did nothing. C.S. Lewis may have said it a little bit better in his book Mere Christianity. He said, “Pride has been the chief cause of misery in every nation and every family since the world began...Pride always means enmity, not only enmity between man and man, but enmity to God. In God you come up against something which is in every aspect immeasurably superior to yourself. Unless you know God as that, and therefore, know yourself as nothing in comparison—you do not know God at all. As long as you are proud you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people; as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you.” Time prevents us from going further into Chapter 2 but Paul does provide us with four examples of a joyful submissive mind—Jesus Christ, Paul himself, Timothy and Epaphroditus. I hope you will take time to read through the whole chapter on your own. So, now that we have learned how to have joy in spite of people by having a submissive mind, we can turn our attention to Chapter 3 which, by the way, is my favorite chapter in the book of Philippians.

In Chapter 3, Paul tells us how to have joy in spite of **things** by having a **spiritual** mind. The key verse here is Philippians 3:20, “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” Circumstances and people can steal our joy from us but so can things. In the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew 6:19-21, Jesus warns about the things of the world, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart (mind) will be also.” The Apostle John affirms this in his first epistle that bears his name. In 1 John 2:15-17 he says, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.” Here, in Chapter 3, we want to look at two mindsets of people

that are diametrically opposed yet represented as part of the 1st century church and are still found in the church today.

1. Philippians 3:18-19 warns believers not to live as citizens of this earth. “For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.” Paul was talking here about people who circulated among the churches professing to be Christians (like the Judaizers). Paul was upset because these people claimed to be believers but did not live as a Christian or Christ-follower should live. This caused great confusion, both in the church and outside the church. There is no indication that the church in Philippi had been infiltrated by such false teachers, but Paul presented this as a way to compare those whose citizenship was in the world (worldly mind) to those whose citizenship was in heaven (spiritual mind). In this warning, there are three descriptions given for those with a worldly mind:
 - A. First, those with a worldly mind are enemies of the cross of Christ. Look with me at verse 18, “For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ...” The cross of Christ is the central principle of the gospel and of the Christian life. In 1 Corinthians 1:18, we read, “For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” The cross humbles human pride because it shows that our good works are not able to make us right with a holy God. It shows us that we cannot save ourselves from God’s righteous judgment. It shows that we cannot even help God out, because we are not saved by our merit, but only by the worthiness of the Lord Jesus and His shed blood. Enemies of the cross diminish its value by emphasizing human worth or merit in addition to what Christ did on the cross. We need to test all theology and especially all self-help books, both secular and Christian, against what Scripture teaches. Does it diminish or elevate the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ? The cross means death to our pride and the temporal things of this world. As Paul says earlier in Philippians 3:7, “But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.”
 - B. Second, those with a worldly mind are heading for eternal punishment. In verse 19, Paul says “whose end is destruction...” Paul is referring to eternal punishment, not some temporal judgment. Destruction here does not mean annihilation, that those sinners are wiped out by God so that they cease to exist. The uniform and consistent teaching of Scripture is that those who reject God’s mercy at the cross will be cast into the lake of fire where they will endure eternal punishment. If you struggle with this, read Jonathan Edwards’ sermon, “The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners.” He argues that sin against God is a violation of infinite obligations and therefore is an infinitely heinous crime, deserving of infinite punishment. Here is an interesting quote from R. C. Sproul about the doctrine of eternal punishment, “The fact is, that virtually every statement in the Bible concerning hell comes from the lips of Jesus Christ. We cannot take Jesus seriously without also taking seriously what He said regarding eternal punishment. There is very little about hell in the Old Testament, and very little in the NT epistles. It is almost as if God decided that a teaching this frightening would not be received from any lesser authority than that of His own Son.”

- C. Third, those with a worldly mind live for the things of this earth. Continuing in verse 19, Paul says, "...whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is their shame, who set their minds on earthly things." These worldly citizens live for selfish and sensual pleasures rather than denying self in order to live for Christ; they glorified and boasted of their freedom without limits, and they became preoccupied with the things of the world. Obviously, we all have earthly things that consume a good portion of our time and our energy: we have jobs, bills to pay, houses to maintain, family needs, wants and desires, and so forth. But the point here is that the true Christian does not put earthly comfort at the center of life but instead has a spiritual mind that allows us to have joy in spite of things.
2. For those with a spiritual mind, there are also three things mentioned in Philippians 3 that will distinguish them from those who have a worldly mind.
- A. First, those with a spiritual mind follow godly examples. In Philippians 3:17, Paul says, Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us." Paul is not implying here that he is sinlessly perfect. Earlier in the chapter Paul says in verse 12, "Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus." He also adds that there were others, probably Timothy, Epaphroditus, and men like them who were examples of joyful living with a spiritual mind. Such men show us in practical ways how we should walk with God. In addition to studying about these men in the Bible you can receive great spiritual encouragement by reading biographies of the great men of faith; men such as John Calvin, Martin Luther, C. H. Spurgeon, Hudson Taylor, Adoniram Judson and many others. Finally, look around you in the church for individuals who are living joyfully and show by example that they have a spiritual mind and include them in your social circle so you can be challenged and encouraged by their walk.
- B. Second, those with a spiritual mind wait joyfully for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The bodily return of Jesus Christ in power and glory is one of the most frequently emphasized truths in the New Testament (mentioned in all but four books of NT). In verse 21 Paul indicates that when Jesus returns, He, "...will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself." The transformation of our bodies is twofold: we will receive an outward, physical body not subject to disease and death and decay, but also an inward spiritual transformation in which we are delivered finally and forever from all sin.
- C. Third, those with a spiritual mind will stand firm in the Lord in light of His coming. This point comes from Philippians 4:1, "Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved." The use of the word "Therefore" in Philippians 4:1 indicates that it is really the conclusion to the challenge presented in Chapter 3 to have a spiritual mind. It is Paul's exhortation that in light of the Lord's return and the transforming work He will accomplish in believers once for all eternity, we should stand firm in spite of the things of this world and express **joy** by having a **spiritual mind**.

Now we finally get to Chapter 4 which is my absolute favorite chapter of Philippians and learn how to have joy in spite of worry, by having a secure mind. The key verses are Philippians 4:6-7, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” And the best way to have that secure mind that leads to a joyful attitude is provided to us in verse 8, “Finally brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.” Since this will be the topic of my sermon next week, we will not go into great detail today. But few of us are strangers to anxiety and worry. It creeps in when we deal with difficult circumstances of life, when we deal with difficult people and when we struggle with having the right perspective over the things of this world. An average person’s anxiety is focused 40% of the time on future events which never happen, 30% of the time on past events that cannot be changed, 12% of the time on criticisms from others that are mostly untrue, 10% of the time on their health which gets worse with stress anyway and only 8% of the time about real problems that will be faced. Here are a few quotes to get you thinking about our topics for next week. George Mueller, “The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith, and the beginning of true faith is the end of anxiety.” Simon Patrick, “It is distrust of God to be anxious about what is to come; it is impatience with God to be anxious with what is present; and it is anger at God to be anxious for what is past.” Finally, C. S. Lewis wrote, “Anxiety is not only a pain which we must ask God to assuage but also a weakness we must ask Him to pardon—for He’s told us to take no care for tomorrow.” Worry can steal our joy away and is such a big issue in most lives that I want to spend a whole study on it next week. I hope you will join me again.

So, for today, let’s conclude by reviewing what we have learned about joy and how to have victory over the joy stealers in life:

1. We can have joy in spite of circumstances by having a single mind (Philippians 1:21)
2. We can have joy in spite of people by having a submissive mind (Philippians 2:3-5)
3. We can have joy in spite of things by having a spiritual mind (Philippians 3:20-21)
4. We can have joy in spite of worry by having a secure mind (Philippians 4:6-7)

For application, try these two suggestions this week and see if you find yourself more joyful:

1. At the beginning of each day, surrender your mind to the Lord through prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. As you pray, ask God to give you a single mind, a submissive mind, a spiritual mind and a secure mind.
2. Let God’s Spirit renew your mind through an intentional discipline of reading, meditating and memorizing God’s Word. In preparation for next week, memorize Philippians 4:8.

Let’s pray.