

## ENJOY the RIDE      The Book of Philippians

Video – When was the last time you let yourself experience joy like that?

A few years ago, someone made a comment to me that really troubled me. The person said, **“What happened to the fun Dan?”** I asked for clarification. **“When you were a youth pastor, you used to be a lot more fun!”**

Well... there could be a long list of reasons why I may not be as fun as I used to be! These 6 years of being your Lead Pastor have not been easy! - surgeries, diagnoses, deaths, departures, pandemic, recession, upheavals, etc.

**I’m probably not the only one with diminished joy over the last few years!** But should these things be able to rob us of true & lasting joy?

The book of Philippians is a letter sent from the Apostle Paul to the church in Philippi, and it’s all about joy! **Paul is writing from prison in Rome!**

How can Paul, not only commend joy to the Philippians in the midst of their difficult circumstances, but also express joy in the midst of his own?

**The back story to the church of Philippi gives great insight into this!**

**Acts 16:6-36** – Paul was preaching the gospel & he delivered a girl from demon possession. The result was him being beaten, arrested, & in chains!

His response - **“About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them...”** – Vs. 25

Fast forward a few years. Paul is now once again in prison, now in Rome, and he writes this letter of joy to be sent back to the church in Philippi!

**15 times** Paul speaks of joy in this short letter of only 4 chapters!

What is the secret to Paul’s experience and proclamation of joy, despite his circumstances? Listen to these verses, for they reveal the answer!

**“I want you to know brothers that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard & to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.”** – 1:12-13

**“And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.”** – 1:14

**“I am put here for the defense of the gospel!”** – 1:16

**“Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.”** – 1:18

The secret to Paul’s joy, despite his circumstances, is Jesus Christ & the gospel! And nothing and no-one can ever steal that joy from him!

This whole letter speaks of such everlasting joy, & Paul reveals 4 specific areas where that joy can overflow in the lives of believers!

- Joy in the midst of suffering (1:1-30) – **“For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake...”** 1:29

Can we find joy amidst our sufferings, when suffering provides us with the opportunity to draw closer to Christ, & point others to Him as well?

- Joy in serving (2:1-30) – Read - **2:1-4** **“Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”** Vs. 4

Do we find joy in serving others just as Jesus did, who did not come to this world to be served, but to serve and to give His life for others?

- Joy in believing (3:1-4:1) – **“But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus Christ my Lord.”** 3:7-8

Does believing/knowing Jesus Christ as Lord, bring us greater joy than anything else in this world? Is everything else loss in comparison?

- Joy in giving (4:2-23) - **“Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble.”** The Philippians sent Epaphroditus 800 miles to Paul to provide for his needs and encourage him.

Do we, no matter the cost, find great joy in providing for the needs of others, and in giving towards the cause of the gospel in this world?

**Joy doesn’t have to be tied to our circumstances!** True joy can be found in Jesus Christ, who is and forever will be triumphant over all!

What is our only comfort/joy in life & in death? “That we are not our own but belong body & soul, in life & in death to our faithful Savior Jesus Christ”

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