

Philippians 4:8-23 Reasons to Rejoice!

Intro: Today we come to our final study in the book of Philippians

A) Last week we left off in V.7 of chapter 4 – Pastor Aaron – key to dealing with Anxiety – prayer

B) Remember that the major theme in the book of Philippians is Joy

C) Anxiety robs us of our Joy.

Over 40 million Americans suffer from Anxiety disorder.

A) Those numbers are even higher in the last two years Covid – now economy

B) People are stressed out! – When we are stressed out it is hard to be joyful.

C) So we ended our study last week considering two powerful verses -

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.

D) Peace of God – that surpasses – understanding

1) Even when nothing makes sense – God's peace is guarding – protecting my heart

So the Question is this: are you going to carry your burdens or give them to Jesus?

A) 1 Peter 5:8 Casting all your cares..... you

B) Well as we pick up tonight Paul is going to share that the key to maintaining Joy is not just that we pray

C) But it is also related to How we think

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**

The word finally indicates that Paul has arrived at the climax of his teaching on spiritual stability.

A) The principle that he is about to relate is both the summation of all the others - **and the key to implementing them.**

B) The phrase meditate or dwell on these things introduces an important truth:

1) Spiritual stability is a result of how a person thinks.

C) I can pray and give the concerns of my heart over to the Lord – fills my heart with his peace

1) But to maintain that peace – keep it with me I need to be thinking the right thoughts

Whatever things are True:

A) What is true denotes the actuality of something. **No Fake news**

Survey revealed 8% of the things people worried about were legitimate matters of concern (true)! The other 92% were either imaginary, never happened, or involved matters over which the people had no control anyway.

B) Jesus prayed to His Father,

"Sanctify (set them apart from the world and unto Yourself, make them holy) them in TRUTH, Thy Word is TRUTH." (John 17:17).

C) Ephesians 6 – Spiritual warfare – the fiery darts

D) Stand strong in the Lord his power – His armor

1) First piece is the **Belt of truth**

E) Truth about who Jesus is – his heart – his way and who I am in him

Paul's call for biblical thinking is especially relevant in our culture.

A) The focus today is on emotion and pragmatism,

B) So the importance of serious thinking about biblical truth is downplayed.

1) People no longer ask "Is it true?" but "Does it work?" and "How will it make me feel?" = Dangerous

Paul starts with truth – because everything else he mentions is going to be connected to where we get truth from

A) Are we going to get it from God's word or from the opinion of others – or our feelings

B) Truth is Key

C) **Whatever is Noble** = Honorable – means worthy of respect or entitled to honor.

1) It is that which inspires reverence or awe.

D) It Comes from a word meaning "to revere," or "to worship."

Spend your time thinking on things that will cause you to worship God

A) Someone said to me last Sunday pm – I think I watch fox news too much- could be

B) Is it leaving you hopeful or Anxious and Angry

C) David Psalm 19 The heavens declare – see's Goliath in that light

Whatever things are Just – Right!

A) It is whatever is in perfect harmony with God's eternal, unchanging standards, again as revealed in Scripture.

B) Scripturally right – so I am not listening to opinion I am going to run it through the filter of God's word

C) God's heart on that thing! – Knowing that God's love and Justice go hand in hand

Whatever is pure:

A) Pure = that which is free from defilement, stainless, that which will not be contaminated,

B) That which is "morally and inwardly" pure.

C) Pure = Hagnos is that which is holy, morally clean, and undefiled.

D) Hagnos was "used ceremonially, it describes that which has been so cleansed that it is fit to be brought into the presence of God and used in his service.

E) Temple vessels

This world is full of things which are sordid and soiled and smutty.

A) Many a man gets his mind into such a state that it soils everything of which it thinks.

B) The Christian's mind is set on the things which are pure; that which has been redeemed

1) Fit for God's use

Whatever is Lovely –

A) Lovely has the idea of that which is admirable or agreeable to behold or consider.

B) Whatever is of good report - refers to that which is well-spoken of, praiseworthy, highly regarded or well thought of.

C) It is something or someone that deservedly enjoys a good reputation.

D) Ask: Are we concentrating on the good things we see in others or are we dwelling on their faults and shortcomings?

E) Focus on Who others are in Him –

Paul Know no man after the flesh – Focus who they are in Jesus

A) And if they are Not in Jesus – explains what is going on in their life

if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things.

Paul's final technique for overcoming worry is to **meditate** on what is excellent and praiseworthy.

A) So Joy or Anxiety is connected to how you pray and how you think

B) Now as we wrap up the book –

Paul's final 3 reasons to Rejoice -

- **His Contentment** – Learned to be content in all situations
- **His Confidence** – Confidence in Christ
- **His Connection** to the church in Philippi

Contentment V.10-12

¹⁰ But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; {Thankful for their support

though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. {not dependent on their support

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.

Contentment: That is a hard one right?

A)How many people do you know who are content?

B)Are you content?

C)Note: Paul says I have learned to be content – in other words it doesn't come natural to any of us

The word contentment actually means sufficient

A)Contentment is a learned behavior

B)Contentment is rooted in the eternal God rather than in the temporal self.

1)Paul saw himself as the bondservant of Jesus

C)My lot in life is up to him – so where ever he has me – abased – brought low – make level – poor

D)Or abounding – I am satisfied because my sufficiency is in him and not me

1)Important lesson to learn– but hard to learn

Doesn't mean we don't try to get ahead or accept a raise – but you are not striving

A)Changing my physical condition is not the main focus in my life.

B)Keith Green - Do your best pray – blessed and he will take care of the rest.

C)I am going to be content – **satisfied in the sufficiency of Jesus – this is where he has me**

D)My situation might change – but my relationship with Jesus doesn't – Content in that.

Again that is easier said than done – but Paul's life was full of so many ups and downs

A)So many things that happened that he had no control over – like shipwreck

B)Paul said – I have **learned** to be content in whatever state I am in

C)The longer we go through the ups and downs of life with Jesus the more we grow in that mindset

His contentment in Jesus led to Joy - the 2nd reason for his Joy **A Confidence V.13 **I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.****

A)This verse has to be one of the most **abused** but also one of the most **undervalued** verses in the entire Bible

B)The abuse comes from ignoring the Context – Paul is writing from Prison –

1)Hard – waiting impending death – scary

C)But he said: I have learned to be content – and I know I can get through whatever the future holds

1)through Christ who strengthens me

D)In other words - **Whatever God has in store – he will strengthen me for it – that is the CONTEXT**

THE ABUSE:

A)Context – **All things – Gym – dead lift 450 lbs – Chanting I can do all things – throw out your back**

B)Novice surfer go out into 20 foot surf at Pipeline – I can do all things – Drowns

C)Student – Didn't study for a test – I can do all things – fails Abuse:

D)This verse doesn't mean you can do anything you set your mind to through Christ who strengthens you. - **Ignoring Context**

But we must not undervalue this verse either:

A)Because some get so focused on the context they are afraid to apply it to anything but Paul and or prison

B)Well I am not in prison or waiting my impending death so that verse doesn't pertain to me – **that is the other extreme**

C)**Here is The Right view:** Paul knew the situation that he was in was God ordained!

1)Through the strength of Jesus working in his life he had a confidence he was going to be able to handle it

When you realize if the situation that I am in is because God has allowed it –

A)I am seeking him – He is going to strengthen me

B)I can make it through this – because God is going to give me his strength to make it through

C)In my walk of faith – God has led me to a situation that has turned difficult

D) Or an opportunity that seems impossible –

1) He is going to strengthen me to overcome – to accomplish his purpose

The Living Bible puts Philippians 4:13 this way: “I can do everything God asks me to with the help of Christ who gives me the strength and power.”

Job loss? Again you didn’t see it coming – now you don’t know what to do –

A) He is going to strengthen you to get through it

B) Ministry opportunity: **Someone asked you to pray about being a part of something –**

1) you never saw yourself doing

C) Everything in your brain is telling you **NO WAY**

1) But the Holy Spirit in your heart is saying – **YES WAY** – he will strengthen you

D) Anything that you find yourself in because – God has brought you there – like Paul in Prison –

1) **He will supply you with power...**

Finally the third reason for Paul’s Joy – Connection

A) Paul knew that one of the ways the Lord was going to strengthen him was – **through the assistance of others**

B) Paul could sing – **I get by with a little help from my friends**

C) His ministry had been greatly helped by the financial support of the Church in Philippi

D) Paul thanks the church at Philippi for their generous gift.

He compares their giving to three very familiar things.

A) 1st A Fruit bearing tree (V.10 – V.14- 17)

V.10 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.

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.

The word “flourished” V.10 carries the idea of a flower or tree budding or blossoming.

A) There was a time where the Church in Philippi’s support of Paul had stopped – planted that dried up

B) But through the sending of **Epaphroditus it was flourishing again**

17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account.

C) **Giving is like planting seeds** – plant the seed and you water it and fruit is going to be the result.

When the church in Philippi was supporting Paul – the fruit that was coming out of that –

A) Gospel spread throughout the whole palace guard – the gospel spread to the household of Caesar

B) While he was in Prison he wrote 4 books in NT
1) That was all fruit from their giving!

C) But notice how Paul frames this – he actually mixes metaphors here: 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account.

D) The word **account** literally refers to interest accrued on the credit side of the ledger.
1) Or Interest accrued on the credit side of the ledger.

So Paul is also saying that giving is like investment banking

A) You give and you reap a spiritual investment – in that partnership –

B) The People who gave to Paul were partnering with Paul and with the Lord in the ministry that God was doing through Paul

C) Same is true for any Church or ministry we are giving to – the fruit produced is part of our reward!

Paul saw their giving as a fruit bearing tree and an investment banking in the Kingdom of God.

A) But he also saw it as an act of Worship

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.

Aa)The highest motivation to do anything, to give anything- Is because it is well pleasing to God.

B)Why is it pleasing to God – not like he needs our money

1)Giving is not God's way of raising funds –but it is his way of raising kids

God is a giver and he wants us to be givers too!

1)God loves a cheerful giver – He loves those who are generous in supporting the work of the ministry

Notice the promise that is connected to sacrificial giving as an act of worship V.19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

A)Most of you know that verse – many of you have quoted that verse but have you ever considered the context

B)The Context is financial giving partnering with the Lord through giving of our tithes and offerings

1)But this verse gets separated from its context all the time – just sort of this blanket statement – **repeat the verse**

C)You know, every text has a context – any text taken out of context can easily become a pretext.

1)You can make the Bible say anything at all you want it to if you take verses out of context

So every text has a context and the context of V.19 is giving

A)What Paul is saying to the Philippians is this: You have been so generous with your finances, and as a result my God will supply all your need.

B)In fact notice again the word full in V.18 Paul says as a result of their giving – I am full

1)and then notice the word supply in V.19

C)You see those two words? I am full. You made me full. Verse 19. God will supply.

1)In Greek, it's the exact same word.

D)In English, it's two different words. It's the same word in Greek. Pleroo.

1)It means to fill up or to fill to the brim.

E)Paul is saying in the Greek language. You've filled me up. My God is going to fill you up.

1)You made me full. My God will make you full

This isn't the only place where we see this promise in Scripture.

A)In the book of Malachi – God rebuked the nation of Israel for their lack of giving

"Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions." Malachi 3:8

B)God gave this challenge

"Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need." Malachi 3:10

C)So There is a blessing that comes from giving: -

1)But Note it is not the reason why we are to give but there is a benefit –

D)God says – I will open the windows of heaven

E) Similar Promises in the book of Proverbs

Proverbs 11:25. **"The generous soul will be made rich. He who waters will himself also be watered."**

Proverbs 3: 9. **"Honor the Lord with your possessions and with the first fruits of your increase so your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine."**

E)We can never out give God – and God who is a giver – invites us to be givers too!

1)Partner with him in the work of the Kingdom – He promises to bless us here when we do

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.