

Joy Series Week 1 "I just want to be happy!"

Icebreaker

What mail do you open first? Bills? Official looking stuff? Personal mail? Love letter?

READ: Philippians 1:1-11

1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 I thank my God upon all my remembrance of you, 4 always in every supplication of mine on behalf of you all making my supplication with joy, 5 for your fellowship in furtherance of the gospel from the first day until now; 6 being confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ: 7 even as it is right for me to be thus minded on behalf of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as, both in my bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers with me of grace. 8 For God is my witness, how I long after you all in the tender mercies of Christ Jesus. 9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment; 10 so that ye may approve the things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and void of offense unto the day of Christ; 11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God. (Philippians 1:1-11 ASV)

- What one word best describes Paul's feelings for the Philippians?
- What word would describe feelings you have for your church?
- What is unusual about Paul's attitude in this letter?
- On a scale of 1 (easy) to 10 (hard), how hard is it for you to express your feelings like Paul did here?
- How is God at work in a believer's life according to verses 6 and 9-11? how does this make you feel about certainties in your life?
- Paul was in Prison but joyful. What difficult circumstances are you dealing with? What's your attitude toward the situation?

READ: Philippians 1:12-25

12 Now I would have you know, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel; 13 so that my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole praetorian guard, and to all the rest; 14 and that most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear. 15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: 16 the one do it of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel; 17 but the other proclaim Christ of faction, not sincerely, thinking to raise up affliction for me in my bonds. 18 What then? only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and therein I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. 19 For I know that this shall turn out to my salvation, through your supplication and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, 20 according to my earnest expectation and hope, that in nothing shall I be put to shame, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death. 21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 But if to live in the

flesh, --if this shall bring fruit from my work, then what I shall choose I know not. 23 But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better: 24 yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake. 25 And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide, yea, and abide with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith; (Philippians 1:12-25 ASV)

- What has happened as a result of Paul's imprisonment? What effect did Paul's situation have on others in the church? (v. 14)
- What negative result did Paul's situation have on most of his fellow believers? (v. 15-17)
- What does this passage say about what your attitude should be toward Christians whose motives you might question?
- Where has God been able to use bad for good in your life?
- Which option (life or death) does Paul personally desire? (vv. 22-23)
- Why does Paul feel it is more necessary for him to do the opposite (vv. 24-25)
- What is something you would like to accomplish before you die?
- What difference has your personal faith in Jesus Christ made in your attitude toward death and dying?