

Paul's Lockdown

A MIDWEEK STUDY IN PHILIPPIANS

THE SEEDS OF JOY: FAITH, HOPE & LOVE
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Philippians 1:1-9
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❖ **Paul a Man of Joy—The Backstory** *Acts 16:25* *About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.*

The story of behind this letter really begins in a Philippian jailhouse. . .
Where did this joy come from?

- Background of the letter to the Philippians.
 - One of the “Prison Letters” from Rome.
 - Written about AD 61, Paul having been a believer about 30 years.
 - Philippi church founded in Acts 16.
 - This epistle is also a thank you letter for a monetary gift. (4:10-20)
 - Sent with Epaphroditus. (2:25)
 - Themes are: 1) unity 2) true spirituality, 3) joy
- If our joy is to be deeper and last longer than temporary circumstances we must dig deeper to find realities that endure—faith, hope & love.
 - Happiness-the Latin root *hap* means chance (*perhaps, perchance*). Happiness is based on lucky circumstances.
 - Pleasure- from Old French *to please*. Giving mental and bodily pleasure.
 - Joy-*chara* Greek, (Joy-Norman-French) often defies circumstances and pleasures by appearing in the most difficult and challenging times.

❖ **JOY IS FUELED BY FAITH (3-5)** *Phil. 1:3* *I thank my God every time I remember you.* ⁴ *In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy* ⁵ *because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now,*

- Paul's prayer life is filled with joy.
- Paul learned that joy was a state of mind rooted in faith in Christ & His work in other's lives.
- It is a remarkable joy to watch someone convert, not simply be proselytized, but actually change their address of belief which in turn transforms their thinking, their behavior and especially gives birth to the wonder of God's love found in Jesus.
- Paul's joy is in their partnership (*koinonia*). i.e. faith in the gospel.
- To be a joyful person, we must posture ourselves where you see God's work in others as they believe in him.

❖ **JOY IS FUELED BY HOPE (6)** *being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*

- Hope is experienced as confidence--- *being confident lit. "to be convinced, sure"*.
- Hope comes from God---*He who began...will carry it on...until...*
- The hope is that God's *work* in us is absolutely good.

- Hope leans forward, focused on the ultimate future---*the day of Christ Jesus*.
- What is this work? God's redemptive, transformational work, in us and through us.
- Who is my hope, my joy, my crown? Is it not you in the presence
- What an absolute joy to know that God finishes what He starts!

❖ **JOY IS FUELED BY LOVE (7-9a) 1:7** *It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. ⁸ God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. 1:9 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more*

- Love is both a feeling and a commitment, even a determination.
- Love is sometimes experienced as a longing.
- Divine love is birthed in Christ Himself--- *Affection of Christ*.
- Love is not shaken by the situation--- *defending (apologia)* - apologetics.
- Love is something we share in--- *partners in God's grace*.
- Joy is not automatic and can't be forced. But it does burn bright on the eternal fuel of faith, hope and love.

❖ THINKING IT THROUGH

- Review verses 1-9. What part of this passage stands out to you?
- Using a concordance, see if you can find the 14 occurrences of the word *joy* or its related term, *rejoice*, in the letter to the Philippians.
- How does Paul use the term joy? Create a definition for biblical joy.
- List the things that bring you happiness, pleasure and/or joy.
- Prioritize these things in the order of the deepest joy.
- What are the three things which fueled Paul's joy in the Philippians?
- Have you ever experienced this kind of joy? Describe the experience or situation.