

THE CHRISTIAN'S JOY

BIBLE TEXT : **Philippians 3:1-3, 7-16, 20, 21; 4:1-13.**

LESSON 406 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice" (Philippians 4:4).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Philippians 3:1-3

1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed *is* not grievous, but for you *it is* safe.

2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.

3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Philippians 3:7-16

7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ,

9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching

Bible References:

I Warnings

1. The brethren are warned against Judaizers and evil workers, Philippians 3:1, 2;

2 Peter 2:1

1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

2. The spiritually circumcised rejoice in Christ Jesus, Philippians 3:3.

II Seeking Christlikeness

1. Paul's desire was to leave all behind that he might serve the Lord Jesus Christ, Philippians 3:7-9.

2. Paul desired to follow the Lord in suffering and in the resurrection, Philippians 3:10, 11;

2 Timothy 2:12

12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with *him*: if we deny *him*, he also will deny us:

3. He pressed forward to higher planes in the grace of God, Philippians 3:12-14.

4. He exhorts us to walk worthy of our calling, Philippians 3:15, 16;

Ephesians 5:2

2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

5. Our hope is the coming of the Lord, Philippians 3:20, 21.

III Rejoice in the Lord

1. He enjoins the brethren to unity and helpfulness, Philippians 4:1-3;

1 Corinthians 1:10

10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

2. Their blessed state is to show in their prayer thanksgiving and rejoicing, Philippians 4:4-6.

3. God will keep those who obey these injunctions, Philippians 4:7;

Isaiah 26:3

3 Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose* mind is stayed on *thee*: because he trusteth in thee.

IV Thoughts to Be Controlled

1. The Christian must think on the right things, Philippians 4:8, 9;

2 Corinthians 10:4

4 (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

2 Corinthians 10:5

5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

2. Paul rejoices that he has learned to trust the Lord under all

forth unto those things which are before,

14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

16 Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

Philippians 3:20-21

20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Philippians 4:1-13

1 Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, *my* dearly beloved.

2 I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.

3 And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and *with* other my fellowlabourers, whose names *are* in the book of life.

4 Rejoice in the Lord always: *and* again I say, Rejoice.

5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord *is* at hand.

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

7 And the peace of God, which

circumstances, Philippians 4:10-12.

3. His strength and victory come from Christ, Philippians 4:13;

Habakkuk 3:19

¹⁹ The LORD God *is* my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' *feet*, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.

Notes:

Paul's Holy Ambition

Paul's main desire in life was to attain unto the First Resurrection. He knew that to attain unto that would be the glorious climax to all the labours and trials he was called to go through. He had caught the vision that caused him to lose all desire for earthly attainments. The advantages and privileges he had enjoyed before his conversion he now counted as worthless. He counted them of so little value that they were actually to be despised and not worth remembering. That is true in the lives of all Christians. The things for which many men sell their soul are less than worthless even though a high price has been paid to obtain them. For the servant of God to forget the pursuit of earthly goals seems foolish to the unsaved person. But the joy and blessing that the Christian feels are not to be compared with the paltry things of this world. His joy is one that money cannot buy. Men's applause and earthly fame are not his goal, but he aims to please Him who has called him to His heavenly calling.

The joy of sins forgiven is one of the greatest joys mortal man can know. The whole human race has had one common experience, and that is that all know the guilt of sin. Everyone under sin feels the condemnation of sin and especially does the load feel heavy when God sends Holy Ghost conviction for sin. Then the load becomes almost unbearable; and to have forgiveness extended and the load lifted brings joy beyond description — the joy of salvation.

Seeking Christlikeness

Paul did not consider himself to have reached his goal in his Christian race but he had his face set like a flint Zion ward. He was forgetting those things that were behind and setting himself to seek after the things of God. He knew that his race was most glorious and he knew that the fullness of joy would be realised when he saw Jesus face to face. In the last days of Paul's life he could look back and say: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (II Timothy 4:7, 8). In his closing testimony to Timothy he felt as if the race was about over. Behind him were his labours, stripes, imprisonments, shipwreck, perils of water, of robbers, perils by the heathen, perils in the city and in the wilderness. Hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness were all behind him. Even when these had come, he had counted it all joy that he could suffer for Jesus' sake; but now that his life was about over he would soon know what it was to awake in Christ's likeness. Then, and only then, would the joy and the attainment of his salvation be complete. The joy here was wonderful, the fellowship was sweet; but eternal joy still awaited him, and also awaits all those who attain unto the First Resurrection. It is no wonder that Paul, knowing this, could say while he was imprisoned in Rome, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14).

passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things.

9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content.

12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Rejoice in the Lord

We are commanded to rejoice in the Lord. Some think of this as a privilege but not a duty. Faith in God causes us to rejoice. Christ, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross. We look back with great joy that our sins were borne by Him on Calvary. The joy that was set before Him was that He might be our Saviour. Our rejoicing is to be in the Lord. The life of a Christian is one of victory and peace. The Christian has laid his sins on Jesus; he discharges his cares on God's providence; he casts his fears on God's promises; and in this blessed state he has no room for anything but joy in his heart. Even in his concern for those who are unsaved he trusts that the God who has saved him will do as much for his loved ones. He cannot bear their sins for them, nor can he repent for them; but as he prays in faith, he rejoices in the fact that he can put his trust in God and His Word.

Moderation and Trust

The Lord wants His people to show moderation. We are not to compromise the issue, nor are we to allow anything that God's Word condemns; but at the same time we are to remember that God is not the author of confusion nor fanaticism. Some religious groups have taken some point of God's Word and put an extreme interpretation upon it that makes their doctrine unreasonable and unscriptural. We are to interpret the Scriptures by the Scriptures and not take some isolated verse and frame our whole belief on what that verse, taken out of context, might seem to teach. The Bible does not contradict itself. We will have to study the whole Bible and believe it all in order to be able to rightly divide the word of truth. We read in John 7:17, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." Many false doctrines are started by people who refuse to do God's will. To cover up their own sin they put their own interpretation on God's Word and form their own doctrine. God said of backslidden Israel "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jeremiah 2:13).

God wants His people to trust Him. If they do, they will not be overly anxious. This means, of course, that they will not let their anxieties rule them. If we bring all our desires to the Lord and pray with thanksgiving, our anxieties will be dispelled. When we pray to God in faith, we trust Him to answer our prayers and do the things that we ask Him to do if they are according to His will. All our prayers and desires are subjected to His will, for no child of God wants his will done above God's will. Jesus set the example for us in His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane when he said: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39).

Our Thoughts

God has taught us in this lesson that we are to control our thoughts. The only hope of salvation is through the merits of the shed Blood of Jesus. So we are not saved by our thoughts, but we are commanded to think upon right things. A person must think right before he can pray right. We do not make ourselves righteous by our thinking, but because we have been made righteous through the righteousness of Christ we are able to obey the commands of God and think upon these things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, virtuous and praiseworthy.

We have all known people who saw something wrong with everyone. We are not to suppose that his judgement comes from the Lord. We are admonished to pray for those who have done

wrong and to help those who are down. We know that a critical and accusing attitude does not speak of a prayerful heart that is crying out to God that He might have mercy on those who have sinned. We should not be pointing out the terrible things that the devil has done. In every circumstance of life there is a chance to see that all things work together for good to them that love God (**Romans 8:28** 28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.). We are not to cover sin by turning our head and calling evil good, but even in denouncing sin in someone's life there can be a springboard for faith in the fact that he has not gone beyond redemption, and God still loves him and will forgive him if he repents. Happy is the man who stays his mind upon the Lord and rejoices in His mercies. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isaiah 26:3).

Victory in All Circumstances

Paul's rejoicing in the Gospel was not because of comfortable circumstances. He had been hungry and he had been filled. He had been cold and he had been warmed. He rejoiced that the Christians at Philippi had been able to minister to his needs because of the reward they would receive for giving it (**Philippians 4:17** 17 Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.). If the Christians were dependent upon outward circumstances to be assured that God's blessing was with them, many would have no hope. Many of the poorest of the earth have had the most wonderful victory in their spirit. Some who at one time possessed much of this world's goods have found themselves destitute, but this did not rob them of their faith in God. In many cases it merely served to whet their spiritual appetite and to make them the more appreciative of that sweet assurance they had that all was well in their soul.

Paul knew that his strength was in Christ. He was not afraid of the task at hand nor of the future, for he had the promise that as his day so should his strength be. Someone has said that he had "living grace" and he felt assured that when the hour of death came God would also supply sufficient grace with which to die.

QUESTIONS

1. Who are those who are referred to as being spiritually circumcised?
2. What did Paul count as loss for the Gospel's sake?
3. What was the main attainment that Paul had in mind?
4. Did Paul count himself as having reached his goal? What did he do about it?
5. What is to be the outward evidence of the Lord in the heart?
6. What were they to think upon?
7. What were they to do about their anxieties?
8. What was to be their attitude toward fanaticism or formality?
9. What had Paul learned to do under different circumstances?
10. Where did Paul say that his strength came from?