

Joy for The Journey

Week 1 in the book of Philippians

INTRODUCTION

Paul wrote much of the New Testament. Philippians is one of the most heartfelt and intimate letters he ever wrote. He's writing to friends and it shows. We can learn a whole lot by studying this letter. We learn how to love those who oppose us; we learn how to love our family and friends; we learn how to have joy that never fades in our lives. So much good content. Let's dig in and study our first passage in this letter.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read Philippians 1: 1-6 together as a group. Where was Paul when he wrote this letter? What does that tell you about his joy and its strength?
2. Our sermon said that "Happiness depends on happenings, but joy depends on Christ." How does that phrase sit with you? Why? Do you have more of happiness or true joy in your life? How can you tell?
3. Read Philippians 1: 12-13 together as a group. Paul seems pretty optimistic about his "chains." Are you? What are the things that function like chains in your life that God could be trying to use to help spread the Good News?
4. We must understand that whatever is going on in our lives right now is God-ordained. Why is that so hard to understand when we are facing trials? How can we shift our thinking during dark times to reflect the joy we have in Christ?
5. Paul and Silas' first trip to Philippi in Acts 16 wasn't a very positive one; they tried to kill them. Yet, in this letter Paul is telling of his deep love for them. How could this have changed? What strained relationships do you have in your life that could be redeemed to glorify God? What will you do to allow that to happen?

MOVING FORWARD

This series will test us in a glorious way. Often, we confuse joy with happiness. Sure, joy can bring happiness, but it doesn't rely on happiness to function. Over the next several weeks we have the opportunity to study joy and begin to shift our hearts towards being joyful hearts. Will your group commit to discussing these passages over this entire series? You will begin to see such life transformation happen when we grasp what this means.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

We can rejoice that God has saved us for His glory. Our salvation is a gift to be received and rejoiced in. We can rejoice that God is sanctifying us (meaning we have been set apart as God's own special possession). We can rejoice that God is using us in His service! May your group spend time praying for God to open your eyes to experience true joy!