

# Make my Joy Full

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Date: 07 January 2021

Preacher: Malcolm Macdonald

[ 0 : 00 ] We're going to begin our service this evening with the singing in Gaelic of Psalm 25 from verse 4.

Psalm 25 from verse 4. I'm going to hear these words sung in Gaelic, Psalm 25 from verse 4.

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[ 7 : 29 ] I'm going to hear these words sung in Gaelic, Psalm 25 from verse 4.

Let's join together in Gaelic, Psalm 25 from verse 4.

I'm going to hear these words sung in Gaelic, Psalm 25 from verse 5.

People desire to hear these words sung in Gaelic, Psalm 25 from verse 5.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Psalm 25 from verse 5.

[ 9 : 59 ] He has always been in Gaelic, Psalm 25 from verse 5.

He has always said, Psalm 25 from verse 5. And that it would be the word, Psalm 25 from verse 5.

And that it would be the word that comes from your word. And that it would be the word that comes from your word. The word of the scriptures of the Old and the New Testament.

The word of the Old and the New Testament. He was able to declare your word.

He was able to declare your word. He was able to declare your judgments, each one, by your aid and with your guiding hand upon it through the Spirit. So help us even in our lives to declare your word.

[ 11 : 56 ] So help us even in our lives to declare your word as a living word that rules and regulates our life. And that we are endeavouring with your help to live by it and to glorify your name.

We pray that you would bless us this evening as we worship. Bless our homes, our families, whoever we worship with. Whether we worship by ourselves or with others.

Give thanks for the opportunity to do so. We are mindful of the difficulties that surround us at this time. We are thankful that we commit all things to you.

We pray for our congregation here. And we pray that you would bless all the homes and the families that are within the community. Remember the members and the adherents.

Those who were faithful in their attendance upon God's house. And where they are denied, they still have an interest. An avid interest in the things of God.

[ 13 : 00 ] And we pray that that would be kept by yourself. That you would fan the flame. Kindle the altar of their hearts. So that it would burn brightly.

And that they would look for the face of the Lord. Those that know you, that they would desire greater knowledge. Those who are yet to know you, that the cry would come from their heart.

What must I do to be saved? That you would counsel them through the Spirit to seek the Lord while he is to be found to call upon you. While you are near.

We ask that you would bless the scriptures as they are proclaimed. Whether they are read in or hearing. Preached from the pulpits of the land.

We give thanks for the resources that you have placed at our disposal. Even services that were conducted many years ago. Sermons preached by men that are no longer living.

[ 14 : 06 ] And yet you are able to bless your word. It will not fall to the ground without you blessing it. And even that which has been lying dormant in the seed.

A seed in the ground. It may yet yield fruit. To that end we pray. Remember our nation. At this time of trial and difficulty.

We pray that you would turn people to yourself. Those who are succumbing to COVID. Be merciful to them. Those who have illnesses to deal with.

Remember them in mercy. Bless those who are caring for them. Bless the carers themselves that they may be kept. So that they would not fail in their duty.

That their health would not yield. And that they too would not suffer from COVID. So remember all that we entrust to your care.

[ 15 : 08 ] Remember the government. Local. National.■■■. And people. And in London. We pray that you would bless.

The Prime Minister. The First Minister. All the various bodies representing. As a people. remember the nations of the earth we are fearful of of the disturbances that we are often confronted with throughout the world be it in large nations or in small communities there is this peace in the world and there is only one real peace and that is the peace that has been secured through the Lord Jesus Christ he is our peace and we give thanks that you have directed us to him so remember us now as we turn to your word and bless it to us and bless our meditation on it in Jesus name Amen I'm going to read from the New Testament scriptures Paul's epistle to the Philippians chapter 2 and we'll read down to verse 18 if there be therefore any consolation in Christ any comfort of love if any fellowship of the Spirit any bowels and mercies fulfill ye my joy that ye be like-minded having the same love being of one accord of one mind let nothing be done through strife for vain glory but in lowliness of mind let each esteem each other better than themselves look not every man on his own things but every man also on the things of others let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God but made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself and became obedient unto death even the death of the cross wherefore God also has highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father wherefore my beloved as ye have always obeyed not as in my presence only but now much more in my absence work out your own salvation with fear and trembling for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure do all things without murmurings and disputings that you may be blameless and harmless the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation among whom ye shine as lights in the world holding forth the word of life that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I may that I have not run in vain neither laboured in vain yea and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith

I joy and rejoice with you all for the same cause also do ye joy and rejoice with me and so on may the Lord be pleased to add his blessing to a reading of his word and to his name be the praise I'd like us to turn to the passage there that we've read Philippians chapter 2 and read again at the beginning if there be therefore any consolation in Christ if any comfort of love if any fellowship of the Spirit if any bowels and meshes fulfill ye my joy that ye be like-minded having the same love being of one accord of one mind and so on it is generally agreed that at the time of writing this epistle that Paul was a prisoner in Rome staring the likelihood of his execution in the faith he is writing to a congregation of believers that he clearly loves very much

Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones calls the epistle the happiest that he ever wrote Sam Gordon entitles his own commentary An Odyssey of Joy and introduces it with the words He penned an upbeat letter a letter that resonates with joy for joy is the exuberant buoyancy of a confidence that is deeply rooted in God The joy that many in the world have is often temporary and seldom anything other than shallow and always dependent on outward circumstances whereas the Christian's joy is deeper more lasting and can exist in a meaningful way notwithstanding the external realities that embody them Paul himself speaks of his joy even in prison

He speaks of his joy even though he knows that things within the saints of God gathered in Philippi are not as they should be there is disharmony amongst them and the danger is that it will get worse in chapter 4 in chapter 4 in verse 2 we read there I beseech Iodas Iodias and beseech Syntyche that they be of the same mind in the Lord I want us to look this evening at the first two verses which sets out for us a positive message from the apostle to them perhaps next week we can if we're spared look at the next two verses which looks at a negative side to the entreaty that Paul gives to them bear in mind that Paul is addressing the need that there is for harmony and humility amongst believers and if Dr.

[ 22 : 33 ] Martin Lloyd-Jones is right as he often is the four verses need to be taken together we are doing so albeit over two evenings I want to begin first of all with two words the first word is therefore if there be therefore this word is linked or a link word tying what we have in chapter 2 with what has just been said chapter divisions can often be misleading and we have a habit of liking the thought packages of the scripture to have a nice tight line separating thoughts or themes from one another in a clear way however here as elsewhere in scripture the words are often interlinked and on this occasion

Paul is looking back to words that we have in chapter 1 and verse 27 only let your conversation be as it becomes the gospel of Christ that whether I come and see you or else be absent I may hear of your affairs that ye stand fast in one spirit with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel this is important within any context be it business or community if they are working together to achieve the same aim no matter what that aim is it is more likely to succeed if they are united in that aim pulling together when that is not there and they are contending with each other progress is thwarted last

Lord's day we spoke of the worthiness of the Lord's people who are called Dr. Sinclair Ferguson in his comments on verse 27 refers to this stating that when Paul uses the term he does not mean that we earn God's favour but that our lives should be consistent with the gospel living illustrations of the gospel's power reference there is to the transformative power of the gospel those who are observers of the church who see division and disputes are immediately dissuaded of the validity of the gospel message if what they see contradicts what they are being taught as Ferguson puts it when the grace of God in the gospel touches our lives it produces graciousness or at least it should do so because this is true of you he says so it follows that this is how you will be the second word we must consider is a small one the word if which is repeated four times this is not in doubt so what he is in fact saying is because or since

J. Alan Blair puts that Paul did not want to express a supposition or a condition but a fact a better translation would be in view of the fact in view of the fact then consolation in Christ in view of the fact comfort of love fellowship of the spirit bowels and messes let's consider each of these briefly consolation or encouragement in Christ by being in Christ by faith it is the in Christ relationship that is referred to here that gives the real reason for feeling encouraged Michael Bentley reminds us of what is true of the believer if bound up with him that is Christ whatever happens to us as believers we are assured of safety secondly comfort of love or as some have it the constraint of love remember as those who are in

Christ they ought to love those who are in Christ the apostle John in his epistle has very challenging words to every professor or Christian if a man say I love God and hate his brother he is a liar for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen how can he love God whom he hath not seen and this commandment have we from him that he who loveth God love his brother also remember the background to the epistle to sisters in dispute the discord escalates and filters into the fellowship how damaging is that at several levels any fellowship of the spirit or fellowship with the spirit the believer shares this experience with all other believers it is the spirit that enables them to cry out to the heavenly father he bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of

[ 28 : 37 ] God fourthly bowels and messes the modern translation use the word affections rather than bowels it's a reminder to us of the kind of people they are because of what Christ both has done for them and in them in fact many of the commentators focus on the passion of Christ at this point because of the reality of the Lord's compassion for the lust of this world now Dr.

Lloyd-Jones collects all four of these together and he says as he puts it himself let me put it bluntly the program which is outlined here by the apostle is only possible to the Christian it is useless for the world outside there is nothing that is so utterly idiotic as to ask men and women who are spiritually dead because of sin to be humble and to think of others before themselves the lifestyle the behavior the relationship that is being encouraged by the apostle is only possible if they are in Christ and it is encouraged because they are in Christ dealing with those who are in Christ as they are so in verse 2 he says fulfill ye my joy that not his words to them fulfill ye my joy that ye be like minded having the same love being of one accord of one mind make me happy as you will if you do those things fulfill ye my joy make my joy complete you know there is one thing for

Paul to see converts to the Christian faith that is quite another thing to see these converts grow to maturity in the faith and he would see that as being maturity if instead of disputing with one another they shared the same objects for the glory of Christ he will go on to cite the perfect example of Christ but before he does so he sets before them what they can do for one another if someone said to you that the goal of the free church for 2021 was to evangelize Scotland would you say wow what high objectives would you follow that with the question what part do I play in it beginning not with cities or towns or even villages but with family members or neighbours if you were asked to play your part it would be a good idea to be part of the evangelistic team that's out to win

Scotland for Christ maybe it won't be so much of an idea or an ideal if you are simply asked to begin at home with a member of the family or a neighbour Paul is going to speak of the condescension of Christ and he will do so against the background of bickering members who want their own way Paul encourages them to share the same goals with others St.

Lear Ferguson makes a valid point I believe he writes when there is only superficial commitment to the gospel there is little risk of serious division why divide over relatively unimportant issues but where there is zeal the danger always exists if the zeal is not permeated with humility perhaps more disunity is caused in the church by lack of humility than by lack of zeal let Christ always be the one who will have the glory sometimes to shame we forget that too easily and when we forget it there is always the potential for discord and dissent if there be any therefore any consolation in Christ if any comfort of love if any fellowship of the spirit if any bowels and mercies fulfill ye my joy that ye be like minded having the same love being of one accord and of one mind

[ 33 : 53 ] God encourages us to seek that for ourselves within whatever calling we have in the cause of Christ let us pray heavenly father we give thanks for the words of your servant to the church of his own day and to the church of our day we give thanks for the interest that he had in his people in this people that he loved so dearly and that he wanted the best for we pray that his words to them and to us would be blessed by you for our encouragement for our healing for the restoration of unity in the bonds of peace wherever it is needed continue with us we pray cleanse from every sin in Jesus precious name amen amen and t you you