

Rejoice in the Lord

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[0 : 00] we are looking at Philippians chapter 3, verses 1 through 3. And I want us to read the passage first off this morning. And the passage begins this way.

Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you.

Beware of the dogs. Beware of the evil workers. Beware of the false circumcision. For we are the true circumcision who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.

Now that's the passage we're going to look at. It's a first part of this paragraph that's here, but there's just so much here that's good and rich for us that I really wanted us to take a look at it separately.

Dr. Steve Lawson, in his little commentary on the book of Philippians, sort of introduces this section with the thoughts of happiness and joy and sort of contrasting the two of those, right?

[1 : 07] And here's one of the things that he writes. He says, True joy is not dependent upon circumstances. And I think that's one of the things that most of us would agree with. Neither does it come from things of this world.

So joy doesn't come from the things of this world. Authentic joy comes from having a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Real joy comes from knowing the Lord.

This source of joy rises above our circumstances and cannot be drained by the surrounding situation. It is available in good times and difficult times, in prosperity and in poverty.

And no matter what transpires in someone's life, they can know joy because this joy is this personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

It is a result of Him being in us. As a matter of fact, I think we'll see that as we go. So we want to look at understanding this joy in the Lord by looking at four things.

[2 : 11] And we're going to look at the joy participants. Who is it that's a part of this joy? And so who is it that Paul's talking to in this verse?

Verse 1? What does he say? How does he call them in verse 1? Brethren. So my question would be, does that mean that he's not talking about the ladies or just the men?

No. No, no. This is one of those cases where language was meant to be inclusive, but we've just, because of our definitions, have gotten to where we don't think it is.

But this is to everyone who's in the church, right? Everybody who's a part, who's a Christian at the church of Philippi. They call themselves Christians, brothers, sisters, irregardless, both of them.

No, not irregardless. Regardless, they are the ones who are supposed to be receiving this rejoicing in the Lord. Let's look then at the second thing, this joy pursued.

[3 : 07] What does Paul command them to do? What does Paul command them to do? What's the command you see in this verse? Rejoice. Rejoice.

Rejoice. Now, let's talk about rejoice in the Lord. Let's see if we can figure out Lord. Who do you think that Lord is?

The Lord. Specifically? Jesus. Jesus. That's right. So if we go back, if we go back to verse, chapter 2, verse 11, we see that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

So specifically, he's saying rejoice in Jesus Christ. Okay? Now, we believe in the Trinity, but we also know that there's a unity and a distinction, a unity and a diversity that's going on within the Trinity.

And so they are to rejoice in Jesus Christ. And I want to just cover a couple of things about this whole thing, because I think we need to have a view of this that sets right with us.

[4 : 24] Right? The first thing is that the rejoicing, it is a command, and it's a present tense command. So in the Greek, the present tense means that it's a continual action.

It's not just a one-time thing. It's not something you do in the past that, you know, has effects in the future, but it's something that is to be your present experience now. It is a command, which means that it's not optional.

However, one of the things we need to do in distinguishing between joy and happiness is we need to balance things just a little bit.

And so I want you to take a look at this verse from Ecclesiastes. How many of you remember the song by the birds?

Was it the birds? To everything, turn, turn, turn, there is a season, turn, turn, turn. So that comes from Ecclesiastes chapter 3, and one of those things in Ecclesiastes chapter 3 is that there's a time to weep, and a time to laugh, a time to mourn, and a time to dance.

[5 : 36] Now here's the reason that this is important. The reason this is important is because the scriptures, the scriptures, are not contrasting joy with mourning.

The scriptures contrast mourning with happiness, or laughter, or dancing, or celebration, or exhilaration, or glibness, or what have you, right?

Joy is something that can actually parallel and go alongside of mourning. Because joy, joy is not about, pray the Lord, I'm happy today, woohoo!

You know, that's not joy, right? That is probably glib. But, the point is, is that the scriptures talk about us mourning all the time.

In James chapter 4, he says, draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, purify your hearts, you double-minded. Now let me just pause.

[6 : 37] James is writing to Christians, who have a sin problem. And he tells them, be miserable, and mourn, and weep, and let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into gloom.

Here's the thing. Mourning and weeping, this gloom, this is there because of the presence of sin. We mourn and weep, and grieve because sin has ruined this world. Sin destroys our bodies, and sin eventually ends up with death, right?

And so, so mourning and sin are connected in that way, if that makes sense, right? I'm not saying one causes the other, but I'm just saying, that as we mourn, part of the reason we mourn, is because of both the presence of sin, and the effects of sin, and the things that sin accomplishes and does, in this world, as it destroys lives, and it ruins societies.

And part of the Christian life, life, is to recognize, and to actually be mournful over these things. To not stick our head in the sand, and say, well, I don't see it, I don't see it, I don't see it, I don't see it, but to actually understand the reality of it, and mourn over these things.

[8 : 09] The prophet Jeremiah, he used to cry for Israel's sin. That's right. That's right. So, so we're supposed to then rejoice in the Lord, and, that's not the one I'm going to go to next.

We're to rejoice in the Lord, we're to rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the little, the little word in here, gives us this idea of two things, that number one, it's, it's the idea of rejoicing, by, Jesus Christ, in other words, by his power, by his, doing something in our lives, but it's also rejoicing in him, as in, in his person, and who he is.

So, the joy, that we're supposed to have, it's commanded by God, it's empowered by Jesus Christ, and it's to be centered, upon, who Jesus is, and what he has, has done.

We are commanded to rejoice in the Lord, and the content, of that, joy, is not just, raw circumstances, that are out there, but it's in Jesus, and what he has done, in our lives, and particularly, let's think about this, you know, you've heard the passage, and heard it said, yeah, consider it all joy, when you encounter, various trials, trials, so sometimes, we have a tendency, to think, that the joy, is about the trials, themselves, but you need to keep reading, right, a trial comes to me, I don't take joy, in the difficulty, it's not the difficulty, that I'm supposed to be joyful about, but knowing, that the testing of your faith, produces endurance, and let endurance, have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect, complete, and lacking, and nothing, how is it, that a trial, can come to me, and end up, for my good, by the grace, and power, of God, so we rejoice, in the Lord, because of who he is, and because of all, that he is doing, in us, the content, of our joy, should be focused, upon the Lord,

Jesus Christ, who he is, and what he has done, for us, when we are, under the heat of trial, our souls, are like in a crucible, and we are being, purified, and to kick against that, is not the way, we

should go, but instead, as that comes, we look for the Lord, in the middle of all of this, and put our eyes, on him, and not take joy, in what I'm feeling, or what I'm experiencing, but take joy, in the Lord, Jesus Christ, so, so this is what, Paul is telling them, he's telling them, that they need to, rejoice in the Lord, so that's the joy, participants, the joy pursued, let's talk about, the joy protected, for just a second, in verse 1 and 2, so here's what's happening, he says, finally, brethren, rejoice in the Lord, to write to you, the same things again, is no trouble for me, and it's a safeguard for you, beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision, why does Paul say, he's writing the same things, to them again, because I didn't get it,

[11 : 35] I didn't get it, yeah, do you think it's because, it's something that he's already, said to them, something he's already, written to them, a concept he knows, they already have, yeah, I just think it's interesting, that he says that, I think, I think that, I think that, we could probably trace it, back in the letter, but I think it may, actually be something, that he's already spoken to them, verse 2, Paul is protecting their joy, so what is he doing, for them in verse 2, how does he protect them?

He gives them warning, of who to beware of, right, and what are these, three descriptions, these three groups of people, if you want to say it that way, the dogs, the evil workers, do you think they represent, three different groups, or one group?

A group. Yeah, it's just one group, and he describes them, three ways, right, so what does he mean by dogs? Why is he, I mean this is, this is not Paul, meek and mild, being gentle and kind, right, like he's just going after them, he calls them dogs.

They're like savages, they're. Exactly, when you, when you go through any city, and you see any stray dogs, those are the ones you stay away from, right, they're scavengers, they just tear up anything that they can.

What about evil workers? You know, a verse I thought of, when I saw evil workers, it's the verse I think you're probably all familiar with, Jesus says, he will say on that day, I tell you, I do not know where you are from, depart from me, you evil doers.

[13 : 24] It's the same word. So, so in this part, where Jesus is talking about in Luke, when he says, depart from me, you evil doers, where do they depart to?

What's the, what's this parable telling them? They're going to depart into the place, where there's weeping and gnashing of teeth, right? So if the evil doers, here, are going off into perdition, or destruction, then as Paul calls them, dogs and evil workers, does Paul have hope, for them?

No, no he doesn't. He calls them the false circumcision. In, like, New King James Version, it says, beware of the mutilation.

Of the mutilation, that's right. The reason is, is because, there's one Greek word there, and, one of the, one of the best English words, actually translated, is the word, concite, concision, the concision.

But like, I have no idea what that means. The New American Standard, is, is using circumcision, because that's sort of what, this is talking about. But, it's, it's saying false, because he's going to use the word, the Greek word for true, in the very next verse.

[14 : 39] So, they're trying to show, that these people have a problem, mutilation, right? And, but they're not the true Jews. So, you know who these people are. The Judaizers.

The Judaizers. That's right. The people we've been talking about, on Sunday morning. They've made it to Philippi, and they're telling, these Gentile Christians, you're not a real Christian, until you have gone through circumcision.

So, that's why he's calling them, dogs, evil workers, and false circumcision, or the mutilation. Okay? The legalists. They're legalists.

Exactly. Oh, that's what I was just about to say. To me, when I hear, circumcision, I think it just means more than the mutilation. It means, the legalistic, you know, I kind of put, start that all together in the same life.

That's right. That's right. What are you going to say? I'm going to say, it's a work of man, not the Holy Spirit. Now, here's the thing. Let's connect, verse 2 and 1.

[15 : 40] Rejoice, beware. Because, what will happen, if they start following this right here? If they're rejoicing in the Lord, but they start following these dogs, and false circumcision, will they be able to rejoice in the Lord any longer?

No. In other words, Paul was saying, listen, people who are teaching false doctrine, and the presence of false doctrine, is one of these things, that's going to harm your joy.

You can't have the kind of joy, that God wants from you, and for you, if you follow after false teaching. False teaching robs of joy.

Because it disconnects us, from the source of joy. From the blood of Christ. From what he did on Christ. That's exactly right. Wrong teaching leads to wrong thinking about God, which leads to wrong living.

And that's just the way it is. So, so Paul is protecting them in this, and then, we get the final thing, joy produced. Let's go, here to verse 3.

[16:52] For we are the true circumcision, who worship in the spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence, and put no confidence in the flesh.

Now, let's talk about, the circumcision for just a second. We all know what that is, and we know that it comes from the Old Testament.

It begins in Genesis chapter 17, as a sign of the covenant, with Abraham. Then it's brought into the, Sinaitic, or the Mosaic, or the Old Covenant, as a part of what they're supposed to continue to do. But, the circumcision in the Old Testament, even the Old Testament tells us, was always supposed to point, to a deeper spiritual reality.

In other words, that physical circumcision, was meant to point them to, the need for, heart circumcision. So, in Deuteronomy 10, verse 16, circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck, no longer.

[18:03] Deuteronomy 30, verse 6, moreover, the Lord your God, will circumcise your heart, and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, so that you may live.

Jeremiah 4, 4, circumcise yourselves, to the Lord, and remove the foreskin, of your heart, men of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem, or else my wrath, will go forth like fire, and burn with none, to quench it, because of the evil, of your deeds.

The God, in the Old Testament, is using, this thing, in order to show, the need, of our hearts, that our hearts, need work, that our hearts, are hardened, that our hearts, are covered over, and need, to be, dealt with, that this is a spiritual reality, this is brought into, the New Testament, in Colossians, where he says, that in him, you were also circumcised, with a circumcision, made without hands, a spiritual circumcision, in the removal, of the body of flesh, by the circumcision, of Christ, which, we don't have time, to go into that, but that circumcision, of Christ, is his death, on the cross, okay, we can show that, at another time, one day, having been buried, with him, in baptism, in which, you were also, raised up, with him, through faith, in the working, of God, who raised him, from the dead, dead, in other words, baptism, symbolizes, the same thing, that circumcision, did, circumcision, pointed, to the need, of the heart, that there needs, to be heart change, and baptism, points, to the need, for the heart, to be changed, you were dead, but now, you're alive, you walk, in the newness, of life, right, so that's, where our hearts are, you can go, to the book, of Ezekiel, and Ezekiel, talks about, how we have, stony hearts, hard hearts, and part of the, promise of God, is I'm going to take out, your heart of stone, and put into you, a heart of flesh, all of those, are images, of the same reality, that, before we're Christians, we have, stony hearts, we have hearts, that need to be circumcised, we're dead, in our sins, we are, lost to God, we're rebellious, against God, we're God haters, right, all of that, is that reality, and what needs, to happen to us, is a change, of heart, so that when we, become Christians, now we have, a heart of flesh, now we have, a circumcised heart, now we have, a heart that's alive, now we love God, now we follow God, right, so what Paul, is saying, then, if we go back, we are the true, circumcision, the others, they want you, to be circumcised, circumcised, in the flesh, that's all they care about, legalism, man stuff, we're the true, people of God, whose hearts, have been changed, right, and then, what does he do, he gives two markers, that distinguish, these people, they do two things, what are the two things, that people, who have had their hearts, changed, do, worship, worship, worship, worship is one, what's the other, glory, they glory, now, let's talk about, a translation problem here, for just a second, how many of you, have a version, that says, who worship God, by the spirit, they do, okay, we got one, so if you have King James, or New King James, yours is going to say, who worship God, by the spirit, all the other translations, are going to say, worship in the spirit of God, now, here's why, that is there, just to explain, why that's the case, oops, these two,

Greek words, all right, so, this is, this is, theu, theu, theu, this is who worship, by the spirit of God, and this is, theo, this is, who worship God, by the spirit, only reason I'm showing you this, is because, when the translators, of the King James, translated, they only had, so many manuscripts,

available to them, and in that manuscript, it had, theo, this bottom one, this is the King James, right, since, 1607, we have discovered, thousands of manuscripts, that are way older, than the ones, for the King James, and they have, theu, now, both of these sentences, can be theologically, fine, and good, and right, there's no theology, really that gets changed, it's just as to, what's the focus, that Paul's after, because one, one tells you, who worship, by the spirit of God, but you have to ask the question, worship, who, and the answer's gonna be, God, right, so in essence, they say the same thing, but I'm showing you this, so that as I'm reading, one version, and you read another version, you're going, oh this is wrong, it's okay, just take some time, to read both, and you'll get to the same place, right, it's good to have, multiple versions, of the English, so that you, can be aware, of these things, so the point is, is that this worship, this worship, that we have, it's, it comes from, the priesthood, the word, the Greek word, for worship, comes from the priesthood, and it's, it means, service, so our worship, typically when we think, about worship, we think only about, maybe, feelings, things we say, or singing, but things we do, are worship as well, right, so, and then, you can, you can turn that around, the other way, when you come, to service on Sunday morning, and you come, and you sing, you are doing service, to God, when you pray, with other people, you're doing service, to God, when we preach, and you listen to preaching, and we're all, in that moment together, we're doing service, to God, or we're worshiping God, either way, you want to say that, but we do this, by, by the spirit, or in the spirit, this is by the power, that he gives us, so in our verse here, we have, get back to it, we have here, the trinity, right, who worship, by the spirit, of God, which is the father, and glory, in Christ Jesus, our worship, of the father, is powered by, or empowered, by the spirit, and it is, glory, in Christ Jesus, glory here, when you hear glory, what do you think of, especially the way, this is written, glory in Christ Jesus, it's one thing to say,

[25 : 13] I see glory, or, praise the glory, of God, or to his glorious, grace, grace, but what does it mean, to glory, in Christ, is it more like, a feeling, like, yeah, yeah, I mean, yeah, I think it goes that direction, a little bit, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, boast, boast, boast, it's the idea of, boasting, in Christ, and this is the positive side of it, we boast, in Christ Jesus, we lift him up, we look at his work, we look at his person, and a person who's truly had a heart change, is a person who accentuates, who exalts, who magnifies, who draws attention to Jesus, his person and his work, but, they put no confidence, in the flesh, so one of the things we can do, is we can see, because of these two being held in parallel, that glory and confidence, sort of work, opposite of each other, or sort of, help us to understand one another, if we're glorying in Christ Jesus, obviously we're putting confidence in him, but if we put confidence in the flesh, we would be boasting, in the flesh, would be born.

My translation says, rejoice in Christ Jesus. Rejoice? Yeah, that would be interesting, I need to, I need to see what the, King James, is yours King James?

It says New King James. New King James, I need to see what that word is behind that, because, because the, the Greek word, in, in, um, older manuscripts, is the word for, um, boasting, but, uh, I'll look that up, and, we'll see.

Um, so let's, let's then make some application, before I, uh, have you discuss, these things. That's interesting. Um, get back to, here.

We want to, rejoice in, the Lord. He's called us to do so, but I want you to think about, all the ways, and I can, I can only give you just a sampling.

[27 : 35] I really can't, I can only give you a sampling. If you read, through the Psalms, for instance, the number of times, we are commanded, and told, to rejoice, in, the Lord, are just too numerous, for us to show.

So, all I can do is give you a couple. You have put gladness, in my heart, more than when there, grain, and new wine, abound. That word gladness, is the idea, of joy.

Psalms 16, 11, you will make known to me, the path of life, in your presence, there is fullness of joy, and in your right hand, there are pleasures, forevermore.

Romans 14, for the kingdom of God, is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy, in the Holy Spirit, and that's where I want to take this, here at the end, and that is this, that, you go to, the fruit of the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit, is love, joy, it's the fruit, of the Spirit, here's, here's, here's what, here's what I'm saying, all of this stuff, about we can't worship, except by, the Spirit empowering us, and, we, we can't rejoice, unless the Lord, empowers us, joy, is not a naturally, occurring, thing, in a human being, joy, is a result, of the supernatural work, of Christ, saving us,

and it is a fruit, of the Spirit, this is why, suffering, cannot destroy, joy, but it is also why, we have to be clear, about the difference, between, what we feel, because of circumstances, versus this presence, of joy,

I don't know, that I can really, give a good definition, of joy, so that we can see, the difference, right, I know we have this idea, that happiness is built, on circumstances, and those circumstances, change, the happiness changes, but joy, is more deep seated, that doesn't help me, it doesn't help me much, for someone to say, joy is deep seated, for me to grasp, and understand, what joy is, but I think, that maybe, the way to think, about this, is to think about, what Hebrews chapter 12, tells us, about Jesus, as he faced the cross, and what he says, in Hebrews chapter 12, is this, for the joy, set, before him, he endured the cross, despising its shame, he at the same time, looked at the joy, and despised, that's why I think, joy and mourning, can go side by side, because they're, different experiences, from different places, about different things,

[30 : 40] I was thinking about, the term joy, before Christ, was ever here, human beings, had something called, joy, but I think, what you just done, is to explain, the deep, strong, meaning of what joy, really is, by what you just said, it's a complete difference, in what it is, it's hard to define it, right, I might would say, since it's a fruit, of the spirit, since it's empowered, by Christ, that, having deep, seated joy, is, having, Christ himself, and that relationship, that we have with him, you know, if you've been through anything, that's difficult at all, and you have moments, that you can go to the Lord, and you're in prayer, or you can't even pray, you're just crying out, you can't even cry out, you're just sitting there, but you know that he's there, and your mind, will begin to, be reminded of, those simple truths, that he is there, and he has not left you, and you may not be able to go, woohoo, praise the Lord, you know, or anything like that, but, yeah, that was really bad, wasn't it,

I love it, I like making you uncomfortable, because, people like that, make me uncomfortable, you can feel it, deep within, but you can be miserable, sad, and crying, but there's something there, I don't, I don't know if I call it peace, but maybe, it is, but there is a joy, that the Lord does give, that's right, that's right, even when you feel, he's not there sometimes, and you just, cry out, that's right, you finally begin, to feel that joy, it's, it's, it's a different joy, though, like you're saying, of, right, happiness, right, you know, this kind of thing, it's not that kind of joy at all, no, no, it's not what you're saying, you're okay in him, he's with you, he's with you, that's right, I like, I like that, you're okay, like at that moment of, you're okay, I've got you, I've always thought of it, when you're in Christ, there's a contentment, no matter what life throws at you, you always have him, and you have him for strength, and, and you get all of these things, because happiness is a fleeting thing, day by day, but contentment, joy, that's a long, deeper seated, because you know, you're in Christ, and he will always take care of you, no matter what the tragedy, or what the, on the back side of it, you're going to come out of it, yeah, yeah, my devotion, that it is, said, always say, all is well, all is well, so you're telling us, to always say, all is well, that's true, yeah, yeah, one thing, that has come to my mind, during all this, is a confidence, that he is there, his presence, is with you, regardless of what's going on, yeah, and, in a sense, he will get you through it, yeah, it's not a feeling, yeah, it's, it's not a feeling, it's so funny to me, because, because listening to everybody's, little sort of, adding on, you can tell, this thing, is, is so, undefinable, undefinable, at times, it's, it, and I believe,

I believe that like, thinking about it as contentment, and confidence, and peace, and calm, or, whatever words we might use, I think, that those things, might end up being, the result, of that joy, being there, but here's the thing, that I want, you know, I want you to walk away with, and I want you to just remember this, and this is a hard thing to say, but remember, this all started with Paul saying, I command you, to rejoice, in the Lord, there is a joy, that's in the Lord, that is that deep seated, but there is a rejoicing, that then becomes something, we do, in the middle of that, I don't want you to lose that, because, because we'll have the experience, that is undefinable, that we know the Lord is there, and there is this deep joy, and whatever that is, but there's a moment, at which we also should then, rejoice, what is that rejoicing, I think rejoicing is, when we express, that joy, what does that look like, maybe all it, maybe all it can be, is just a faint whisper, of thank you, and maybe that's, that's the only expression, you can have, maybe, by God's grace, you can get to a, further place, of being able to actually, say to the Lord,

I'm rejoicing in you, or singing to him, maybe there's a lightness, that comes, but don't forget, that it is commanded, and if it's commanded, then he gives, what we can't do, think about faith, faith is commanded, do we have faith, no, he gives faith, trust is commanded, do we have trust, no, we don't have trust, he gives that, he commands joy, because he gives joy, joy,