

Joy in the Midst of Problems

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[0 : 00] All right, well, good morning again, and as we are beginning our study in the book of Philippians, Billy Sunday said, To see some people today, you would think that the essential of Christianity is to have a face so long you could eat oatmeal out of the end of a gas pipe.

William Barclay said that a gloomy Christian is a contradiction in terms, and nothing in all religious history has done Christianity more harm than its connection with black clothes and long faces. C.S. Lewis wrote, It's not so much the joy of the Lord that we are seeking as the Lord himself. Let that sink in for a moment.

It's not that we're seeking the joy of the Lord. We need to seek the Lord, and the joy of the Lord is going to be a byproduct. And so that is what we're going to be seeing in the book of Philippians. Now, we all experience painful situations in our life, and sometimes of our own making, sometimes through external reasons and causes.

[1 : 13] We're going through difficult times, and as a result, these can rob us of our joy. They can rob us of our feeling like things are going well in our life.

And these situations, as we said, can steal our joy. But no matter the origin, they can be painful, and they can be frustrating.

But God can provide us the grace to thrive during these times of discomfort, and he can provide us peace and comfort us in these times, and he can replace our gloominess with joy.

And that is what we're going to be seeing. And that's the theme of the Apostle Paul's letter to the Philippian Christians. And as you read different commentaries, you might find that there are some who pick up on the theme of joy.

Other commentators might pick up on the theme of living the Christian life. It was a very personal letter that the Apostle Paul wrote.

[2 : 27] And as well as the united fellowship of the church, the unity of the church. There was some disunity in the church of Philippi. Paul doesn't really spend a whole lot of time dealing with this disunity, but he does speak to two women in the church, Euodes and Syntyche, who were having some difficulties, and apparently people were taking sides.

And so Paul deals with it. He addresses it in one verse, but then he goes on. So as we begin our study of this heartfelt letter of the Apostle Paul, let's start by way of background.

And as we do that, as we're looking at the book of Philippians, or the letter to Philippians, the letter to the Philippian church is undoubtedly one of the best love letters of the Apostle Paul.

We don't see anything negative to the church in this letter to the Philippians. And Paul is writing this letter most likely because the church had sent possibly their pastor, Epaphroditus, with an offering for the Apostle Paul to help him while he was in prison, Philippians being one of his prison epistles, the second of the Apostle Paul's prison epistles.

And so Epaphroditus comes, and he brings him an offering from the church. The church loved Paul. Paul loved the church. And so to help his imprisonment be a little bit better, they brought an offering for him to use.

[4 : 01] And very possibly, maybe the original intent of the letter was for Paul. It was a thank you note to the Philippian church to thank them for their gift, to thank them for sending Epaphroditus to him to help him.

And it was an intensely personal letter. It lacks formality. A lot of Paul's letters, a lot of Paul's books that he writes, there is a theme that is distinct.

He has a distinct purpose in writing the letter. And he follows a particular outline, as if he said, I'm going to talk about this, then I'm going to talk about this. But the letter to the Philippian church is more like when you start a letter to a friend, and it just meanders and goes as the thoughts come

into your mind.

And he gets elated from time to time and talks about the joy of the Lord and that he wants them to have the joy of the Lord as well. Paul seems to set down ideas as they come to him instead of a structured outline and a single-minded purpose.

And for that reason, if you look in just about any commentary of the book of Philippians, most commentators are not necessarily not going to agree, but they're going to come up with different titles or different names for the different divisions because it's really just a letter, and it's not a doctrinal treatise.

[5 : 31] It is more of encouraging the church, thanking the church, and encouraging them to be unified as they serve the Lord together.

The keynote of the letter to the Ephesians, I believe, we find in chapter 4, and that is rejoice in the Lord always.

And again, finish it up. I say rejoice. So I believe that's kind of the keynote of the book. Rejoice in the Lord. Where was Paul? Paul was in prison.

Paul had been beaten. Paul was in stocks. And Paul says rejoice in the Lord always. And again, I say rejoice as if one time wasn't enough to say it.

The word joy in its verb and noun forms occurs about 16 times in this very, very short letter of the Apostle Paul, proportionately more than any of Paul's other letters that he writes.

[6 : 34] So that is why I've taken joy as the probable theme of the book, The Joy of the Lord, realizing the joy that the Lord can provide us as we seek the Lord himself.

And what's even more remarkable, as we said, this repeated call for joy is what is going on in the Apostle Paul's life, even in the midst of being in prison, in a prison cell.

And this can only come from a person whose life is centered in the Lord Jesus Christ. We see that in chapter 1, verse 21, chapter 3, verse number 8.

And who's learned the secret of being content in all situations and in all circumstances, like the Apostle Paul said that he has. And he's learned this secret of being content at all times and under all circumstances.

This is chapter 4, verse 10, and the following verses. Now, this letter was written to the Apostle Paul, by the Apostle Paul, to this Macedonian church in the city of Philippi.

[7 : 49] And Paul had visited this city on his second missionary journey. So Paul had already been on one missionary journey. On his second missionary journey, the Apostle Paul is on his way to Asia.

That's where Paul wanted to go. Paul wanted to go to Asia. But if you remember, he had a vision. A man from Macedonia, some possibly say it was possibly Luke.

Some others maybe differ on who this individual was. But in the vision, he says, come over to Macedonia and help us.

We see that in Acts chapter 16, verse number 9. So let's, by way of background, why does Paul end up here? And what is Paul doing in Macedonia, in the city of Philippi?

Well, this is the reason, and this is what leads us to the letter from Paul's second missionary journey. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, Come over to Macedonia and help us.

[9 : 01] Now, after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them. Therefore, sailing from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and the next day to Neapolis.

These were port cities. And Philippi was a very important city during that period of time. There were gold mines, silver mines in the area. And in the mountains that were there, there was a mountain pass near Philippi.

And so there was a trade route that was going through. So Philippi was a very important place. And if you know anything about the Apostle Paul, and the way Paul did his missionary trips, Paul went to large metropolitan areas.

So if Paul were alive today, and Paul were saying, Okay, I'm going to be going on my next missionary trip, Paul would go to New York City. Paul would go to Boston.

Paul would go to New Orleans. Paul would go to the largest metropolitan areas. Why is that? Because Paul had the biggest audiences. And in these large metropolitan areas, what the case was, people were there, and people were very transient.

[10:18] They would leave from there, and they would go other places. And Paul said, That's perfect. Now, if he went to Mamu, or if he went to Ville Platt, something like that, you know what? Most people have lived there their entire life, never left there. Some people have never gone more than 50 miles from home. But if you go to a modern, large city, people are transient. And so Paul is thinking, I'm going to preach the gospel.

They're going to hear the gospel, and then they're going to take it with them as they go around. So Paul went to Philippi. That's the city. The vision only said, Come to Macedonia.

So what did Paul do? Paul picked the biggest city, and Paul picked the most important city of that day in that area. And from there to Philippi, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia. He said it's the biggest place, and it's like when people come to Louisiana, where do they go? New Orleans. Why? Because everybody knows about New Orleans.

[11:18] When you go to New York, where do you go? You go to New York City. Why? Because it's the foremost city in the state. New Orleans is the foremost city in the state. Now, we have maybe a different conclusion being on this side of the state, right?

But for the average person, Paul says, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a colony. It was a Roman colony, by the way.

And we were staying in the city for some days. Philip of Macedon was the one who originally conquered that area, and it was named after him.

And this area, Macedonia, Philippi was a Roman colony. And there were many ex-soldiers who were told that you're going to go and you're going to populate Philippi.

And because it was a Roman colony, it was more like a little Rome. And the Roman citizens who lived in Philippi had different rights than the typical Greeks who lived in Philippi.

[12:26] As a matter of fact, the Roman citizens who lived in Philippi paid no poll taxes, paid no property tax. They had rights that the rest of the citizens did not have, so they had the full rights of citizenship with Rome.

And so here they are in a Greek country with a Roman citizenship who felt that they were out of place. So when Paul talks about your citizenship is in heaven, they would have immediately identified with, here we are, we live here, but we identify with Rome.

We identify with Italy. And so we're in Greece, but we're Italian. And so the believers, the Christians there in Philippi, they might have lived in the Greek province of Macedonia, but they were Roman citizens living in Philippi.

So the church included some rather familiar people. Matter of fact, when we mention their names, you're going to remember them. What about Lydia, the seller of purple? She was a very prominent citizen.

As a matter of fact, in Macedonia at this time, women had more rights than anywhere else in the modern world of their time. There were many women who were businessmen. There were many women who took part in the gospel.

[13:44] Matter of fact, Paul talks about Euodia and Syntyche as they were fellow laborers in the gospel. So we have Lydia, the seller of purple.

She would have been the modern-day fashionista. She would have been the ones who sold the fashions to the, you know, the ones who were on the lifestyles of the rich and famous. Those were the ones who could afford Lydia's garments because purple took a lot of dye.

And so they were very expensive to produce. And so she was a very, apparently, a very successful businesswoman during that time.

Then we had a slave girl. Do you remember the slave girl that was demon-possessed? And she told fortunes. Well, guess what? If you are the master of this little slave girl who told fortunes, you could set up your booth and say, Fortunes told, 100 bucks.

And for however much they charged, we don't know. But Scripture says they made a small fortune on her. And they made money off of this slave girl because people would come and the demons, however they were able to do it supernaturally, were able to tell people's fortunes.

[14:55] And what happens is Paul comes through and Paul casts the demon out. Well, that, just like the people, just like the guys who owned the pigs, you remember that in Scripture?

Well, he casts the demons out of the pigs. And what do the pigs do? They run off a cliff. And there goes that guy's whole herd and source of income. And so what happened was Paul cast out this demon out of the slave girl.

And so they're saying, Come on, tell their fortune. Jesus saves. And that's about all she could say at that moment in time. And so they got mad and they threw Paul in prison.

And so Paul did not have a good ending there in Philippi, but he really loved the Philippian Christians because he started the church there with Timothy and with Silas.

Usually when Paul mentioned the name, he used Silvanus, which was Silas's name. But Paul and Silas were there in Philippi with Timothy.

[15 : 54] And we also see a third prominent individual. What happened when Paul and Silas were in prison? They were praising the Lord and they were singing hymns.

And an earthquake took place and their chains are broken off. And so they're free. And they're in the darkness. The Philippian jailer, thinking that his prisoners had escaped, is set on preparing to kill himself because he knew that things were not going to go well because the commander was going to call him into his office.

And so Paul and Silas said, Oh, wait a minute. We're OK. We're still here. And then what was the question that we all know we've memorized it?

Sirs. What must I do to be saved? And they share the gospel with this Philippian jailer. And then what does he say? Come to my house.

My whole family's there. And then what happens? His whole family trusts the Lord and they're baptized and they're part of the church. And so we have Lydia. We have this slave girl. We have this Philippian jailer.

[17 : 05] So they were the core group of the church and they began to grow. And so there can be no doubt that Jesus Christ was the source of the Apostle Paul's joy.

Otherwise, how could he rejoice in prison? Painful. Matter of fact, Roman stocks of this at this in this period were done so that you would be stuck in an uncomfortable position for hours at a time. So much so that your body would be wracked with pain. And so Paul and Silas, Paul and Silas are praising God even in the midst of this pain and suffering in this Philippian jail.

And that is why this Philippian jailer says something is different about you guys. I've got to know what it is. So here in this letter to the Philippians, there's 104 verses.

But the name Jesus or Christ or the pronoun or any one of his cognates appears 61 times. 61 times out of 104 verses is significant, wouldn't you say?

[18 : 17] So Jesus and Christ and what Jesus is doing and what Jesus means to Paul permeates this entire letter to the Philippian Christians.

So it's all about Jesus, the joy of the Lord, living the Christian life, unity in Christ as he's talking to these Philippian believers.

Another one of Paul's emphasis is the word mind. The word think. And minded occurs a total of 11 times in this short letter.

Attitude, outlook. We talked about it last Sunday evening in Bible study. So Paul was saying that your attitude is important. Your outlook is important.

So here is Paul in a Roman jail bound in pain. His outlook made all the difference in the world. His attitude was, I'm here for Jesus.

[19 : 18] And I am living according to his purpose. And as a matter of fact, the gospel is spreading because of my being in prison. The gospel is spreading throughout the prison.

And so Paul knew Jesus's purpose. Paul knew why he was part of God's purpose. And so he was able to have he was able to be like minded. He was able to have the same attitude that Jesus Christ had.

And it was an attitude of humility. We're going to find as we get to that part. I don't know how long it's going to take us to get through Philippians. It might take us might take us a few months to get through Philippians.

But we're going to get through it. And I believe we're going to be the better for it. Because this is this book has brought more joy to more believers in. A couple of thousand years than just about any other book in scriptures.

It's a it's a very, very matter of fact, a lot of the verses that we learned as as as children in Sunday school come out of the letter to the Philippians. So there are a lot of verses.

[20 : 20] Matter of fact, there are a lot of verses that would that would be good Twitter. Good Twitter verses. Good Instagram verses. You know, you make a little picture and you put the verse on it. Why? Because they're so meaningful to us as followers of Jesus.

So when we put all these things together, we arrive at this truth. Christian joy comes through having a Christ centered mind. Our joy is because Jesus Christ permeates our mind and he is at the center of our thoughts.

You know, multitudes or are obsessed with happiness and frustrated because they can't find it. Wouldn't that be a fair assessment? Society today is obsessed with happiness and get frustrated when they can't find it.

Now, why is this the case? Could it be that this is the problem? We search for happiness instead of the thing that creates happiness.

We search for happiness instead of the thing that creates happiness. Now, that'll post to Instagram.

[21 : 31] We are searching for happiness when in reality, if we would just seek the Lord and we would allow our life to be centered around Jesus Christ.

Joy is going to be the byproduct and it's going to be something that we experience because you know what? We're not going to find happiness in our job. We're not going to find and if we do, it's not it may not last because things change.

We are not going to find joy in our family because sometimes families can be frustrating.

Relationships can be frustrating. So, yes, there's joy. But sometimes there's moments when that joy is taken away for a moment.

But in Christ, that joy never leaves because he's always there. He's always the same. He never changes. And that relationship is always going to be the same unless we change or we move.

But he will never change and he will never leave us nor forsake us. So I get the impression that Paul wasn't looking for happiness. Paul wasn't going, OK, now where can I find happiness tomorrow?

[22 : 37] I think I'm going to going to go and find happiness here. No, Paul said, my joy is in the Lord for to me to live is Christ. And so for the apostle Paul, his life was Jesus.

He lived a Jesus life because Paul was all about Christ after he met him on the road to Damascus, on the on that road to Damascus. And he was changed forever.

So we need to learn that happiness is a byproduct. And it comes to us as we occupy ourselves with serving the Lord. So with these things in mind, as we begin our study of Philippians, that was introduction.

So we're almost done this morning and we've just introduced. But we're only going to go through the first two verses. And the first two verses of Philippians is merely a salutation. It followed the typical Greek formula of salutation.

But we'll keep a consistent lookout as we go through the book of Philippians. We will be on the consistent lookout for the theme of joy as it bubbles to the surface. How about that? And we're going to hopefully turn that frown into a smile.

[23 : 49] So today, as we start with the first two verses, Paul's introduction, his salutation. Let's read verse number one. Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Christ, of Jesus Christ to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi with the bishops and deacons.

Grace to you and peace from God, our father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ. So for the next few moments, we're going to be looking at these two verses.

Paul begins by greeting the church and he includes Timothy. Timothy, the Philippian Christians had a special place in Timothy's heart. Now, as we begin with just about any study of a writing of Paul or any of the other biblical writers, we have to think about who was the writer, who was the recipient, and what was the purpose, what was the wish of the writer.

And this book is no different. And so we're going to be looking at that. And I included that in your Philippian journals as well. But Timothy, not a co-author.

We'll say, well, maybe Timothy was his secretary or Timothy was a co-writer. I believe Paul includes Timothy because he was preparing Timothy for his next visit. He was going to be going to be sending Timothy back to the Philippians.

[25 : 16] The reason I say that Timothy was probably not a co-writer is because he mentions Timothy here. But for the rest of the letter, Paul uses first personal pronoun speaking of himself.

And the only other time Timothy is mentioned, he's mentioned in the third person. So Timothy was not, he did not have his hand to the pen. It was Paul that wrote this letter.

And I think he introduced or reintroduced Timothy at the beginning of the letter and says, Timothy is with me on this. Timothy is my fellow servant. So as we study the Bible, we begin, as we said, with

the writer, the audience, and the proposition.

So for this letter, the writer is who? The Apostle Paul. Paul says, I, Paul. And very few historians, very few theologians will disagree with Paul being the writer.

So in typical Greek fashion, when a letter was written, they say who they are, they say who they're writing to, and then they give the typical Greek formula was grace and peace.

[26 : 28] And Paul used that as well. Although I think we're going to get a little bit more out of that this morning. So the recipients are the church and along with the bishops and the deacons.

He says grace and peace to you. So now for the so what. This morning, for the next few moments, we'll consider what God can provide to us through Jesus Christ.

So what does God provide us through Jesus? First of all, Jesus provides us with his purpose. And I believe that's what made the Apostle Paul tick.

I believe that's what motivated the Apostle Paul in everything that he did. Why did Paul continually subject himself to pain and torture?

Because he named the name of Jesus Christ in these large metropolitan areas, knowing that the Jews in almost every area was going to put him in prison or make life difficult for him, try to stone him, try to get him beaten.

[27 : 45] But Paul kept going and going and going. And going was because Jesus provided him with his purpose.

Let's take a look. Verse number one, Paul and Timothy, bond servants. I want you to pay attention to that word, bond servants. Some of your translations might say servants of Jesus Christ.

But that word servant was a common Greek word for slave. A slave literally had no rights. A slave had no freedom.

A slave was under the sole ownership of an individual who was their master. So when Paul identifies himself and Timothy as servants, what he means here is they were the absolute possession of Jesus Christ, their Lord, and owed absolute obedience to him.

So they were his slaves, just as we are. But this kind of servitude is more than a master-slave relationship. Because I believe it went further than that.

[28 : 58] I think the Apostle Paul is undoubtedly thinking of the bond servant, bond slave relationship here, where when a slave is ultimately given his freedom.

Could be. Maybe they were an indentured slave. And maybe they were paying off a debt. But according to Jewish law, there were some situations where they were a slave for six years.

The seventh year, they were set free. Well, the servant or the slave had a choice. There were many people who were in that slave relationship.

And life under that particular master was better than life on their own. And they were saying, you know what? I never ate this well. And I never had such a nice roof over my head.

And you know what? Master treats me pretty well. Doesn't beat me. And so this is not a bad gig. And so master says, you've got your freedom.

[29 : 59] Would write their writ of freedom. And they would say, you know, what if I stayed on? And so there was that relationship that was allowed under the law at the time.

What they would do is they would go to a post and in public, the owner would take an awl, drive it through the slave's ear, and they would be called a bondservant.

Meaning, they still belonged to the master, but they were belonging to this master of their own volition and of their own free will.

So Paul and Timothy belonged to Jesus Christ of their own free will, but yet they still gave their total and complete allegiance and obedience to Jesus Christ.

So they were bondservants to Jesus Christ. So it's in this very relationship that provides us with our purpose in life. So Paul's purpose was, he was a bondslave.

[31 : 01] Every morning he got up, he belonged to Jesus, and he did what Jesus wanted. So that was his purpose. He didn't have to think about, well, what's my purpose today? We don't have to think about what's our purpose today. What's life about?

Is there any purpose in life? If you're a follower of Jesus Christ, you have one purpose. And that is to serve Christ and share the gospel, share your faith. That's our purpose. Everything else is ancillary to that.

And so Jesus gives us our purpose. And since this letter was written in the midst of a personally challenging situation, it reminds me of Romans chapter 8, verses 28 and 30.

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his what? His purpose. We're called to the purpose of elevating Jesus Christ and doing his bidding.

What was the last thing Jesus said, most important thing he said to his followers before he left? He said, go, make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

[32 : 09] So he says, this is what's important. This is what I'm leaving you with. This is your purpose. Go forth and share the gospel and the good news of Jesus Christ.

And the gospel is another common refrain in the book of Philippians. Paul mentions the gospel multiple times in this letter. So as the servants of Jesus Christ, we are uniquely tied to this.

Let's go to verse 29. So as the servants of Jesus Christ, we are uniquely tied to his purpose in this world.

Don't ever think your life is meaningless because your life has purpose. Things may be bleak.

Things may be dark. But you always have a purpose. And you're always, as we've said before, you are always part of the plan of God.

No matter how dark things are, no matter how bleak things appear, and no matter whether you can see the light at the end of the tunnel or not, you're still part of God's eternal plan.

[33 : 31] Our life has a purpose. So most of us here this morning, I believe, have trusted Christ as their Savior.

But if you are listening to this message or Facebook or listening to it on our website, consider this.

Giving your life to Jesus Christ hitches your life to the greatest purpose in the universe.

When you hitch your life to Jesus Christ, that is the only thing that truly has purpose and that will outlast this life, that will outlast your bank account, that will outlast this very world.

And he is on. And he is the winner. He is the victor. And we're on the winning team. Consider trusting Jesus Christ as your Savior.

Give him your life and trust Jesus Christ alone. Not only does Jesus Christ provide us with purpose, he goes one step further. Jesus Christ provides us with his presence.

[34 : 36] We have his purpose, but he didn't leave us alone. He left us with his very presence.

Number one, Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi with the bishops and deacons.

Now pay special attention to that second phrase. To all the saints in Christ Jesus with the bishops and the deacons. Who was he talking about with the bishops and the deacons?

Bishops, some translations have overseers. The same word for presbyters. We use the term elder. Same word. Presbyteros.

And we call those today elders and deacons. Elders had the leadership responsibility of the church. The deacons had the physical responsibility of feeding the poor and taking care of the widows, taking care of those within the church.

So the elders had the teaching and the spiritual leadership responsibility. The deacons had the physical responsibility of taking care of the physical components of the church.

[35 : 51] But who were they with? He didn't write just to the leaders and the deacons. He wrote to the saints. So the church members are called saints.

Now this doesn't mean they were venerated or they were elevated to sainthood by the church.

There's no such ecclesiastical status where a particularly pious person performs a miracle and it can be somehow substantiated and they're elevated to a status above other Christians and they're in heaven with a direct pipeline to God.

No such thing. We don't find it in the Bible. Not in Scripture anywhere. Not even Mary has that direct pipeline to God, so to speak, because the Bible says there is only one mediator between God and man.

And who is that? Jesus Christ. There is only one mediator between God and man. That is the man, Jesus Christ. So there are no saints who we pray to that go to God and plead our case for us.

Mary doesn't plead our case for us. Jesus is the one who pleads our case. Jesus is our mediator in heaven. So they're called saints.

[37 : 06] Literally, the word is hagios in the Greek, and it means holy or set-apart ones. So they were considered saints.

They were considered holy. They were considered separated. Now this is a reference to forensic holiness or their legal standing before God. It wasn't a reference to their moral holiness, although

that's a part of our Christian life.

But being called a saint is more of our standing before God. But I want us to pay special attention to the phrase, in Christ, to all the saints who are in Christ.

And I won't bore you and get off into the weeds in the locket of a sphere with the Greek and all of this. But what it simply tells us is we have our purpose and our meaning, and who we are is because we are in Christ.

We are in the body of Christ. We've been baptized into the body of Christ. We've been sealed until the day of redemption. And this is a favorite expression of the Apostle Paul.

[38 : 22] Paul uses the term in Christ in a lot of his letters, and he used that in here. It speaks of our union with Christ in his death and in his resurrection, and in the power that comes through his resurrected life and the new life that we share.

It's part of our baptism formula, raised to nudists in life. That's our identification with him. We've been sealed in Christ.

And in Christ often points to Christ Jesus as the sphere in which Christians have their life. Our life revolves around Christ.

Our life is in Christ. In other words, we're always in the presence of Christ, and he's always with us.

And I love the way Louis Giglio illustrates it.

So here it is. I am somebody. God knows my name. I am a saint, which is translated a holy one, by the grace of God in Christ.

[39 : 28] That's who I am. And what Colossians 1 says is one of the passages that you took away last week, is that Christ, or through God, he has rescued us out of the dominion of darkness.

So we were in this predicament at one time of our lives, but no more. And what God does is he comes along and he breaks open the power that sin had over our lives. He actually breaks open our lives and takes the sin that was in us out of our lives.

And so there's a whole change going on in us. And what he does is he says, hey, has anybody got a big fat marker? And of course he's God. So one of the angels hands him a big fat marker, and he goes to town, and he changes everything.

And so now it's Christ in you, the hope of glory. That's the new thing. That's what God is doing.

And so just so you can see it, he is saying there is a new work coming. There's a new identity coming. There is a new you coming.

[40 : 28] I am placing Christ, my son, risen from the dead inside of you. It's right there. It's the mystery hidden from ages past. It's now being revealed to the saints.

And here's what it is. It's Christ in you, the hope of glory. Something powerful changes and something powerful happens. And now there's a you floating around that's got Christ inside of you. And that's a whole new way of looking at life right there. But not only is that true, that Christ is in you, all these passages are telling us that you are in Christ.

So he is in you and you are in him. That's a pretty solid deal right there. So let's go ahead and make that reality happen. So you're not just wallowing around and whatever, but you've been moved into a whole new position.

And the whole new position that you've been made, put into, and you've been sealed, by the way. If we had some stuff, we could seal this up because you were sealed, remember, with the Holy Spirit that we were reading last week. And so now Christ, that's where you are.

[41 : 32] And that's where I am. That's who you are. And it's who I am. That's the hope of glory right there. That's you. That's you going out of here tonight.

Now you've got some problems, by the way. Can I just say that? Because you lived a really crazy life and you came into this world with a lot of problems called sin and the sin nature and earthly nature.

And so there's a lot of that stuff still in your mind, still in your process of your thinking. There's stuff that's going on chemically in your body. There's still a lot of stuff about you that's going on.

But God is changing all that. And he's starting to change it all by putting Christ inside of you and by putting you inside of Christ. So when you roll out of here, that's you in there. You can still see you, but mostly what you see is Christ.

Amen. But then there's you. And in you is Christ. We can see as we being in Christ, and he mentions that it's in our attitude.

[42 : 34] We still have sin. We still sin. But Jesus Christ is changing us by the renewing of our mind. And that's where we see mind, mindedness, same mind as Christ in Philippians.

We see a common theme, or we see common themes run through this letter of Philippians. Isn't that a good illustration? Can't get much better than that. And then, next, Jesus provides us with his power.

Now, we're coming down to a landing. It won't take us long to get to the end. Jesus provides us with his power. Because what good would purpose be? What good would his presence be if it didn't come with power?

And so we have the power of Jesus Christ within us because we have Jesus in us, and we are in Christ. And so, therefore, we have that power, grace and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I know we're all familiar with that term, grace. For Paul, grace underscored the salvation event. Salvation is by grace through faith.

[43 : 50] In other words, salvation is appropriated by faith through the working power of grace. Grace is the power that works in us as we move and flow in our life.

It is that power of him. It's what we could not do for ourselves that God does for us through Jesus Christ. So grace is the catalyst.

It's the power by means by which we effect or by which salvation is effected. So how can you and I get through life?

The answer is grace. The Bible says we live from grace to grace, from faith to faith. So that is how we get through life, is through the grace of God.

God's divine, you've heard it, God's divine enablement. God's power is what helps us to get through that life and to accomplish the purpose of Christ.

[44 : 52] So how could Paul be filled with joy considering his situation? Only by God's grace. You've heard someone pray, God, please give me the grace to get through this.

God, give me dying grace. But you know what? I think sometimes there's more power necessary for living grace, getting through life. You know, it's easy.

Remember when Paul said, we're going to again be looking at this, For to me to live is Christ, but to what? To die is gain. What could you do to Paul?

Kill him and he's in a better place. Wow, that must have been frustrating to his captors. That must have been frustrating to his enemies. What can we do to Paul? We beat him and he praises God. We put him in the stocks and he sings hymns. We threaten to kill him and he says, go ahead, make my day. Because for him to live was Christ, but to die is so much better.

[45 : 52] He gains so much more. The same with you and the same with me. Jesus providing the power to rise above his circumstances, realizing that Jesus was with him, using Paul to accomplish a divine purpose.

So we have implanted within us in which would lift us above all of our circumstances, all difficulties, and it's the power of Jesus Christ.

This is the almighty power of the grace of God. And then lastly, Jesus provides us with peace. Jesus provides us with peace.

The peace of God, peace with God. All of these are, I believe, included in this salutation. I knew you thought this was just a salutation.

I believe Paul knew exactly what he was writing. Although he was following a typical Greek form, Paul knew there were power to the words. And those words took on a brand new meaning to followers of Jesus Christ.

[46 : 56] So Jesus provides us with peace. Grace to you and peace. From whom? From God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. The word peace, as is used here, is not referring to a relationship between people.

As normally we use peace. You know, hey, are we at peace? That's not what he was referring to. The Greek has so many different variations and hues of meaning.

The term that Paul used here for peace, not even an attitude of peace, but referred to a time of peace or a state of peace.

God can bring to us this state of peace, knowing that we're in him, knowing that he's in us, knowing that we're living according to his purpose, knowing that he is providing us the power to make it through life.

And there's also no peace without grace. Because without grace we would have no peace with God. So with grace comes peace. Inward peace springs from a sense of divine favor.

[48 : 05] No grace and peace, but from whom? God our Father. The fountain and origin of all blessings. The Father of lights, from whom comes down every good and every perfect gift.

James chapter 1, verse number 17. No grace and peace from God our Father, but in and through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace doesn't come without the Father. But grace doesn't come from God the Father except through Jesus Christ. He says, through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ is our mediator. He's a channel of provision for all of our spiritual blessings that we have in the heavenly places, that we enjoy in the heavenly places in Christ.

All spiritual blessings to the church and provides these spiritual blessings to all of his members. So what does all this mean this morning?

[49 : 02] In conclusion, no matter what situation you are in, God can turn a frown into a smile. No matter what you are going through in life, if you are seeking the giver of every good and every perfect gift, the byproduct will be inner joy and inner peace provided through his grace.

So God can turn a frown into a smile when our life is centered in Christ, in Jesus Christ.

Secondly, God's purpose, God's presence, God's power, and God's peace can lift you above any and all of life's circumstances, can not only make it bearable, but can connect it to the eternal.

So it's not totally correct for us to say God can give you peace in spite of circumstances. That is not completely correct. I believe it's more accurate to say that God can give us purpose, or God can give us joy and peace very often because of our circumstances.

Because what was Paul saying about his circumstances? God is using it for the furtherance of the gospel. So Paul knew all things work together for what? Good.

[50 : 30] So all of our circumstances are working good for us. So God can give us joy. God can provide his purpose, his presence, his power, and his peace, and can lift you above all of life's circumstances and make it bearable and connect it to the eternal.

And then lastly, but ultimately, this is only appropriated through faith in Christ Jesus. And so one last appeal. Trust Jesus Christ as your Savior.

We're all sinners, just as Louis Giglio showed in that video. We're all in sin. We're all in a state of sin.

But through the cross of Jesus Christ, his death and his resurrection, God has broken free the chains of death, and Jesus Christ paid that sin debt eternally for you and for me.

And by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ, he gives us the free gift of eternal life. And that's only through asking him and saying, Lord, I know I'm a sinner.

[51 : 39] And I'm trusting Jesus right now to come into my life and to remove the sin and to make me a part of your family.

That is what makes this whole thing work. Let's pray. Lord God, this morning, as we are looking in your word and, Father, as we are trusting you to provide us with your purpose and the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ and the power and your peace to make it through life, Father, I pray that you help us to see the joy that only comes from knowing Christ and being centered upon him.

Be with us today. Send us upon our way this morning, Heavenly Father, with grace and peace. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.