

# Coronavirus Online Bible Study

## ***Week Six- Rejoice- Philippians 4***

### **Introduction:**

Rejoice! This is one of the prevailing themes of the last chapter of Paul's letter to the Philippians. We have much to rejoice over, but so many times the circumstances of our lives get in the way of our joy. Today we will see how the joy of the Lord can be ours, and how Paul concludes his letter to his friends in Philippi.

**Read Philippians 4:1-3.**- How do you think Euodia and Syntyche would feel to know their names were in the Holy Scriptures in this way? We don't know what their disagreement was over, but how important was the issue they disagreed on in the eternal scheme of things?

Why do you think Paul feels it necessary to get involved in this disagreement?

**Read Philippians 4:4-7.** Verse 4- Why do you think Paul tells us to rejoice twice in this verse?

The early Christians were known for beginning each day by singing a joyful hymn. As we discussed last week, joy is different than happiness. Happiness is an emotion based on our circumstances, but joy doesn't take circumstances into account. Joy is a chosen mindset, empowered by God's Spirit, founded in God's promises.

What reasons do we have to "always" rejoice?

In verses 5-6, Paul identifies a couple of things that can steal our joy if we aren't careful. They are:

Impatience (vs 5)- The word translated as "gentleness" can also be translated as "patient", or "peaceable". It refers to treating others with gentle fairness. How does impatience steal our joy? Why should we patient, according to the end of this verse?

Anxiety (vs 6)- Anxiety, or worry, steals our joy by focusing us on our problems rather than on the One that helps us overcome them. **Read Matthew 6:25-27.** How do Jesus' words dovetail with Paul's instructions in Philippians 4?

Why is thanksgiving such an important part of our prayers when we are feeling anxious?

Verse 7- We are not saved by our actions, but our choices have a lot to do with how much we experience God's inner peace! Here Paul assures us that if we want to experience God's peace, we must CHOOSE to be patient and gentle, and

be in the habit of taking our cares to God, with thanksgiving. Our habits are not unrelated to our experience of joy and peace!

**Read Philippians 4:8-9.** How do negative thoughts rob us of our joy? Can the things we watch, listen to, or our conversations with others affect the way we think negatively? What have you done in your life to keep away from “stinkin’ thinkin’?”

Paul says in verse 9 that the Philippians could put into practice ANYTHING they have seen him do or say. There are few people that could (or should) say this, because it displays a confidence that one has sought to model Christlikeness in every way. We all can think of things we do/say/think that others probably shouldn’t put into practice, but we can learn from Paul that our GOAL should be to become spiritually mature enough that we can say with integrity, “follow my example!”

**Read Philippians 4:10-13.** Vs. 11-12. What is “contentment”? How does someone “learn” to be content? How did Paul do so?

How might Paul’s contentedness be related to what he says in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10?

How have you experienced the truth of verse 13 in your own life? How have you seen it through the lives of others?

How do verses 11-13 relate to Paul’s current circumstances as he writes his letter to the Philippians?

**Read Philippians 4:14-19.** Paul had a special relationship with every church he helped to start, but his love for the Philippians was especially strong. The church at Philippi had for years been one of Paul’s greatest financial backers, and had provided for his needs as he evangelized all over the Mediterranean region.

Acts 17:1-9 describes the trouble Paul and his fellow ministers experienced at Thessalonica immediately after leaving Philippi. The Acts passage suggests Paul’s ministry in Thessalonica wasn’t a very long ministry, but it was very effective.

Verse 19- What are the things we “need”? What are our physical needs? Our spiritual needs?

How does our knowledge of what we “need” relate to our sense of contentment?

What else do you see in this chapter that we should discuss? What questions still need to be answered?

## **Closing Thoughts:**

Paul has taught us a lot in his letter to the church at Philippi. Though he likely never knew he was writing Scripture, the timeless truths he teaches are just as appropriate nearly 2000 years after he wrote them as they were in the first century. Here's a quick synopsis of some of the main points of Paul's letter:

- God's not done with us! "He who began a good work... will carry it on to completion. (1:6)
- We should seek to display the same humility and obedience to God that Christ displayed during His time on earth, to "do nothing out of selfish ambition". (2:3)
- Our outward behavior makes us shine like "stars in the universe", (2:15), a testimony of the Gospel to a dying world.
- Our confidence is not in our religious actions or family pedigree, but rather through the salvation that is by faith in Christ Jesus (3:1-10)
- Because of the salvation we have through Christ Jesus, we should "rejoice in the Lord always!" (4:4)