**Introduction of The Book of Philippians**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Philippians 1:1-7**

**Wednesday Evening**

**January 5, 2022**

**The Purpose**

To thank the Philippians for the gift they had sent Paul and to strengthen these believers by showing them that true joy comes from Jesus Christ alone!

**Author**

Paul The Apostle

**Audience**

All the Christians at Philippi, and all believers everywhere

**Date Written**

Approximately A. D. 61 from Rome during Paul’s imprisonment there.

**Setting**

Paul and his companions began the Church at Philippi, and his second missionary trip. This was the first Church established on the European continent. The Philippian Church had sent a gift with Epaphroditus one of their members to be delivered to Paul. Paul was in a Roman prison at the time. He wrote this letter to thank for their gift and to encourage them in their Faith!

**Key Verse**

**Philippians 4:4**

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

Saints, THE WORD happiness evokes visions of unwrapping gifts on Christmas morning, strolling hand in hand with the one you love, being surprised on your birthday, responding with unbridled laughter to a comedian, or vacationing in an exotic locale.

Everyone wants to be happy; we make chasing this elusive ideal a lifelong pursuit: spending money, collecting things, and searching for new experiences. But if happiness depends on our circumstances, what happens when the toys rust, loved ones die, health deteriorates, money is stolen, and the party’s over? Often happiness flees and despair sets in.

In contrast to happiness stands joy. Running deeper and stronger, joy is the quiet, confident assurance of God’s love and work in our life—that he will be there no matter what! Happiness depends on happenings, but joy depends on Christ.

Philippians is Paul’s joy letter. The church in that Macedonian city had been a great encouragement to Paul. The Philippian believers had enjoyed a very special relationship with Paul, so he wrote them a personal expression of his love and affection.

They had brought him great joy. Philippians is also a joyful book because it emphasizes the real joy of the Christian life. The concept of rejoicing or joy appears sixteen times in four chapters, and the pages radiate this positive message, culminating in the exhortation to “always be full of joy in the Lord.

Saints, in a life dedicated to serving Christ, Paul had faced excruciating poverty, abundant wealth, and everything in between. He even wrote this joyful letter from prison. Whatever the circumstances, Paul had learned to be content, finding real joy as he focused all of his attention and energy on knowing Christ and obeying him.

Paul’s desire to know Christ above all else is wonderfully expressed in the following words: “Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I may have Christ and become one with him. . . .

Saints, as a result, I can really know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I can learn what it means to suffer with him, sharing in his death”. May we share Paul’s aspiration and seek to know Jesus Christ more and more. Rejoice with Paul in Philippians and rededicate yourself to finding joy in Christ.

**Philippians 1:1-7**

1 Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, 5 for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

7 just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace.

**1 Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:**

The undisputed author of this letter is the apostle Paul, missionary to the Gentiles, imprisoned in Rome for preaching the gospel. Paul had founded the church in Philippi, so the recipients of the letter were his dear friends and children in the faith.

Paul wrote this letter from Rome. He had arrived there through a series of unusual circumstances. He had been arrested in Jerusalem by the Romans for seemingly inciting a riot. As a prisoner being unjustly tried, Paul used the opportunity to get to Rome by appealing his case to Caesar.

Paul had wanted to preach the gospel in Rome, and he eventually got there—in chains, through shipwreck, and after many trials. In Rome, Paul was under house arrest. This meant that he could receive visitors and write and receive letters.

Paul had to finance his imprisonment. Acts 28:30 states that Paul had to pay for his own rented apartment in Rome; plus he had to pay for the guards as required by Rome.

Although Paul’s normal policy was not to accept support from the churches so that he could not be accused of having a “profit motive,”

he did accept a gift from the Philippians for his support in prison. Paul had arrived in Rome around A.D. 59 and had spent two years under house arrest. The letter to the Philippians was probably written toward the end of Paul’s imprisonment there, in A.D. 61.

**2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Paul used grace and peace as a standard greeting in all his letters. Grace is God’s undeserved favor—his lovingkindness shown to sinners whereby he saves them and gives them strength to live for him; peace refers to the peace that Christ made between sinners and God through his death on the cross.

Peace also refers to that inner assurance and tranquility that God places in the heart, producing confidence and contentment in Christ. Only God can grant such wonderful gifts. Paul wanted his readers to experience God’s grace and peace in their daily living.

The phrase God our Father focuses on the family relationship among all believers as God’s children. By using the phrase Lord Jesus Christ, Paul was pointing to Jesus as a full person of the Godhead and he was recognizing Jesus’ full deity. God the Father and Christ the Lord are coequal in providing the resources of grace and peace.

**3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,**

Saints, every time Paul thought about the Philippians, he gave thanks to God for them. The Philippian church had brought Paul much joy and little pain. Some of the churches had developed severe problems, and Paul’s letters had focused on dealing with the problems. Paul’s letter to the Philippians, while mentioning some concerns and giving some advice, could be considered a beautiful thank-you note for their unwavering support.

Paul probably visited Philippi on three separate occasions:

1. On the second missionary journey, when the gospel was planted

**Acts 16:12**

“and from there to Philippi, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a colony. And we were staying in that city for some days”

2. On his journey from Ephesus through Macedonia on his way to Greece, where he stayed for three months

3. On his way back to Jerusalem

**Acts 20:6**

“But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days”

Saints, while the length of time of each stay is uncertain, his time with the Philippians had cemented a strong relationship.

**4 always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, 5 for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now,**

Saints, the words, I always pray for you, are in the present tense, meaning that Paul was praying for them continually. Paul planted churches and then kept those churches in prayer as he continued in his ministry.

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-22**

16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not despise prophecies. 21 Test all things; hold fast what is good. 22 Abstain from every form of evil.

Saints, when Paul prayed for the Philippians, he thanked God for them, and he prayed with a heart full of joy. This is the first of many times that Paul used the word “joy” in this letter. Coming from an itinerant preacher imprisoned for his faith, joy would be the last attitude one would expect.

Paul had joy despite his imprisonment and the uncertain decision on his case. True joy rises above the rolling waves of circumstance; true joy keeps us on an even keel no matter how happy or sad we might feel. One reason for Paul’s joy was that the Philippians had been his partners in spreading the Good News through their generous contribution to Paul’s ministry.

**6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;**

Saints, the verb tense indicates that Paul had been sure from the first, and he was still sure to that very day, of God’s continued work to transform the lives of the Philippian believers.

The good work refers to God’s salvation and continued perfecting of the believers. God who began a good work of redemption will continue his work until it is finally finished when believers meet Christ Jesus face to face when he comes back again.

Paul was describing the process of Christian growth and maturity that begins when people accept Jesus. Nothing in this life or after death can stop God’s good work in us (Romans 8:28-39).

**Romans 8:28-39**

28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." 37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,

39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Saints, despite any persecution the church in Philippi might face, Paul was confident that God would continue his good work in them.

**7 just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace.**

Paul knew that his feeling of confidence in the Philippians was right because of his personal relationship with them and knowledge of their sincere faith in Christ. These believers held a special place in Paul’s heart.

All the believers shared the blessings of God. As Paul sat imprisoned in Rome, he knew that the Philippians suffered as well because of their deep concern and love for him. Paul knew that the church was constantly praying on his behalf.

**In Closing:**

The Philippians also shared in defending the truth and telling others the Good News through their support of Paul’s ministry across the world both when he was in prison and when he was out.

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**