



“Joy in Everything: Epiphany” January 8

Discussion Questions

1. How would you define “joy”? Is it quantitatively or qualitatively different from happiness: i.e., is joy extreme happiness, or a different feeling altogether? When in your life have you experienced joy?
2. How did the sermon define “joy” in a biblical sense? (Hint: there’s a connection to “grace”.) Look at the Philippians reading: where is joy/rejoicing mentioned, and why?
3. Read Phil 1:9-11. What is Paul’s prayer for the Philippians? If this prayer were answered in your own life, what would it look like?
4. Read Phil 1:12-18. Why does Paul’s imprisonment actually help spread the good news of Jesus?
5. Reflect on the recent past (the last day, week, month, etc.). Where have you experienced God’s grace? Try to prayerfully “rejoice” in that: i.e., meditate on the experience with thanksgiving.

Bonus question: What is the feast of Epiphany and what does it have to do with joy?

Philippians 1:1-18a

1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons[a]:

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

Thanksgiving and Prayer

3 I thank my God every time I remember you. 4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

7 It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. 8 God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

9 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, 10 so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

Paul's Chains Advance the Gospel

12 Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters,[b] that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. 13 As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard[c] and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. 14 And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

15 It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. 16 The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. 17 The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. 18 But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice,