

"PHILIPPIANS, WALK THRU THE BIBLE."

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First Christian Reformed Church, Lynden, WA

July 26, 2026, 6:00 pm

Text for Sermon: Philippians 1:1-2; 3:7-11; 4:12-13

Philippi.

Philippi was Paul's first European city, as he came over from Asia Minor (Turkey) during his second missionary journey, having received a vision from God in a dream.

The church in Philippi was born in the place of prayer and out of prayer.

Acts 16:11-13 So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, 12 and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days. 13 And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together.

As with everywhere Paul went, here he preached the way of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Remember the question of the Philippian jailer to Paul and Silas:

Acts 16:30-32 Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." 32 And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.

The church of Jesus Christ in Philippi was founded on and built on individuals who had made a personal commitment to Christ as their Savior from sin and their Lord over all their life.

We are reminded again and again of the uniqueness and exclusiveness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He is the only way of salvation, there is no other.

The church there was born out of prayer and out of the severe suffering of God's apostles, willing to suffer and be whipped and lashed for the sake of the truth of the Gospel they preached.

The Letter to the Philippians.

This is another one of Paul's prison epistles, written from his jail cell in Rome. The others are Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon.

Writing from prison and at the end of one's life, gives you a special and unique perspective on life, on what is important. It cuts through the trivial, the mundane, the small talk.

Some of the most loved verses in the NT were written in prison and found in Philippians.

1:21 For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made like him in his death.

4:11 I have learned, in whatever state I am, in this to be content.

4:13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

4:19 My God shall supply all you need according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

He is facing possible execution in Rome. He had been nearly abandoned in prison in Rome. He was deserted, left alone, with few visitors. Yet he writes his most joy-filled and peace-filled, up-lifting pastoral letter.

This is deeply personal letter, the most personal of Paul's letters written to a Church. It reveals the sincere warmth of Paul's heart, showing his love for them. Paul cherished his relationship with them. He bares his soul to them more than in any other letter.

Philippians 1:7-8 It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. 8 For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.

The Philippian believers are struggling, they are having a hard time finding reason for joy.

“Their beloved leader Paul is in jail; they face tremendous opposition from enemies; their church is experiencing rivalry and disunity; one of their key leaders, Epaphroditus, has nearly died twice. How can they rejoice?” (Jon Dennis).

Philippians 1:18-19 ... Christ is proclaimed, and *in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice*, 19 for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance.

Paul’s unadorned testimony was “I rejoice ... and will rejoice” (1:18). His unqualified command was “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, Rejoice!”

Paul rejoices in the midst of his terrible personal suffering, and he encourages others to persevere in joy.

Paul overflowed with joy, and we know it was genuine because he had this joy no matter what his circumstance, whether in seasons of plenty or want. Sixteen times Paul speaks of joy, gladness, happiness.

If a man in chains in prison for a couple of years tells you to rejoice even as he rejoices, what are you going to say?

Paul says he has learned the secret to joy, peace, contentment in all circumstances. No matter the difficulty, pain, disappointment, failure, rejection, loss or challenge.

Since this is a joy-filled letter let me draw out four truths about joy.

First, joy is a gift from God.

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.

Psalms 16:11 In your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Second, God gives joy to those who believe the Gospel and obey God's Word.

Philippians 1:25 ...your progress and joy in the faith.

Jeremiah 15:16 Your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart.

John 15:11 These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

Third, joy is produced by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in us.

Philippians 2:1–2 If there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind.

Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23 The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, ...

Fourth, believers' joy is deepened through trials.

Philippians 2:17–18 Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

James 1:2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.

How Paul could find joy in his suffering? Paul sees the hand of God in his suffering, working all things for God's glory and for the advance of the Gospel, the spread of salvation.

Philippians 1:12-14 I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, 13 so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. 14 And most of the brothers, having become

confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

He encourages his follow believers to do the same.

Philippians 1:18-19 Yes, and I will rejoice, 19 for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance.

Paul has a quiet trust and reliance on God's goodness and sovereignty. He wants them to have the same.

He believes and lives Philippians 4:6, having no anxiety. He sees the hand and purpose of God.

Jesus

One of the greatest doctrinal passages in all the Bible is in Philippians 2 which we read as our Profession of Faith.

Philippians 2:5-11 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

What a powerful glimpse into the person, character and very mind of Christ Jesus.

In humility and obedience Jesus, who was very God of very God, condescended to come down from heaven to earth. He relinquished what He had, what was rightfully His, and received something far inferior, humbling Himself to take the very form of human flesh.

This is glorious doctrine. It reveals both the greatness of Christ and the humility of Christ is complete submission and obedience. Paul exhorts the Philippians to have this same mind as Christ, to have unity among themselves that flows out of this kind of humility. And Paul goes on in the next chapter to model this very thing, to show it is the driving motive of Paul's life.

Speaking of relinquishing what He had, Paul speaks of this in a personal way in chapter 3.

Boasting. What do you boast in or about?

In High school the pinnacle of coolness was having a High School letterman jacket. When I got mine, I wore it proudly. And I loved pinning those additional letters to my jacket. In a box of memorabilia somewhere in the attic I still have the big letter C with the pins from that jacket.

The things we boast and brag about. The past achievements and accomplishments we nostalgically look back on and try to hold on to.

In Philippians 3 we hear about Paul's letterman jacket:

Philippians 3:4-9 If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. 7 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 Indeed, ***I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.*** For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and ***be found in him***, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes ***through faith in Christ***, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.

Paul reviews all the various aspects of his personal life and history, all his achievements and they are considerable, and finds the sum of them to be rubbish compared to gaining Christ and being found in him. Nothing else in life comes close to comparing to being in Christ. He shows the

emptiness of boasting in anything other than by being in Christ, which comes from faith in Christ.

Back in high school when I was strutting around in my jacket it never once occurred to me to boast in Jesus, how gave me the strength and the ability and the opportunities to get that letter. He gave me my mind and body.

I didn't boast in Christ's strength in me. I didn't boast about my weaknesses that revealed that the true power came from Christ and all the glory belongs to Him. I wasn't thinking about ways to magnify the power and grace and glory of Jesus.

When the day of my departure from this earth comes, I hope I will be remembered for one thing, for preaching Jesus and His Gospel. If that is all I am remembered for, it will be enough.

The best thing that has ever happened to me is Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, has personally come down and rescued and saved me and delivered me from sin and death and hell, and has reconciled me to my Father in heaven.

Nothing else comes close to comparing and believe me I have a bunch of other really great things in my life, my wife, children, grandchildren, church home and family. The goodness of the Lord has overflowed and abounded to me in countless ways. But nothing on earth compares to knowing the saving love of Jesus and having the hope of spending eternity with Him.

If I must boast, may all my boasting be in Jesus and because of Jesus and about Jesus.

That is what I want for you. That you would find your life, your hope, your peace, your strength and joy in Jesus and His Gospel. He is our rock and our salvation.

I Corinthians 1:31 As it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

Galatians 6:14 May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

Philippians 3:8 Indeed, *I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.*

Prayer:

As Paul prayed for the church in Philippi, so I pray for you:

Philippians 1:9-11 It is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may approve what is excellent, and so 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.