



Transcendent Joy: Learning How to Rejoice No Matter What

Message #7: **How to Live a Worthy Life** (Philippians 2:1-4) – December 4, 2022 - Pastor Jeff

- One of God's great sources of joy is the unity of His church. In a fallen world and even in the church with God's people who are still in-process, disunity can have a debilitating effect on the joy factor.
- It is no surprise then that God gave His people much instruction on pursuing and cultivating relational unity (John 17:20-21; Rom. 15:5-6; 1 Cor. 1:1-13; 2 Cor. 13:11; Gal. 3:18; Eph. 3:11-16; 4:4-6, 13; Phil 1:27; Col. 3:14-15; 1 Thess. 5:13; 2 Thess. 3:16)
- Disunity dishonors God since He commands and models it (Eph. 4:3; John 17:21-22), discredits the church's testimony (Jn 13:33-34), drains our resources away from fulfilling our mission, and disillusiones the world about the good news message we are called to proclaim.
- With disunity threatening to undermine the good gospel work in Philippi (4:2-3), Paul lays down three ways to preserve the precious unity they share in the Lord.

① Embrace the right incentives for unity (2:1-2a)

- Two words ("*therefore*" and "*if*") jump out to provide great reminders of how important the gospel-worthy life is in maintaining unity.
 - The word "*therefore*" looks back to the demands of the gospel-worthy life in Phil 1:27-30
 - The conjunction "*if*" (with its first-class condition) communicates the sentiment "*if and it is true*" to highlight the truisms that incentivize our unity
- #1 is the motivation of our counsel in Christ (v. 1: "*if any encouragement in Christ*"). The Lord constantly comes alongside to give us His encouraging help.
- #2 is the motivation of the comfort of love (v. 1: "*if any consolation of love*"). The Lord provides a tender and comforting love to us in our times of disappointment.
- #3 is the motivation of our companionship in the Spirit (v. 1: "*if any fellowship of the Spirit*"). We have the indwelling partnership of the Holy Spirit that moves us away from grieving or quenching His unifying work.
- #4 is the motivation of the compassion of the Spirit (v. 1: "*if any affection and compassion*"). The Holy Spirit produces a deep gut feeling and mercy for others to encourage our unity.
- #5 is the motivation of our connection to church leadership (2a: "*make my joy complete...*"). Paul represents the heart of all church leaders whose joy quotient spikes when they see God's people living in harmony and working together.

② Embrace the right ingredients for unity (2:2b)

- Paul reveals four ingredients that promote unity.
- #1 is a united mindset ("*being of the same mind*"). God wants His people to think the same way about unity spiritually (Rom. 8:4-6); selflessly (Rom. 12:3), and supernaturally (Col. 3:2)

- #2 is a unity ministry (“*maintaining the same love*”). We used God’s gifted love (Rom. 5:5) to serve others with what is good and best for them (Col. 3:14; Rom. 12:10; 1 Cor. 13:4-8)
- #3 is a united motivation (“*united in spirit*”). God’s people are “one-souled” people and reflect the reality of all we share together (Eph. 4:4-6)
- #4 is a united mission (“*intent on one purpose*”). Paul is calling the church to mind the one thing which is advancing God’s kingdom purposes (Matt. 6:33) in knowing Christ and making Him know.

③ Embrace the practical imperatives of unity (2:3-4)

- The key to enjoying unity with God’s people is cultivating unselfish attitudes, so Paul lists five interrelated and practical commands in two overarching ways that provide a pathway for growing unity.
- #1 is to radically avoid a selfish spirit (v. 3a: “*do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit*”). Avoid at all costs (“*do nothing*”) a willful self-consumed heart. Joy gets undermined when you put yourself above others in your heart.
- #2 is to religiously adopt a selfless spirit (v. 3b-4). This involves a proper attitude of “*humility*” (a disposition that assesses one’s personal sinfulness and creatureliness. It also involves a proper awareness that intentionally thinks about other people’s interests (“*do not merely look out for your own interests, but also the interests of others*”))