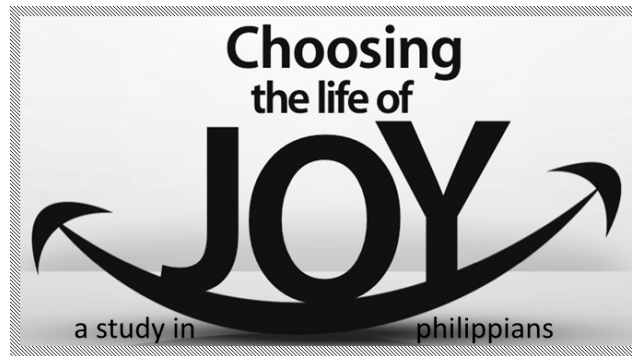


Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, September 26, 2018 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study



CHOOSING THE LIFE OF JOY A Study in Philippians “A Thank You Letter’s Salutation” *Philippians 1:1-11*



Many refer to the book of Philippians as a “treatise (discourse) on joy.” Dr. Warren Wiersbe calls Philippians, “a personal manifesto on how to live a life full of joy,” and that despite the circumstances one may encounter in life. As Dr. John MacArthur says it, “The joyful Christian thinks more of his Lord than his personal difficulties, more of his spiritual riches in Christ than his poverty on earth, and more of his glorious fulfillment in heaven than his present pain. Therein lies our joy.” This is certainly true and reflected clearly in the New Testament book of

Philippians. The introductory sections of this important and practical book may enable us to begin to not only understand the purposes of the book, but may in fact introduce us to some keys to this kind of “in all circumstances” joy in the life of a believer.

It must be noted that Philippians is primarily a practical book. The book contains little historical material, there are no Old Testament quotes in the book, only some, how be it, important treatment of Paul’s spiritual autobiography. There is, likewise, little direct theological instruction, with one momentous exception. The magnificent passage describing Christ’s humiliation and exaltation in chapter 2, which contains some of the most profound and crucial teaching on the Lord Jesus Christ in all of the Bible. The major theme of “pursuing joy in the Christian life” in spite of circumstances is dominant in this important book.

Just for review let take a look at some of the more interesting facts about Philippians that need to be remembered as we navigate our study. Here are

7 Interesting Facts to Remember about Philippians: **these may be some things that set the book of Philippians apart from Paul’s other letters and writings*

1. **The book of Philippians has no Old Testament quotes** – This is distinction that not only sets it apart from Paul’s other writing in the New Testament where Paul is said to have quoted the Old Testament as many as 500 times, just not in Philippians. The Old Testament is quoted more than 1,000 time in the New Testament with half of those being found in Paul’s writings. The lack of Old Testament quotes in Philippians could be as simple as Paul’s purpose in writing. It is a more practical letter.
2. **The book of Philippians contains little historical or theological material** - The only exceptions to this are the historical biographical material contained concerning Paul’s life in prison during his Roman imprisonment. And Philippians, chapter 2 that describes the humiliation and exaltation of Christ in theological terms. Philippians is the only of Paul’s letter that was not written primarily to address doctrinal, theological issues. The apostle Paul did not write Philippians in response to a crisis (caused by false teachers and false teaching), as he did with Galatians and Colossians.
3. **The book of Philippians is primarily a practical (*relevant, every-day, pragmatic, useful*) letter** – And, in fact, it may be the most practical of Paul’s 13 New Testament books/letters. What do we mean by practical? We mean that of all of Paul’s letters, Philippians in it purpose and content is the most pragmatic and common every-day letter he wrote. We will get more into this as we progress through our study, but suffice it to say that the very reason Paul wrote the letter is simple, every-day in it application.
4. **The book of Philippians is essentially a thank you letter** – This itself sets Philippians apart as the most unusual of Paul’s letters. Instead of writing to correct doctrinal matters, he writes a “thank you” letter to the church at Philippi that had been so generous in supporting him over the years. He primarily wrote to express his appreciation and affection for the Philippian believers. More than any other church, the believers in Philippi offered Paul material support for his ministry. Paul’s affection for these people is clear through the letter as he encouraged them to live out their faith in joy and unity.
5. **The book of Philippians is one of four “prison epistles” (or letters) and most likely the last of the four written by Paul** - So titled because they were written by Paul while he was in prison in Rome. The four “prison epistles” are Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and

Philemon. Given the theme of the book it is significant that Philippians was written by Paul at a particularly difficult time in his life... while he was in prison.

6. **The book of Philippians contain the word “joy” in some form at least 16 times** – With the common occurrence of this word in some form repeated throughout the letter, it make it clear that this is the theme of Paul’s letter to the Philippians and to us. And as stated above this theme of “joy” is particularly astounding given the fact that it is a prison epistle, written while Paul was incarcerated and being persecuted for his faith.
7. **The book of Philippians was written to a church and Christians that represent the one of the most important advancements of the Gospel to the west, particularly Europe** - Paul’s “Macedonian Call” in Troas during Paul’s 2nd missionary journey led him to his work in Philippi and the planting of the church there. Philippi was located in Macedonia, in northern Greece, on the continent of Europe. So the “Macedonian Call” and the planting of this church in Philippi through Paul’s second missionary journey, and Paul’s letter to the church at Philippi are very significant because they represent the advancement of the gospel further west, into Europe and ultimately to the entire world through Europe. It is not to be missed that the first converts on the continent of Europe were Lydia and her household, a demon possessed girl, and a Philippian jailer.

With these important facts about the book of Philippians let’s probe into the introductory remarks in the book and see what we discover about the author and his purpose in writing in the first 11 verses (READ: Philippians 1:1-11)

“¹Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: ²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, ⁴always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, ⁵for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ; ⁷just 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. ⁸For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ. ⁹And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, ¹¹being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”

–Philippians 1:1-11 (NKJV)

THE BASIC BACKGROUND OF PHILIPPIANS (Phil. 1:1-2, 2 Cor. 11:23-28)

There once lived a man who became a Christian as an adult and left the security and popularity of his former career as an official religious leader to follow Christ. The persecution that became his companion throughout the remaining years of his life was just the beginning of his woes. Misunderstood, misrepresented, and maligned though he was, he pressed on joyfully. One top of all that, he suffered from a physical ailment so severe he called it a “thorn in my flesh” ... possibly an intense form of migraines or a severe eye disorder or some other infirmity of the flesh... whatever this physical impairment was debilitating, weakening, draining for him. By now, you know I am referring to Saul of Tarsus, later called Paul. Though not one to dwell on his own difficulties or ailments, the apostle Paul did take time to record a partial list of them in

his second letter to his friends in Corinth in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28. Compared to his first-century contemporaries he was... ²³... *in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often.* ²⁴*From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one.* ²⁵*Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep;* ²⁶*in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;* ²⁷*in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—* ²⁸*besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.”*

Although that was enough hardship for several people, Paul’s journey got even more rugged as time passed. Finally he was arrested and placed under the constant guard of Roman soldiers to whom he was chained for two years. While he was allowed to remain “in his own rented quarters” (Acts 28:30), the restrictions must have been irksome to a man who had grown accustomed to traveling and to the freedom of setting his own agenda. Yet not once do we read of his losing patience and throwing a fit. On the contrary, he saw his circumstances as an opportunity to make Christ known as he made the best of his situation.

Interestingly, Paul wrote several letters during those years of house arrest, one of which was addressed to a group of Christians living in Philippi. It is an amazing letter, made even more remarkable by its recurring theme... joy. Think of it! Written by a man who had known excruciating hardship and pain, living in a restricted setting chained to a Roman soldier, the letter to the Philippians resounds with joy! Attitudes of joy and contentment are woven through the tapestry of these 104 verses like threads of gold. Rather than wallowing in self-pity or calling on his friends to help him escape or at least find relief from these restrictions, Paul sent a surprisingly lighthearted message. And on top of all that, time and again he urges the Philippian Christians (and his readers... you and I) to be people of joy. The first 2 verses of Paul’s letter to the church of Philippi help us confirm much of the major background information for the letter.

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

Major Background Information for Philippians:

1. The Author of Philippians: The Apostle Paul - The apostle Paul wrote this letter to the Christians in Philippi, from Rome. Paul wrote to the Philippians from prison. He had been imprisoned for his faith. Paul ministered at Philippi during his second missionary journey, spending about three months in the city. The ministry at Philippi marked Paul’s entrance into Macedonia (Greece, Europe), which came about as a result of a vision he had in the city of Troas, just across the northeastern corner of the Aegean Sea from the port city of Neapolis and its close neighbor Philippi (Acts 16:8–12). During this first stay in Philippi—he later briefly visited the city on his third missionary journey (20:6)—Paul brought to faith in Christ people who would form the core of the burgeoning congregation in the city. Among them were Lydia, a businesswoman who opened her home to Paul and his coworkers (16:13–15), and the Philippian jailer, who was converted under Paul’s ministry after an earthquake miraculously broke open the prison (16:22–34).

Philippians 1:1-2 – First century letters normally began by identifying the sender and recipient with a basic greeting. One notable variation here is that Paul includes Timothy’s name because. Timothy was an important gospel co-worker in and around Philippi and a trusted, corroborating witness to the truths Paul expounded.

Philippians 1:1 –

- **Paul:** Paul wrote this letter from a Roman prison.
- **Timothy:** Timothy, Paul’s beloved son in the faith. He was not the author of the letter or even the co-author with Paul, but possibly the one to whom Paul dictated it. Regardless, Paul had good reasons for including Timothy’s name. Again, Timothy was an important gospel co-worker in and around Philippi and a trusted, corroborating witness to the truths Paul taught.
- **Bondservants:** This term denotes a willing slave who was happily and loyally linked (was chained) to his master. The word itself may have allusions to Paul’s own situation and being chained to his captor (the roman prison guard to which he was chained daily). Paul is saying that his life was attached and chained to Christ, and by their faith in Christ to them (the Philippians) as well

What Does it Mean to be A Bondservant of Christ?: **in other words, what is Paul telling us about himself here, and what is he saying that a relationship with Christ looks like*

- (1) **Subservient to Christ as Master** - A bondservant is a slave. In some Bibles the word *bondservant* is the translation of the Greek word *doulos*, which means “one who is subservient to, and entirely at the disposal of, his master; a slave.” Other translations use the word *slave* or *servant*. The actual meaning of the word bond servant for Jesus Christ , means a person who is ready to forsake all that he owns and is now willing to follow Jesus Christ.
- (2) **Voluntarily giving up one’s rights to Christ as Master** - In Roman times, the term *bondservant* or *slave* could refer to someone who voluntarily served others. But it usually referred to one who was held in a permanent position of servitude. Under Roman law, a bondservant was considered the owner’s personal property. Slaves essentially had no rights and could even be killed with impunity by their owners. The Hebrew word for “bondservant,” *‘ebed*, had a similar connotation. However, the Mosaic Law allowed an indentured servant to become a bondservant voluntarily: *“If the servant declares, ‘I love my master and my wife and children and do not want to go free,’ then his master must take him before the judges. He shall take him to the door or the doorpost and pierce his ear with an awl. Then he will be his servant for life”* (Exodus 21:5-6). Oswald Chambers says it like this, *“The passion of Christianity comes from deliberately signing away my own rights and becoming a bondservant of Jesus Christ. Until I do that, I will not begin to be a saint.”*
- (3) **Indenturing one’s self to Christ as Master** – “Indenturing” one’s self means, to commit oneself to servitude for a specific period of time by means of indentured agreement between two parties. In the case of a Christian, when you give your life to Jesus Christ you indenture yourself to Him as being His. Believers today should still consider themselves bondservants or slaves of Christ (1 Corinthians 7:22; Ephesians 6:6; 2 Timothy 2:24). He is our Lord, and our allegiance is due to Him alone. As bondservants,

we renounce other masters (Matthew 6:24) and give ourselves totally to Him (Matthew 16:24). Being a bondservant of Christ is not drudgery. His “burden is light” (Matthew 11:30). Also, we have this promise: “Now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life” (Romans 6:22).

2. **The Recipients of Philippians: Believers/Christians at the Church at Philippi** – As already stated Philippians is a letter written by the Apostle Paul during his Roman imprisonment to a group of people that were very special to him. These at Philippi had come to know the Lord Jesus through Paul’s witness to them in response to the “Macedonian Call” of Acts 16. Notice who Paul identifies as the recipients of this letter in verses 1-2, *“¹Paul 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.”* Notice that Paul mentions three recipients of this letter at Philippi:

3 Philippian Recipients in the Church at Philippi:

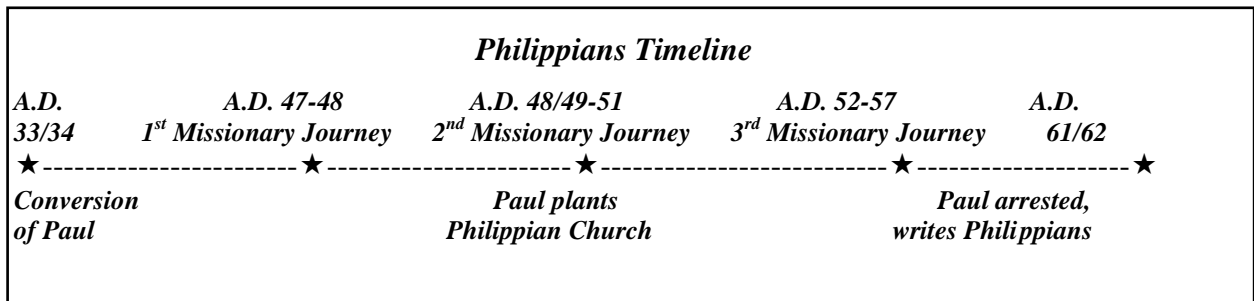
- (1) **Saints** – These were believers in the church at Philippi, including those who led the assembly. Remember we said that is not to be taken as insignificant that the first three converts at Philippi... the place where this all began was with a merchant “woman” (a seller of purple, Lydia), a demon possessed servant “girl,” and a profane, brutal and rough Philippian jailer “man.” And now he is calling them Saints. What do you think would be the significance of all of that for us today? Whosoever will may come and God can do amazing things through a life surrendered to Him. The phrase, *“saints in Christ Jesus”* describes the Philippian believers’ union with Christ in His death and resurrection, which was the reason they could be called “saints.”
- (2) **Bishops** – Literally, “overseers.” This is a term used to emphasize the leadership responsibilities of those who were elders, who are also called pastors. All 3 terms are used to describe the same men in Acts 20:28. Paul not only affirmed the believers at Philippi but their leaders at well, those who were carrying out the leadership responsibilities among them. This may be seen as a confirmation and affirmation of their leadership.
- (3) **Deacons** - Literally, “those who serve.” Servants of Christ in the church. There are always those who do the bulk of the work, who are the behind the scenes servants, making things happen and being sure everything is taken care of . Sometimes today we have perverted the word “deacon” to mean the “power brokers” and “decision makers” of the church, but nothing could be further from the New Testament understand and idea of a “deacon.” Here Paul is acknowledging and affirming those who are doing the great job of serving the saints... a sometimes thankless job, but so beneficial and significant in it’s own right.

And notice in verse 2 Paul’s exceptional greeting to these believers at Philippi... two of the greatest and underserved gifts that we receive as believers, and indeed confirmations that we are believers. Paul says in verse 2, *“² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”* Paul’s standard greeting reminded the believers of their relationship with God... a relationship that was established by “grace” and “peace.” Two things that we did not do for ourselves, but are purely the work of Christ alone on our behalf.

GRACE = The unmerited favor of God

PEACE = Peace treaty signed by Christ on our behalf at the cross

3. **The Date of Philippians: A.D. 61-62** - Of the four Prison Epistles, Paul likely wrote Philippians last, near the end of his Roman imprisonment in AD 61 or 62. Paul sent the other three Prison Epistles—Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon—by the hand of Tychicus, as their destinations were near one another. However, the letter to the Philippians was to be delivered by Epaphroditus, who had come to Paul in Rome with financial help from the church at Philippi ([Philippians 2:25](#); [4:18](#)). But during his time in Rome, Epaphroditus took ill, which delayed his return home and, therefore, the delivery of the letter (2:26–27).



4. **Theme: Joy in Christ in the midst of all circumstances** – Paul encourages the Philippians to live as citizens of a heavenly city, growing in their commitment to serve God and one another with “joy,” a word that is mentioned in various forms no less than 16 times. Jesus is the supreme example of this way of life. Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus try to be good examples as well of a life lived with joy and contentment despite overwhelming and dreadful circumstances.

Philippians brims over with often quoted passages: [Philippians 1:6](#), “*He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*” [Philippians 1:21](#), “*To live is Christ and to die is gain.*” And [Philippians 4:13](#), “*I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.*” These are just a few. But the portrait of Jesus Christ as a humble servant serves as the core of Paul’s teaching in this letter in [Philippians 2:5–11](#).

Paul’s joy at the mere thought of the Philippian church is undeniable in the letter, and it’s that same joy that he wanted the recipients to possess as well. To lead the Philippians to this truth, Paul took them directly to Jesus, teaching them that a community of believers living in harmony with one another comes only through mutual humility modeled after the Savior. Paul wrote that he poured out his life as an offering for the sake of Christ, leading Paul to find great joy and contentment in Christ’s service. His letter to the Philippians showed them that by centering their lives on Christ, they, too, might live in true joy.

5. **Purpose:** –Philippians brims over with often quoted passages like [Philippians 1:6](#), “*He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*” Or in [Philippians 1:21](#), “*To live is Christ and to die is gain.*” Or maybe this oft quoted verse in [Philippians 4:13](#), “*I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.*” But the portrait of Jesus Christ

In Philippians 2:5-11, as a humble servant serves as the core of Paul's teaching in this letter. It's about Jesus and joy... especially joy that can be ours in Christ Jesus.

Paul's joy at the mere thought of the Philippian church is undeniable in the letter, and it's that same joy that he wanted the recipients to possess as well. Notice his word, also purpose revealing in verses 3-11, 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.* ⁸*For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.* ⁹*And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,* ¹⁰*that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,* ¹¹*being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."*

To lead the Philippians to this truth, Paul took them directly to Jesus, teaching them that a community of believers living in harmony with one another comes only through mutual humility modeled after the Savior. Paul wrote that he poured out his life as an offering for the sake of Christ, leading Paul to find great joy and contentment in Christ's service. His letter to the Philippians showed them that by centering their lives on Christ, they, too, might live in true joy.

Philippians 1:3 – *I thank my God:* Paul's letters usually included such commendation.

Philippians 1:4 – *In every prayer... with joy:* The Greek word for "prayer" denotes a petition for, or a request made on behalf of, someone else. It was a delight for him to intercede for fellow believers.

Philippians 1:5 – *Fellowship:* This can also be translated "participation" or "partnership." ***From the first day:*** These believers eagerly assisted Paul in evangelizing Philippi from the beginning of the church there.

Philippians 1:6 - *He... will compete it:* The Greek verb translated "has begun" is used only here and in Galatians 3:3... both times in reference to salvation itself. Where God begins a work of salvation in a person, He finishes and perfect that work. Thus the verb "will complete" points to the eternal security of the Christian. ***Day of Jesus Christ:*** This phrase is not to be confused with the "Day of the Lord." "The Day of Jesus Christ" is also called the "Day of Christ" and the "Day of the Lord Jesus Christ," which looks to the final salvation, reward, and glorification of believers.

Philippians 1:7 – *Heart:* A common biblical word used to describe the center of thought and feeling. ***Defense and confirmation:*** Two judicial terms referring either to the first phase of Paul's trial in Rome in which he defended his gospel ministry or in a general sense to his continual defense of the faith, which was the heart of his ministry. ***Partakers with me of grace:*** During his imprisonment, the Philippians sent Paul money and Epaphroditus' services to support the apostle, thus sharing in God's gracious blessing on his ministry.

Philippians 1:8 - Affection: The word literally refers to the internal organs, which are the part of the body that reacts to intense emotion. It became the strongest Greek word to express compassionate love... a love that involves one's entire being.

Philippians 1:9 – Knowledge: This is from the Greek word that describes genuine, full, or advanced knowledge. Biblical love is not an empty sentimentalism but is anchored deeply in the truth of Scripture and regulated by it. **Discernment:** The English word "aesthetic" comes from this Greek word, which speaks of moral perception, insight, and the practical application of knowledge. Love is not blind, but perceptive, and it carefully scrutinizes to distinguish between right and wrong.

Philippians 1:10 – Approve the ... excellent: "Approve" in classical Greek described the testing of metals or the testing of money for authenticity. "Excellent" means "to differ." Believers need the ability to distinguish those things that are truly important so they can establish the right priorities. **Sincere and without offense:** "Sincere" means "genuine," and may have originally meant "tested by sunlight." IN the ancient world, dishonest pottery dealers filled cracks in their inferior products with wax before glazing and painting them, making worthless pots difficult to distinguish from expensive ones. The only way to avoid being defrauded was to hold the pot to the sun, making the wax-filled cracks obvious. Dealers marked their fine pottery that could withstand "sun testing" as "sine cera"... meaning "without wax" or "sincere." "Without offense" can be translated "blameless," referring to relational integrity. Christians are to live lives of true integrity that do not cause others to sin. **The day of Christ:** This phrase again is not to be confused with the "Day of the Lord." "The Day of Jesus Christ" is also called the "Day of Christ" and the "Day of the Lord Jesus Christ," which looks to the final salvation, reward, and glorification of believers.

Philippians 1:11 - Fruits of righteousness: This is better translated, "the fruit righteousness produces." **Which are by Jesus Christ:** This speaks of the salvation transformation provided by our Lord and His ongoing work of power through His Spirit in us. **To the glory and praise of God:** The ultimate end of all Paul's prayers was that God be glorified

4 Purposes for the Letter that Emerge from Paul's Word: He had several purposes in mind:

- (1) To tell them that Epaphroditus had recovered from a serious illness
- (2) To encourage them in their faith and joy in the Lord
- (3) To assure them that he was still in good spirits and full of joy for them and the Lord
- (4) To thank them for their continued support

APPLYING PHILIPPIANS TO MY LIFE (Phil. 1:3-11)

Though we all have much to be thankful for, the pace and the pressure of life often squeeze the joy from us. Our shoulders slumped and our heads bowed, we find some days—or months—very difficult to get through. Desperate, we often search for joy in all kinds of ways—acquiring possessions, visiting places, or seeing people. But none of these can provide lasting joy. Where do you find joy in the midst of a trying circumstance?

6 Keys to Finding Lasting Joy Through the Application of Philippians to My Life:

- 1. You find lasting joy only Christ Jesus (v.2)**
- 2. You find lasting joy in a spirit of thanksgiving (v.3)**
- 3. You find lasting joy through the discipline of prayer (v.4)**
- 4. You find lasting joy in the fellowship and mutual support of other believers (vv.5-8)**
- 5. You find lasting joy through continued growth and maturity in the faith (v.9)**
- 6. You find lasting joy in a sincere faith (v.10)**

This was the life experienced by the Philippian believers, and it is a life available to us today. Allow the joy you find in Christ to keep you from useless quarrels and divisions and to instead guide you into harmonious relationships with God's people. And this sets the tempo for Paul's letter to the Philippians that we will see played out through Paul's words to these exceptional believers.