

HOW PAUL'S JOY WAS FILLED FULL  
Phil. 1:27-2:18

Intro: We have been considering the book of Philippians to discover why Paul was a happy Christian. All that we have seen thus far has had to do primarily with Paul and the joy he was experiencing in his life.

Tonight I want to call your attention to a transition which takes place in chapters 1 and 2 of this letter.

We have in these first two chapters three aspects of joy:

- (1) In vv. 12-24 we see Paul's joy as it related to his own experience.
- (2) In vv. 25, 26 there is a change. Here Paul expresses concern for their joy, i.e., the joy of the Philippian believers.
- (3) Then, just as abruptly, he begins to talk about his joy in them, i.e., the joy that he can derive from their lives, and from their work in Philippi. And the joy which he can experience in them is both present and future.

JOHN 15:11  
(same words)  
JOY FULFILLED  
IS COMPLETED  
- NOTHING &  
NEED BE  
ADDED

Note the present aspect: "Fulfil ye my joy" (2:2).  
Note the future aspect: (Read 2:16b-18. From the contemplation of the future, he returns to the present.)

It is this third section that I want to consider with you tonight: 1:27-2:18. A careful look at these verses will show us that there were three things about the lives of the Philippians that produced joy in the heart of the Apostle.

Before I mention what these are, let me point out that this is a condition, or these are conditions, which normally we do not pay much attention to. Joy to us is a personal thing. But to God it is not limited just to our own personal affairs; He wants us to see that there is a most intimate relationship with other believers. And if they, particularly those for whom we have some responsibility are not manifesting these characteristics, then, to use the Apostle's words, our joy cannot be full. Think of this in connection with your family, or your class, or our Church.

Now, what <sup>to</sup> are the things, the three things which Paul wanted most of all <sup>to</sup> see in the Philippian church before his joy could be full? They are these: UNITY, HUMILITY, AND TRANQUILITY.

Let us look at them in order.

I. UNITY (1:27-2:2).

Notice such words as "one spirit . . . one mind . . .

likeminded . . . the same love . . . of one accord . . . of one mind." Cf. 1:27; 2:2.

Divisions. How Paul despised that word! Cf. 1 Cor. 1:10; 3:3; 11:18; Rom. 16:17. The Corinthian Church seems to have had the most trouble along this line. But there were the beginnings of it in Philippi! There were two women who were having trouble with each other (4:2). What their trouble was we do not know. What we do know is that they were not "of the same mind in the Lord."

What reasons does Paul give for UNITY among the believers in Philippi? There are two.

First, there must be unity because we all have the same job: "striving together for the faith of the gospel" (1:27b). Note 1:5, 7, 17, and "the same conflict" in 1:30.

The way we treat each other you would think that we were in competition with each other. But to all of us has been committed one common task: the proclamation of the Gospel.

But he would remind us that such a proclamation is not just in word, but even more so in life!

The Gospel is the message of salvation, BUT PAUL USES IT IN A WAY SO AS TO INDICATE THAT WE AS BELIEVERS NEVER GET AWAY FROM THE GOSPEL. Note 1:27a. The Gospel takes into account the whole picture of my salvation: past, present, and future. This is what Paul had been talking about in 1:19.

Our UNITY has a doctrinal foundation. There can be no unity unless we agree on the Gospel. But having the doctrinal foundation, it soon issues in life. AND UNLESS WE ARE LIVING IN UNITY, IT IS DOUBTFUL HOW MUCH GOOD OUR PREACHING WILL DO.

See how the Lord prayed about this in John 17:20-23.

Secondly, there must be unity because we all have the same resources. Cf. 2:1. Without going into detail, you will see how he turns their thoughts toward two Persons: the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

Think of what you have in Them, and then try to explain your lack of unity. There are no excuses that will stand. And these resources in Christ and in the Holy Spirit are available to every believer in every church regardless of where it might be. There must be UNITY, and God has made full provision for it.

## II. HUMILITY (2:3-11).

There can be no UNITY without HUMILITY. Pride produces disunity.

Paul begins this by saying, "Let nothing be done through strife." The Greek word is ἐριθείαν. It describes one who is campaigning for an office. It speaks of politics. No only is such a person intensifying a division, but he wants to have one of the prominent places in the division.

Are we ambitious for ourselves, or are we ambitious for others?

A perfect illustration of this is found in Matt. 20:20-29. Here we are told that the mother of James and John was politicking for them. Mark tells the same story in 10:35-45, but indicates that James and John were doing the politicking. What does this mean? It means that all three agreed that this should be done.

When this happened, Mark says, "And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John" (v. 41).

The greatest place in the church is the lowliest place. I am not talking about the position we hold, but how we hold the position. There must be none of this.

And think: James and John and their mother were talking about the throne, when Jesus was talking about the Cross! See the context.

But Paul says, Neither can there be "vainglory." This is the Greek word κενοδοξία. This is glory which has no reason behind it, and for which there is no reason. It is based upon a groundless, exalted opinion of ourselves.

Much of our trouble comes from the fact that we think we are better than everybody else, when just the opposite is closer to the truth. Cf. 2:3b, 4.

And, most amazing of all, look at the illustration which Paul uses in 2:5-8. Again he turns our thoughts to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Don't you suppose that this was one thing which kept Paul from saying in Rome, "Why should this happen to me?" Instead, he was more likely to say, "Why shouldn't this happen to me?" Cf. 1 Cor. 15:8-10.

- III. TRANQUILLITY (2:12-18, esp. vv. 14-16). The state of being peaceful, quiet, free from disturbing emotions. What God takes us through to teach us humility often produces anxiety instead of tranquillity.

"Murmurings and disputings."

This word "murmurings" takes us back to the children of Israel where we find this same word used in the Greek translation of the OT time and time again. The children of Israel murmured!

The Greek ~~verb~~<sup>word</sup> is γογγυσμός. It means to "mutter, grumble, say anything in a low tone" (Thayer, p. 120). It is like a whisper campaign against God. They did not begin by complaining out loud, but spread their discontent behind God's back--or so they thought!

They did not like what God was doing with them, and to them.

And it ~~was~~ not until shortly before Moses left them that he ~~was~~ led by the Lord to write the word we find in Deut. 8:2.

"Disputings" - διαλογισμῶν. This is "the thinking of a man deliberating with himself" (Thayer, 139). It is translated "imaginings" in Rom. 1:21. We get our word dialogue from it. Lightfoot calls this "intellectual rebellion against God" (p. 117).

How ~~we~~ react to the discipline of God is a vital<sup>^</sup> part of our witness, as the following verses show.

There is no better illustration than Paul's own experience.

Concl: UNITY, HUMILITY, TRANQUILLITY. These are the keys of joy in our relationships with other in the church, and the things which filled Paul's joy to overflowing.

Closing illustration: John the Baptist when his disciples came to him and said,

"Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him."

Note John's answer: "This my joy therefore is fulfilled"--the same word Paul uses in Phil. 2:2, ἵνα, which means "to make complete in every particular" (Thayer, p. 518). Nothing needed to be added.