

There is Always Reason to Give Thanks Philippians

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November 25, 2012

Introduction: Philippians is a book of joy. The key verse of the book is Philippians 4:4. In addition, throughout the book, joy is the theme. The Greek word for joy is used 9 times and various related words (with prefixes, etc.) are used approximately another 7 times. So our question is “why joy?” “How joy?”

Considering his circumstances, Paul has a remarkable outlook on life. He is under house arrest as he writes this letter. This book helps us to develop some conclusions about joy. Joy is not dependent on our circumstances. Joy is a choice—a choice to receive a gift.

It is appropriate that we think about thanksgiving today as we receive the Lord’s Supper. There is always reason to give thanks.

We can always be thankful for the ...

- People of our Lives (1:3-7)

³ I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you, ⁴ always praying with joy for all of you in my every prayer, ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶ I am sure of this, that He who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. ⁷ It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because I have you in my heart, and you are all partners with me in grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and establishment of the gospel.

- Pain of our Lives (1:12-20)

¹² Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has actually resulted in the advance of the gospel, ¹³ so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard, and to everyone else, that my imprisonment is in the cause of Christ. ¹⁴ Most of the brothers in the Lord have gained confidence from my imprisonment and dare even more to speak the message fearlessly. ¹⁵ To be sure, some preach Christ out of envy and strife, but others out of good will. ¹⁶ These do so out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; ¹⁷ the others proclaim Christ out of rivalry, not sincerely, seeking to cause me anxiety in my imprisonment. ¹⁸ What does it matter? Just that in every way, whether out of false motives or true, Christ is proclaimed. And in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice ¹⁹ because I know this will lead to my deliverance through your prayers and help from the Spirit of Jesus Christ. ²⁰ My eager expectation and hope is that I will not be ashamed about anything, but that now as always, with all boldness, Christ will be highly honored in my body, whether by life or by death.

- Purpose of our Lives (1:21-26)

²¹ For me, living is Christ and dying is gain. ²² Now if I live on in the flesh, this means fruitful work for me; and I don't know which one I should choose. ²³ I am pressured by both. I have the desire to depart and be with Christ—which is far better— ²⁴ but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. ²⁵ Since I am persuaded of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶ so that, because of me, your confidence may grow in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

- Power of the Gospel (3:7-11)

But everything that was a gain to me, I have considered to be a loss because of Christ. ⁸ More than that, I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of Him I have suffered the loss of all things and consider them filth, so that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own from the law, but one that is through faith in Christ—the righteousness from God based on faith. ¹⁰ My goal is to know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, ¹¹ assuming that I will somehow reach the resurrection from among the dead.

And Because of this, there is the continuation of the list...

- Promise of Eternal Life (3:20-21)

²⁰ but our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. ²¹ He will transform the body of our humble condition into the likeness of His glorious body, by the power that enables Him to subject everything to Himself.

- Peace of God (4:7)

⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses every thought, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

- Provision of God (4:19)

¹⁹ And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

So What?

- Rejoice (4:4-5)

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your graciousness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.

- Don't Worry (4:6)

⁶ Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

At thanksgiving time, I often think of this story that I heard years ago. The origins of it, I don't really know, but here is the story. A man was walking down the street and as he passed a rickety, little shack, he heard a voice saying in wonderment, over and over. "All this, and Jesus, too!" Not being able to pass by without satisfying his curiosity, he peeked in the window. At a meager table knelt a withered, old man, his body ravaged by years in the mines. In his coal-stained hands, he held a piece of bread and before him was a small bowl of very thin soup. The dear saint lifted his eyes and hands toward heaven and once again exclaimed, with deep adoration and thankfulness, "All this, and Jesus, too!"