



Sermon Notes and Study Questions

Live Directionally

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹ Whatever you have learned or

received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

¹⁰ I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. ¹¹ I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹² I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³ I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

Philippians 4:4-13

Notes:

Introduction: Experiencing Joy

First Question: Why is Joy a necessity?

- God is the most joyful being in the universe

- It is why we exist
- The Joy of the LORD is our strength
- Experience Matters

Question 2: How do we have joy in any and all circumstances?

- Joy is a discipline we can practice
- Start practicing Joy today
- Set aside a day a week for Joy
- Express Gratitude
- Cultivate relationships that bring you Joy
- Paul's secret: true Joy is dependent upon Jesus

Conclusion: Living from Victory

Connecting Questions

1. Share about a time when you experienced a profound sense of Joy.
2. What are at least three things that give you joy that people may be surprised to know?

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the difference between joy and happiness? Why does Paul tell them to rejoice in Philippians 4 instead of command them to be happy?
2. What are reasons to believe that God is the most joyful being in the universe?
3. How is the Joy of the Lord our strength? How do we live into this reality?
4. Respond to the following statement: We must arrange our life so that sin no longer looks good.
5. Joy can be commanded but it cannot be imposed. Since it can be commanded, joy can be a discipline we practice. Ralph identified four different practices that cultivate joy in our life (the discipline of celebration—go have a party, set aside a day a week—Sabbath rest—to pursue joy, express gratitude regularly, and cultivate relationships that bring joy/consider having a joy mentor). If you are going to start earnestly seeking more joy today, where do you feel like you should begin? With one of these or something else?
6. What is Paul's secret of having joy in any and every situation?
7. How do we follow Paul's example in Philippians 4?
8. How did God speak to you through Philippians 4 and the message?

Going Deeper into Scripture

Read Philippians 4:4-13

1. In verse 5, when Paul said, “let your gentleness be evident to all”, the word “gentleness” means being forbearing, tolerant not condemning, not treating sins as they deserve but looking to help turn sinners back to life. Paul says this should be our attitude with everybody. Why do we need to be this way towards believers? Why do we need to be this way towards non-believers?
2. Why do you think this command of gentleness/forbearance comes right after the command to rejoice and just before the reminder that the “Lord is near”?
3. What are the key elements of cultivating the peace of God given in Philippians 4?
4. The Hebrew understanding of peace comes from “Shalom”. It is more of a state of reality than a feeling. It is a state where there is no discord between God, other people, or creation. It points to the good life, where things work according to God’s will and so our lives and the surrounding environment begin to flourish. How is this idea of peace similar and different from the way we use the word “peace” today? How does this idea of “shalom” impact the way we understand this passage?
5. In Philippians 4, Paul contrasts peace with anxiety. He offers prayer and then beyond prayer he tells them to focus their attention on what is good and true and admirable. Why do you think this is important? How is it related to Romans 12:1-2?
6. Paul’s testimony of finding sufficiency in Christ—the secret of being content in any and all situations—was a marked contrast from the way of the Stoics, who strived toward this same goal through self-sufficiency. Paul’s language was reflective of the Stoics and would have led the Philippians to contrast Paul’s position and the Stoics. [If you have time you might want to do a quick internet search or look at Bible background commentary on Stoics/Stoicism.] Paul and the Stoics had the same goal but very different conclusion on how to get there. How is American culture and Stoicism similar and different? What gets in the way of us finding our sense of being content in any and all situations through Christ?