

Finding Joy

A study of Paul's Letter to the Philippians

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4- *Finding Joy When Other Live Out the Faith**Philippians 1:27-2:4*

Philippians 1:27-2:4 Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; 28 And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. 29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; 30 Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me. 2:1 If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, 2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

One of those silly questions that people often wonder about is why there are interstates in Hawaii. You cannot go from one state to another, i.e. interstate, from Hawaii. This may seem silly but it is as foreign to the Bible that we as Christian should isolate ourselves from others and live on our island and not be connected to others as interstates in Hawaii.

One thing that brings great joy to our lives is our connections with others. It is a lonely world when we are not connected. Most of our big cities have millions of strangers living close geographically but millions of miles apart socially. Many are attracted to towns and communities where people speak to them.

The church is certainly a place intended to be where emotional, social and other needs are understood and met by other believers. What greater joy for a believer than to find others walking with God and living out their faith.

I- Encouragement in Walk:

Philippians 1:27 Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ... It is true that most of us who have been in church do not need to be taught something new we only need to be reminded to practice what we have already been taught. Paul reminded them to live out the faith that they possessed.

Barnes Notes discussing the meaning of conversation says the following:

It undoubtedly implies that, as citizens, we should act, in all the duties which that relation involves - in maintaining the laws, in submission to authority, in the choice of rulers, etc., as well as in other relations - on the principles of the gospel; for the believer is bound to perform every duty on Christian principles. But the direction here should not be confined to that. It doubtless includes our conduct in all relations in life, and refers to our deportment in general; not merely as citizens of the state, but as members of the church, and

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in all other relations. In our manner of speech, our plans of living, our dealings with others, our conduct and walk in the church and out of it - all should be done as becomes the gospel. The direction, therefore, in this place, is to be understood of everything pertaining to conduct.

Paul went on to say that he longed to hear that they were walking in such a manner... *that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel...* Striving together means working in unison to produce energetic individuals for the gospels sake.

II- Strength in Numbers:

Ecclesiastes 4:12 NASB And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart.

Beloved one thing that will always remain constant in our lives is our need of others. We all need encouragement and kind words. There is strength in numbers. Paul you will remember was encouraged by others and encouraged others by his endurance of suffering for Christ sake.

Philippians 1:28 And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. 29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; 30 Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

One benefit when we stand together is to not go the wrong direction with our lives as we try to minister to the world. We need to

be in contact with the world as we seek to bring them to Christ but need each other to remind us to be separate and call each other into accountability.

I found a little light hearted thought provoker that ask what kind of Christian we are that illustrated how we need each other at the same time challenging us to be the right kind of believer.

What Kind Are You?

Some Christians are like wheelbarrows, not good unless pushed.

Some are like canoes, they have to be paddled.

Some are like kites, if you don't keep a string on them, they fly away.

Some are like kittens, they are more contented when petted.

Some are like balloons, full of wind and likely to blow up unless handled carefully.

Some are like trailers, no good unless pulled.

Some are like buzzards, they "get wind" of a foul smell and come quickly.

Some are filled with the Holy Spirit, and thank God for these!

Beloved we need each other...we need each other to push, keep us from flying away, pet us..well you get the idea.

III- When "IF" Is Certain:

AT Robertson in his *Word Pictures* says, "Paul uses four conditions in this verse, all of the first class, assuming the condition to be true." Or as I put it, when "if" is certain.

Philippians 2:1 If there be therefore any consolation [*encouragement] in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies [*affection and compassion].

*NASB translation interlaced.

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Paul is exhorting them to, as *Vincent's Word Studies* says, "...show yourselves to be true citizens of God's kingdom by your humility and unity of spirit."

We might say because these things are certain we should be living our lives in accordance with God's will and word.

IV- Finding Joy When Other Live Out the Faith:

The great joy that Paul is talking about here is that these Philippians are living out the faith. He continues to exhort them to oneness is purpose.

Philippians 2:2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded... What would cause the joy to be real? Notice ...having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

Now this is one mind in Christ. Many churches find themselves in one mind of become the best social club they can be or one mind in become the place they can always get their needs met and not ever reaching out past themselves. May I say the one mind we need to have is the mind of Christ. What was His mind? To reach the lost and bring them into fellowship with God. If we do not have this one mind, we do not have the mind of Christ.

A rich man decided to take up fishing. He bought the most expensive equipment and bait, but he caught nothing. He passed by a farmboy who had an old stick and a rusty hook but had caught a big string of fish. "How did you manage to catch so many, when I couldn't catch a single one?" he asked. "Oh," said the boy, "I try to keep out of sight so the fish won't see me. Perhaps you show yourself too much."

Philippians 2:3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other

better than themselves. 4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

Now this is certainly a cause of harmony or of disharmony when others thing more of themselves than of others.

Paul tells us to esteem others better than ourselves here. In *Rom 12:3* he says, *For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*

Let me leave us with a of list of how not to be. I know this focuses on the negative side of life but I think we all need to be reminded of these things so we can live our lives in Christ and bring joy to others as we live our lives in the faith.

Nine Great Ideas: All Mine!

1. My idea of visitation: everybody come to see me.
2. My idea of sympathy: everybody suffering with me.
3. My idea of a sinner: the man for whom I have a great dislike.
4. My idea of a meek man: the man who yields to me.
5. My idea of a contentious man: the man who takes issue with me.
6. My idea of a wise man: the man who listens to me.
7. My idea of unity: everybody agreeing with me.
8. My idea of cooperation: everybody working with me.
9. My idea of a good sermon: one that fits and hits everybody but me.