

Philippians: God's Joy On Display.

Week #2: Christian Joy

April 15, 2018

Joy can seem elusive in a world that seems to be growing in sadness, lacking in hope and seething in anger. But joy is an essential ingredient to a meaningful life. In fact, joy is often that proof that a person has found life's real meaning. Happiness comes and goes, depending on circumstances ... but not joy. Joy endures through even the most difficult days. People facing tragedy, heartache and even death are joyful when their purpose has been found. Nothing, for them, interrupts their joy.

In Paul's letter to the Philippians, we find an individual who bathing in the hot tub of joy. Though he finds himself in prison, he is filled with joy. Though people have let him down, he remains joyful. When his plans don't work out, he continues to rejoice. He has lost all his possession, but (you guessed it) he keeps on rejoicing. Throughout his letter to a congregation very dear to him, Paul urges those he writes to remain joyful. "Rejoice in the Lord, always," he writes. "And don't worry about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition - with thanks - present your request to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Php 4:4-7)

What was Paul's secret? Knowing Christ, and leaving everything else behind.

Study Questions: #2 - Christian Joy

1. Ken spoke this week about "Christian" joy.
 - Begin by pondering this thought: Is there any joy at all for someone who is not in Jesus Christ? If so, describe it. If not, what does this mean for people without Jesus?
2. Take 10 minutes and read the entire letter of Philippians.
 - How many times does Paul include either the word joy (directly), or the thought of joy?
 - How many times is it directly connected to Paul's (or the Philippian's) relationship with God, others, himself, or God's creation?
 - If joy is truly measured relationally, then how badly is our world missing the entire point of living in joy?
3. Because we know God, and have received His grace, our hearts are filled with joy (Psalm 126:3).
 - How might we as a congregation up the joy factor in the Cowichan Valley? Again, is it possible to increase the level of joy in others until we lead them to personal faith in Jesus?
 - Introducing someone to Christ usually takes time ... and sometimes a long time. As you ponder this:
 - Pray for those that God has placed in your mind, who have not yet found His grace. He has put them in your mind for a reason - don't stop praying for them.
 - Think about your relationship with them. How can you begin to point out to them the truth about wealth (it's relational, not material), and joy (it's a by-product of be "wealthy")?
4. If you are struggling with a relationships, commit it to God, asking for His wisdom in terms of repairing it.
 - Read Colossians 3:12-17 and Matthew 18:15-20. Let them guide you in your thoughts and actions as you seek to live a biblically joyful life.