

# Philippians: God's Joy On Display.

Week #4: Paul's Prayer of Joy

April 29, 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: #4 - *Citizenship: The Secret to Loving More***

1. When you travel, how often are you reminded how great it is to have a Canadian passport?
  - How about your heavenly passport? How often are you reminded that your citizenship is in heaven?
  - What happens when Christians begin living as expatriates in this world? Take a few minutes to review the history of the Church living powerfully as expatriates ... and the Church forgetting its citizenship and living like everyone else.
2. Pastor Ken said that the measure of your spiritual character is what it takes to lose your joy. But being joyful is not easy - there's a lot to lose your joy over in this life.
  - As you see what's going on in our world today, what takes away your joy more than anything else? How has Jesus kept you from losing your joy?
  - Watching human suffering is very difficult for most people because God has created us to see life through His eyes - and the problem with modern media, gaming and entertainment is that life is seen as cheap & disposable.
    - Does what you watch regularly reinforce God's view of life, or the world's?
    - How about your children? Is what they play with and watch desensitizing them?
    - Is God asking you to get involved in alleviating suffering somewhere?
3. Pastor Ken also taught that joy in the midst of great difficulty tells others that God has a better plan.
  - This is very difficult, and is completely dependent upon surrendering our will to God. When you have suffered greatly, has it drawn you closer to God or pushed you farther away?
  - Read Galatians 2:20. What have you left behind to follow Christ? What have you gained?
4. Pray this week for greater insight into the truth of your heavenly citizenship. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with understanding so that, like Paul, you might joy in Jesus, and see life through new eyes.