

Philippians: God's Joy On Display.

Week #5: Imitating Jesus - Part #1

May 06, 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: #5 - Imitating Jesus - Unity

1. Read Philippians 2:1-4

- Ponder for a moment what we have in common because of Jesus. Compile a list of 10 essential truths that unify us as Christians ... in every congregation that follows Christ.
- Now take a moment and reflect on what we have in common in the Holy Spirit. Make another list of 5-10 things that unify us because He dwells in us.
- With these wonderful truths before you, take time to thank God for what He has so graciously done to bring people from all over the world together ... in unity under Him.

2. Pastor Ken said that "unity determines whether a church moves forward in glory & victory".

- What is it about unity that is so attractive and powerful?
- To every congregation Paul wrote to, he included a reminder to practice unity.
 - Why is unity something we need to practice ... something we never really master?
 - Read John 16:12-15. How do we see the unity of God - Father, Son & Spirit - as they labour to bring us into the truth about life.

3. Pastor Ken also mentioned that, though agreeing on essential doctrine is vital for unity, it is no guarantee for unity - it is our attitudes that must also come together.

- Reflect for a moment on what "essential" doctrine is? If you want to know what our congregation considers "essential", go to our New Life website and read our Statement of Faith.
- Now, having reviewed what we teach is "essential" doctrine, consider how much latitude you are leaving for others to disagree with you on non-essential matters, while you live in an attitude of unity, love & common purpose together - serving one another in love?

4. Pray for our unity of spirit & purpose together. Pray that God will powerfully work through us because of our common foundation in Jesus; our common filling of the Holy Spirit; our common perspective of attitude, inclination and intent, and; of our common serving together under God.