

December 8, 2019 #9 (19095-A)

Philippians 4:10-23

Ingredients of Joy

I. Christmas is a time of great joy. Luke 2:10.

A. How could the angels say that about a poverty-stricken couple giving birth to their first-born alone (no family around) in a cave, at night, with nowhere to lay the child except in a feeding trough?

B. *The answer is that there is a source of joy that goes deeper than material circumstances.*

C. What is true of Jesus' own birth and family holds true for his spiritual family. Paul is an example.

II. Five ingredients of Paul's Joy in the Lord. Phil.4:10-23

A. Gratitude: I rejoice that your concern for me is revived. v. 10

1. Gratitude can only be experienced in the context of need.

a) We cannot simply generate "gratitude." But when a need is met, we automatically experience it.

2. Rejoicing in the Lord can take the form of being encouraged by the concern and help of others in the Lord.

a) *It creates joy to know that somebody else is concerned for you.*

B. Contentment. But I'm not complaining because I have learned contentment. 11-13

1. It is learned. 11-12

a) I have learned contentment in all circumstances. 11-12

(1) It means he didn't always have it; he was initiated into it.

(2) *you learn it having little and figuring out that the Lord is faithful.*

(a) *Nobody learns contentment by having more stuff.*

2. It is a result of knowing the Lord. 13

a) It will not be found within yourself. Stoicism taught Self Sufficiency as contentment. Paul uses the same word, but says it is in Christ.

b) *Jesus said to abide in Him and bear fruit (Jn.15:4-5)*

C. Generosity: You have done well to share. 14-18

1. You have always been generous. 15

a) We don't need to wait til you have a ton of money to be generous. **2Cor. 8:1-5**

2. Not that I am looking for the money itself, says Paul.

D. Hope: And the Lord will supply your needs. 19

1. Hope = confident expectation of future blessing in Christ. Paul cannot reimburse his friends, but the Lord will.

2. *Paul saw the Lord as the supplier, no matter who was the immediate cause.*

E. Worship. Because to Him goes all the glory! 20

1. Praise and worship are main ingredients in the Joy of the Lord.

2. There is a peace in our hearts when we pray, praise, worship, and are reminded that God's glory is more important than our circumstances in this age.

III. Pastoral advice: Four things we can do to increase Joy: We can...

A. Recalibrate our metrics.

1. What is your definition of "the good life?" "what is your net worth?"

a) Did Jesus' birth, life, and death equal what you would call "the good life?"

b) How do you measure spiritual progress?

2. *Do not evaluate your spiritual life primarily by your physical circumstances.*

a) Our life does NOT consist in what we own.

b) Our culture doesn't consider people successful or substantial unless they have physical property, great reputations, happy families.

(1) *Under this scheme Jesus was a nobody and Paul was a complete failure.*

3. *Paul knew he was in affliction, but didn't feel bad or ashamed about it.*

a) He did not evaluate his position in the will of God by looking at his physical circumstances.

b) He never doubted that he was in the will of God, even though he was in jail.

- c) He never second-guessed his decision to preach in Jerusalem (the event which landed him in Roman custody some 5 years before he wrote this letter).
- 4. *We usually do the opposite*—we evaluate the success of our lives on the basis of our material prosperity, and then use that as the gauge of whether we are in God’s will. Paul turned this around and evaluated himself on whether he was walking with the Lord, and then used that as the gauge of how successful he was.

B. Re-examine our desires: Watch out for covetousness. Luke 12:13-15

- 1. *The opposite of contentment is covetousness. Desire is not automatically wrong. But covetousness is.* (Rom.7:7/Ex.20:17; Dt.5:21)
 - a) **Piper’s definition:** Covetousness is desiring something so much that you lose your contentment in God. Or: losing your contentment in God so that you start to seek it elsewhere.
 - b) "Half the world is unhappy because it can't have the things that are making the other half unhappy." anon.
- 2. **Two things to be aware of:**
 - a) *Our culture undermines contentment because it’s bad for business.*
 - (1) Advertising creates the perception of need and feeds desire.
 - (2) Billions are spent annually to convince you that you don’t smell, look, feel, earn, or live right. So, buy, borrow, spend, keep up.
 - b) *Our old nature militates against contentment because contentment grows out of selflessness—and the old nature is radically selfish.*
 - (1) We tend to think of contentment as personal acquisition.
 - (a) *Get all you can. Can all you get. Sit on the can.*

C. Revive our giving. 2 Cor.9:6-8

- 1. He sees giving to ministry as a partnership in a great mission, joy and privilege 10
 - a) Paul is specifically avoiding three common motives for giving.
 - (1) Guilt: I have so much I feel guilty, so I’ll give some away.
 - (2) Superstition. Keeping God happy, like Baal?
 - (3) Remuneration: paying God back for salvation? Legalism.
- 2. **Four things happen when you give to the work of the Gospel**
 - a) You prompt joy to those in need. 10
 - (1) Financial pressure is part of all ministry. When provision comes it is seen as God’s provision and brings joy.
 - (2) So, you become a partner in a great work.
 - b) You serve the Lord well. 14, 18
 - (1) You have done well, a fragrant aroma, acceptable sacrifice, pleasing
 - (2) He sees it as a personal sacrifice of praise. These are worship metaphors from the OT. (Heb.13:15)
 - c) Your account in heaven grows. 17
 - (1) The term “credit” or “account” is a bookkeeping metaphor.
 - (2) The Lord does keep track of what we do. (Heb.6:10)
 - d) Your Father will repay you. 19
 - (1) Pr.11:25; 19:17; Matt. 6:4
 - (2) You cannot repay Him, but He will repay you abundantly!
- 3. *All mature Christians think about and pray about and follow up on their giving.*
- 4. *Consistent and serious giving actually increases contentment and simplicity of life.*

D. Rest in the Lord’s Grace. 23 The Grace of the Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

- 1. All of this advice is founded on knowing that in Christ you are secure and loved in Christ.
- 2. Christmas is not God telling humanity to “shape up.” It is God giving his own life so that we can be rescued and reshaped into His Joy.
 - a) Giving life to those in need of it.
 - b) By the sacrificial offering of His own Substance...
 - c) Producing joy and peace in those who receive.