

Philippians: The Joy of the Lord

by Stephen Kaung

Stephen Kaung's sermon emphasizes the profound joy found in a relationship with Christ, as illustrated in Paul's letter to the Philippians.

Duration: 1:15:15

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Philippians 4:4-5, Philippians 4:18

Topics: "Joy"

Description

In this sermon, Brother Stephen Kahn emphasizes the importance of rejoicing in the Lord always. He explains that the phrase 'the Lord is near' refers to the present, rather than the second coming of Jesus. The speaker shares a theme song from a conference he attended, which expresses the desire to know the Lord personally, beyond just witnessing signs and wonders. He concludes by stating that the joy of the Lord is our strength and that by focusing on Him, we can overcome any challenges in life.

Transcript

This is Monday evening, June the 18th, 1973, in Richmond, Virginia. Ministry is being given through Brother Stephen Kong. He was born, reveal thyself to me.

I realize my error, but, Lord, I was lonely. I don't know who wrote this chorus, but I brought it back from New Zealand. In 1970, I was invited to go to New Zealand to a conference.

I don't know these people. They invited Brother Fonke to go there for that conference in 1969. And evidently, Brother Fonke introduced me to them.

So they wrote me and asked me to visit them during their conference in October 1970. Every year they had a conference in a big tent. And people will come and live in what we call trailers, they call caravans.

And it's a conference for a week. Now the background of these people, most of them probably, or some of them, they came from apostolic faith. I don't know if you are familiar with that.

It was actually the result of the Welsh Revival in 1905. You know, in Wales, there was a great revival. And the revival came to New Zealand.

And out of that revival came the apostolic faith church. Two brothers in the flesh, but also in the Lord. One of them was a minister in the apostolic faith church for ten years or a number of years.

And his work was going around in New Zealand, bringing a tent with him. And he would hold evangelistic meetings. And he worked especially among young people.

And after he had worked for about ten years, he began to feel that the Lord was leading him. To just trust the Lord and just be guided by the Lord in everything. So he and his brother, they took a job.

They were builders. They began to build houses to maintain their living. But they told me that serving the Lord was the priority.

So they began to start a work in the southern tip of the Northern Island. You know, New Zealand is composed of two islands. The North Island and the South Island.

Now in the southern tip of the North Island, they began to start a work there. And the Lord began to work through these two brothers and a few others with them. So every year they had such a conference.

And among them, of course, signs and wonders were routine, almost routine to them. And the year I was there in 1970, I don't know who wrote this chorus. But in a sense, this became the theme song of that conference.

Because this brother had such a heart for the Lord. And he sang this again and again during the conference time. He was very musical and so was his brother.

Both of them were very musical. And as he led the audience singing this chorus, I could sense that he was just expressing what was in his heart. Show me thy way, O Lord.

Reveal thyself to me. I've seen thy signs and wonders. But Lord, I would know thee.

And you could see that when he sang that, and the whole atmosphere as he was leading the singing was to know the Lord. He was not satisfied by just seeing signs and wonders, which they saw a lot of. But they want to know the Lord himself.

And that was the theme song of that conference. So I brought it back from this year. Can we sing it once more? Show me thy way, O Lord.

Reveal thyself to me. I've seen thy signs and wonders. But Lord, I would know thee.

Lord, how we praise and thank thee. Thou dost show us signs and wonders. For thou dost desire that we would know thee.

And Lord, this is the prayer of our heart tonight. We thank thee and praise thee for thy signs and wonders. But Lord, we know that these point us to thyself.

Lord, we can never be satisfied without thee. We would know thee. O, reveal thyself to us.

Thou must be everything to us. Unless thou be everything, Lord, all things are empty. All things are transient.

But Lord, thou art the only one who is eternal. Thou art the only reality in this universe. So Lord, with such a desire in our hearts, we come to thee, Lord, tonight.

Trusting thy Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of reality, to lead us into all truth. We ask in the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

We have been fellowshiping together during the past two sessions on the letter to the Philippians. We mentioned at the very beginning that the letter to the Philippians has its unique character. Because of all the letters written by the Apostle Paul to the churches, this letter is the most intimate of all his writings.

It is a love letter. It is a heart-to-heart talk between Paul and the saints in Philippi. And there was such a love between them.

There was no inhibition, no reservation, no fear, no misunderstanding. But there was just a free flow of the innermost feeling of Paul to the saints in Philippi. So I think everybody who reads the letter to the Philippians will love that letter.

It does not deal too much with teaching or doctrine. It does not deal very much with problems. It is not a corrective letter, nor an instructive letter.

And yet there is such a sense of life, of love, of uplifting when you read this letter to the Philippians. You know, sometimes after you have read such a letter, it is very difficult for you to explain it or to tell it. And yet somehow you feel warm in your heart.

Now that is the kind of the letter to the Philippians. In this letter, Paul reveals himself. He bears himself to the saints in Philippi.

He tells them of the secret of his life as a Christian. And the secret is, for me to live is Christ. In other words, it is not Paul who is living.

It is not Paul who is trying to live a Christian life. It is not Paul who is trying to live like Christ. He has found that it is impossible.

Even though he has such a strong will, he is such a man of genius, of great ability. And yet he gave up. He said it is impossible.

But at the same time he discovers the secret. For me to live is Christ. It is not I, Paul, who is living.

It is Christ who lives in me. And that is the explanation of his whole life. And because he lives by the life of Christ, therefore his walk on earth is not by the mind of Christ, the spirit of Christ.

And it is the spirit of humility. Now tonight we would like again to go through this letter. Not the first chapter, not the second chapter, but the whole book.

You know, as you read the letter to the Philippians, you cannot help but notice a note that runs through the whole letter. And thank God, quite a number of the choruses we sang had that note. As you read the letter to the Philippians, you will find there is only one word.

Or it is a similar word. Repeat it again, again, and again. If you try to count this word and its similar word, you will find altogether fourteen times.

Fourteen times. It is the word joy, or rejoice. So people who read this letter to the Philippians say it is the letter of joy.

The whole letter, no matter what it writes, it carries with it a note of joy. And this is especially impressive. Why? Because when you consider the situation of Paul, and you consider the situation of the church in Philippi, there does not seem to have much reason for such joy.

You look at Paul. He was a prisoner in Rome. Even though we said he was given certain liberty.

He was allowed to live in his own rent apartment. And he was even allowed to receive visitors. And yet, he was confined to a certain area.

He was not allowed to move freely. But he was confined to a certain area. And a Roman God, Victorian God, Imperial God, was always chained with him day and night.

He did not have any liberty and he did not have any privacy. He was waiting to be tried by Caesar, by Nero. And you know, when a prisoner was waiting to be tried by the Emperor, you never knew when he would try you.

In other words, it's up to the Emperor. When the Emperor felt that he wanted to look into your case, then your case was to be tried. And if you didn't mind to do that, you never knew for how many years you might be confined as a prisoner without getting a trial.

And Paul was waiting there, waiting there for the trial. And he never knew when the trial would come. And that was a real burden.

And not only that, he never knew what would be the outcome of that trial, humanly speaking. It's up to the Emperor. It's up to Caesar.

It's up to the time when he tried the case, what kind of mood he was in. So you'll find everything was in suspense. And brothers and sisters, how we like to have everything settled.

When things are in suspense, now that was, that is in itself a trial. We would rather see it go either one way or the other, either life or death. Either a cripple or sentenced to death.

Then to be hanged there in suspense. And that was what Paul wanted during that time. And we also mentioned that when he was in Rome, he was continuing in preaching the gospel of grace as God had revealed to him.

But it aroused the jealousy of those so-called Jewish Christians. Those Christians who believed in the Lord and yet they held on to Moses. So they began to preach Christ out of contention, out of strife, not out of love.

And these people added the burden upon the heart of Paul. Then the news came. The church that Paul loved so much, there was such a harmony between that church and Paul.

And yet in that church they had a serious problem. Two leading spiritual sisters acted very unspiritually. They were in rival one with another.

Not because of truth, but because of the clash of personalities. And Paul could not go there and talk to them because he was a prisoner. He was not free.

And of course added to this would be the burden of all the churches. As Paul said in Corinth, who is weak and he is not burdened. So you think of the situation Paul was in under such a condition.

If he was not complaining, if he was not murmuring, if he was not rebelling against God and against man, now that was good enough. If he was not groaning and moaning over his tragic condition, that will be considered as unvictorious. How could he under such a condition remain so joyously in the Lord? You know, this was not just incidental.

Because in the very beginning of the church in Philippi, you remember, Paul was put in a jail in Philippi. He was beaten. He was locked.

He was put in the inner prison, in a dungeon there. And yet at midnight, you remember, he and Silas, they sang, they prayed, and they praised God. That was the beginning of the history of the church in Philippi.

And now after ten years, approximately ten years, he was again in prison in Rome. And there again, in that prison, when he was writing the letter to the church in Philippi, again he was singing and praising and praying God in the Roman prison. In other words, this joy that Paul had was not incidental.

It was something that characterized his life. For ten years, in his relationship with the church in Philippi, he began with joy and he concluded with joy. And the situation was getting worse, not getting better.

On the other hand, when Paul wrote this letter to the Philippians, he knew what the believers in Philippi needed. Because of the rivalry between these two sisters, a shadow was cast over the whole church. Everybody was grieving.

Nobody knew what to do. They were in sorrow, in grief. And you know, this was a very dangerous situation.

Because when a person was in sorrow and in grief, he was open to temptation. He is not victorious in the Lord. He would become an introvert.

He begins to look within himself. And as a person begins to look within himself, you know, temptation is at the door. So Paul knew what they needed.

They needed to be comforted with joy. If only they knew the joy of the Lord, then they will rise above their situation instead of being under the situation. So Paul saw the need of joy with the saints in Philippi.

Did he write this letter with a note of joy as a policy? As a necessity? Trying to create an atmosphere? Trying to do something? Not at all. Because with Paul, the joy in him was real. And only that which is real could be imparted to others.

It is no use to tell people to rejoice if the joy of the Lord is not real in you. It is so real in Paul. He is not pretending.

He is not manufacturing. He is not trying to do something. He is not stirring up something.

No, he is just sharing the joy that overflows in his life. And the overflowing of joy made the Philippian believers joyful in the Lord. So it is a letter of joy.

Brothers and sisters, you know, according to the Greek word, there is a difference between joy and pleasure. Pleasure, according to the word pleasure, pleasure is, generally speaking, superficial and transitory. It is an emotional expression that comes out of a conscious pursuit of happiness.

In other words, you are pursuing happiness. You are exerting your effort consciously seeking for happiness. And as you are seeking for happiness, there comes into you an emotional effect.

And that emotional effect is called pleasure. It is superficial and transient. Why? Because it passes away very quickly.

Now that's pleasure. The joy, according to the Greek word, is very different. Joy is deep.

It is a sustained state. It is more than an emotional outburst. It is a character.

Joy always carries with it a sense of sharing, a sense of realization. It is of a higher realm in the spirit. That's joy.

The difference between pleasure and joy is heaven and earth. People of this world know pleasure. They seek for happiness, and they got pleasure.

They seem to be happy for a short while, and then it's gone. It is superficial. They may be laughing, and yet it goes off very quickly.

This is not joy. Joy is something that is deep, that is sustained, that is in our spirit. It is a character within us.

It has its root somewhere else. Not in the things that you seek for, but it is rooted in God. And because of that, you find oftentimes affliction, suffering, seems to add joy to your life instead of taking it away.

It is different. In spite of the situation Paul was in, there was joy within him. That these conditions could not take away.

And he could rise above all these conditions and rejoice in the Lord. He said, for me it is not earth-shaking, but for you it is safe. That's joy.

Dear brothers and sisters, do we know this joy? This joy does not depend upon environment. It is not affected by circumstance. It arises above it, because it is rooted.

Let's look beyond Paul and look into Christ. If you read the life of Christ as we find in the full gospel, you'll find that the life of Christ is a perfect fulfillment of that word in Nehemiah 8.10, the joy of the Lord is your strength. The joy of the Lord is my strength.

Now you'll find this perfectly fulfilled in the life of our Lord Jesus. Now, who is our Lord Jesus while he was on earth? Isaiah 53 says, He is a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief. Who is the Lord Jesus? He is a man of sorrow.

He not only knows what sorrow is, but He is a man of sorrow. In other words, His sorrows are deep. Very deep.

His sorrows come from two sources. One is, He is such a person, a man of God. Even though He is a man, yet He is God.

And He has such a heart for mankind in a sense, He carries with Him, He bears upon His heart all the sorrows of this world. He is one who is full of sympathy. Brothers and sisters, a person who is full of sympathy, a person who bears the sorrows of other people, a person who bears the pains of other people, how can He stand it? Our own sorrows that we bear seem to crush us.

And if we try to bear other people's sorrows, you'll find that we are really burdened down, way down, by the sorrows of other people. Now if you have a bigger heart and you begin to bear the sorrows of the whole nation, the sorrows of the whole world, who can bear it? You cannot live. You will be completely crushed because the sorrows of this world are so much immeasurable.

And the Lord Jesus, why He walked on earth, He took upon Himself all the sorrows of mankind, of this world. A man of sorrow. His sympathy is infinite.

And then secondly, His sorrows came for man. Oh, how people treated Him. How people in this world misunderstood Him and are still misunderstanding Him.

How He came with a heart of love and yet they hated Him without a cause. Not only His foes did not understand Him, even His disciples often misunderstood Him. Now brothers and sisters, think of it.

The sorrows that He received from man were tremendous. Tremendous. No wonder the prophet said, He is a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief.

To Him, grief and sorrow are not the only thing. He experienced it deeply in His own life. Now this is our Lord Jesus.

He is a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Now if He is such a person, can He ever last? He should be crying and weeping all the time. Well, as a matter of fact, in the Bible you never find Jesus last.

Well, I do not say He never lasts, but the Bible does not recall that. On the contrary, you find the Bible says Jesus wept. Why? Because He is a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

And yet, dear brothers and sisters, you do not find our Lord Jesus going around with a long face. Oh, oh. A man of sorrows, acquainted with grief.

You know, if our Lord Jesus was like that, no child will ever get near to Him. You know, children are very innocent, and yet they are very intuitive. If you are a man with long face, the children, when they look at you, they will go away.

But in the case of our Lord Jesus, as you find the children flock to Him. Out of the babe, the praise is perfect. And our Lord took the children in His hands and prayed for them and blessed them.

Think of that. So you can see that our Lord Jesus never went around with a long face. No, never.

He is a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. It is true that the Bible does not record His laughing, but only His weeping. And yet our Lord Jesus is not one who wears a long face.

He is very attractive to the children. And one day, you remember, He even said to the people, John the Baptist came without eating and drinking, but the Son of Man does eat and drink. He was not an ascetic.

No, not a hermit. But you find He is open to all. Open.

One day, the 70 disciples that He sent out came back. Oh, and they rejoiced. They came back to the Lord Jesus and they were rejoicing.

Why? Because their mission was successful. They told the Lord and they rejoiced and said, Now Lord, in Your name we cast out the demons. Even the demons are subject to us.

Oh, and they were so happy about it. And you know what our Lord Jesus said? The Lord said, Do not rejoice because the demons are subject to you. There is something better.

Rejoice because your names are recorded in heaven. The Lord labored much in the cities of Chorazin, Capernaum, Bethlehem. And yet these people refused to receive Him.

After much labor in their midst, and yet these people rejected Him. And when the Lord looked at these cities, He cried out, O Chorazin, O Capernaum, O Bethlehem, if that which I have done in your midst were done in Sodom and Gomorrah, they would be repentant. But you people, I have labored so much in your midst and you are so stubborn, so hard-hearted.

It was broken-hearted, you know. So far as our Lord was concerned, His heart was really broken when He was faced with such a situation. We may think He was weeping, but strange.

In the midst of His crying and weeping, suddenly He lifts His eyes to heaven and He rejoices in His Spirit and says, Father, I thank you. Because you keep these things away from the wise and the prudent, but you reveal them to me. Father, I thank you because it is the pleasure, good pleasure of your will.

No one knows the Son but the Father and those to whom the Father revealed. And no one knows the Father but the Son and to whom the Son reveals the Father. Dear brothers and sisters, you see that? He was crying and He was rejoicing.

So far as the situation before Him was concerned, it was heartbroken. And yet when He turned to the Father, He rejoiced in His Spirit. Now that is joy.

That is joy. Joy is not just going around and laughing all the time. You do not know the sorrow, the grief, the pain in the heart of a clown.

A clown may be laughing and try to make people laugh, but if you examine his heart, he is crying. No joy. No joy.

But joy is something that overcomes, that rises above the clouds, and there is always sunshine above the clouds. That is joy. That is our Lord Jesus.

The joy of our Lord Jesus is in the Father and in the Father's will. As long as He sees the Father, as long as He knows He is doing the Father's will, there is joy. That is His joy.

And dear brothers and sisters, the last night He was with His disciples in that upper room. You know, the whole atmosphere was rather gloomy and dark because the Lord was telling His disciples, one among you will be betrayed. And everybody knew something was going to happen.

Even though they did not know too well, and yet they said the Lord was leading them. And they were in grief. The whole atmosphere was hanging heavily upon them.

And you know, during the Last Supper, after the Last Supper, our Lord Jesus was pouring out His heart to His own. And if you read John 14, 15, 16, what do you find there? You will find again and again the note of joy. As a refrain, the Lord said, I tell you these things beforehand that my joy may be in you and your joy may be full.

Now you are in grief, but I am coming to you and when you shall see me, then you will be filled with joy. Even though you have not asked anything of the Father in my name, but now if you ask in my name, my Father will hear you and your joy will be full. The joy that I give to you, nobody can take away.

Brothers and sisters, think of that. Our Lord Jesus was to be betrayed. Our Lord Jesus was going to the cross.

And yet, the joy within Him was so full that He was able to share it with His disciples. Now that is joy. That is joy.

The joy of the Lord is history. There is another chorus we often sing. And it is, In thy presence there is fullness of joy.

At the right hand are pleasures forevermore. That's Psalm 16. Brothers and sisters, have you ever thought about this? In thy presence is fullness of joy.

And the word in thy presence literally means thy countenance is fullness. Thy countenance, thy faith, is fullness of joy. And at thy right hand are pleasures forevermore.

You see the two words? Joy and pleasure. Joy is related to the countenance. Pleasures are related to His right hand.

In other words, what is our countenance? Our countenance reveals what is within us. Now suppose today you are not too happy. Something is bothering you.

You are burdened. Unconsciously, it comes out in your countenance. People can just look at you and know what is in your heart.

If you are not pretending. You know, when you are alone. You know.

So you find that joy is always related to the countenance of God. In other words, joy is related to God. What He is.

If you know who He is and what He is, then you have joy. Joy is not related to things. Joy is not related to your environment.

Joy is only related to God. If you know Him, if you know who He is and what He is, if you know His will and you are related to His will, then joy is your portion. What is pleasure? Pleasure is connected with His right hand.

And right hand in the Scripture always speaks of the act of God. You use your right hand to do something. In other words, suppose you have a need and you pray and God uses His right hand to do something for you and you are very happy.

That's pleasure. Does it last long? After a while you forgot what God had done for you. You know.

Because it is pleasure. It is not joy. Joy is knowing the nature.

Joy is related to God's nature. And pleasure is only connected with God's act. So here you find our Lord Jesus in His life.

Oh, our Lord Jesus. He knows joy. He knows the joy of the Lord because He knows the Father and He is doing the Father's will.

So in spite of everything His joy always remains. It never changes. And He is able to impart His joy to His disciples.

This is the case with Paul. We find so far as pleasure is concerned he doesn't seem to have much. He was not relieved.

He was still in prison. He was still burdened with all these pressures. And yet dear brothers and sisters he knew the Lord.

He knew He was doing the Lord's will. And because of that there was a deep joy within him that nothing could take away. And he was so joyous in the Lord that he was able to even share it with the believers.

Now this is Christian life. You know oftentimes we do not see the difference. Oftentimes we mix up joy and pleasure.

But joy is in the Spirit. Something very deep and nothing can take it away. So in this letter to the Philippines you'll find it is it runs from beginning to the end a note of joy.

And when the joy of the Lord is there there is strength. There is strength. If you lose that joy you lose your strength.

You begin to be discouraged. You sink into despair. But if the joy of the Lord is there on you go.

You know in Hebrews chapter 12 our Lord Jesus it says look away from everything unto Jesus the author and completer of our faith who for the joy that is set before him endured the cross despised the shame until he is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Joy. It is because the joy of the Lord was with him.

He was able to endure everything to do the Father's will. That is his joy. And there he arrived at the right hand of the throne of God.

Now let's look into the letter to the Philippines. You will notice the joy or rejoicing we find in this letter. And probably we can learn something out of it.

The first mentioning of the word joy is in verse 4, chapter 1 verse 4. Constantly in my every supplication making the supplication for you all with joy because of your fellowship with the gospel from the first day until now. Here you'll find Paul says I can pray for you all with joy. I wonder how many times are you able to pray for someone with joy? Probably for most people whom you'll pray for you'll pray with groaning.

Very sad. Why? Because you see in their lives something is wrong. Something there that hinders opposes God's will.

So when you pray for them you'll pray with groanings with deep groanings within you. Oh that God may get through this life. But here Paul he was able to pray for the saints in Philippi with joy.

Brothers and sisters, sometimes you have a taste of that. Sometimes when you mention someone before the Lord you really feel joyful in your heart as you mention them before the Lord. You can praise God for that.

And here Paul says I supplicate for you all with joy. Why? Because of your fellowship with the gospel. You know the church in Philippi had fellowship with Paul in the gospel from the very first day until the day Paul was in the prison in Rome.

Ten years. From the very beginning they stood with Paul in the gospel. They might not be traveling around with Paul but they were supporting Paul in their prayer.

They were one with Paul in the gospel. Even though Paul was in Rome as a prisoner they sent Epaphroditus there with their gift and with their prayer. They stood with Paul.

Fellowship in the gospel. Brothers and sisters, I wonder aside from the Lord that which can give us joy on earth is fellowship. To me I think it is very real.

Aside from the Lord from whom we receive the joy of the Lord in us I think there is nothing that makes us joyful than to have fellowship with brothers and sisters. When you find some brothers and sisters to whom you could fellowship with of one heart, of one mind, of one spirit you can share together of the Lord and you are one in the Lord. Brothers and sisters, it gives you such joy.

Such joy. Fellowship is full of joy. But what is fellowship? When God's people come together and they begin to discuss this brother and that brother that is not fellowship.

Because the more you talk about it the more you are said fellowship is sharing Christ. Sharing Christ. Oh, there is nothing more joyous on earth than when God's people come together and share Christ in one spirit.

That's joy. And Paul says, I pray for you with joy because of your fellowship. Fellowship in the gospel.

You are one with me in the preaching of the gospel. Now that's where joy comes. And then the second place is in verse 18.

What is it then? At any rate, in every place whether in pretext or in truth Christ is announced and in this I rejoice yea, also I will rejoice for I know that this will turn out for me to salvation through your supplication and supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. You know, Paul, in a limited way he was still trying to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. The pure grace of God.

And then these Jewish believers began to preach Jesus Christ out of contention. Trying to distort the truth of the gospel. It grieved Paul.

It grieved Paul. In other words, so far as truth is concerned there could be no compromise. And yet, in spite of that Paul rose above the situation and said whether they preach Jesus Christ by pretext or by truth in love or in jealousy at least Jesus Christ is announced.

No matter what happens to me Jesus Christ is announced. Not foolish not in perfection but at least the name of Jesus Christ is uplifted. And if I, Paul, shall suffer that doesn't matter I rejoice.

In other words, you'll find the reason why we do not rejoice the reason why we do not have joy is because we care too much about ourselves. He who cares much about himself is one who is always worried and unhappy. If we can forget ourselves and if we can only think of the Lord brothers and sisters we will rejoice.

This is the reason why we are not joyful as we should. Why? Because we think too much of ourselves. What will happen to me? And we lose our joy.

But if we think of Christ oh, if only Christ is announced if only Christ is uplifted I rejoice. Because He is the source of my joy. He is the purpose of my life.

And Paul can rejoice over that. Then the third time it is mentioned is in verse 25. You know, Paul was pressed.

He said, for me to live is Christ and to die, gain. But if to live in flesh is my loss this is for me worth the while and what I shall choose I cannot tell. I am pressed by both.

Having the desire for departure and being with Christ for it is very much better but remaining in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. And having confidence of this I know that I shall remain abide along with you all for your progress and joy in your faith. Here you'll find Paul was pressed.

He didn't know whether he should go or whether he should stay. If he should go it was much better for him because he would be with the Lord. All these trials all these pressures would be gone.

But then he thought of the saints in Philippi. They still needed him. And for their sake he felt he should stay.

In order that he might help them in the joy in faith. Brothers and sisters do you see that? Where is our joy? Our joy is in the Lord. Our joy is in doing the will of God.

Where comes our joy? Our joy is when we are thinking of the joy of other people. You cannot rejoice if you always think of yourself. If you can think of other people to make other people joyful then your joy is full.

In our Chinese classics there is a saying I think it is Confucius who asked this question. He said to be happy alone or to be happy with other people which is happier? If you are happy by yourself or you are happy with other people which is happier? And his answer is with other people. You know there is two things.

You cannot be happy by yourself. It's very limited. You have to share your happiness with others and then your happiness is full.

So if we seek the joy of our brothers and sisters oh to see they are built up in faith. They are progressing in the Lord. When you see these things your joy is full.

So no wonder later on Paul said you are my joy, you are my crown. If you stand in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. That's joy.

Why is it that we don't have joy too much? It's because we are not helping other people. We are not building up other people in the Lord. Oh when you see your brothers and sisters growing in the Lord.

And if the Lord should use you in a small way to help them. It's the joy that comes to you is more than when the Lord is doing something to you. It is joy.

Real joy. And then in chapter 2 Paul says in verse 1 If then there be any comfort in Christ if any consolation of love if any fellowship of the Spirit if any bowels and compassion fulfill my joy that ye may think the same thing having the same love joining souls thinking one thing. The joy will overflow.

If we are one. One in heart. One in spirit.

One in love. One in mind. Brothers and sisters the joy is full.

Oh the oneness of God's people. Because God's people are so divided we are grieved. We are grieved.

But when God's people are really one nothing can be compared with that. The joy that comes with the oneness with the unity of God's people is overflowing. It's overflowing.

And then of course in verse 17 we mentioned this morning that if also I am poured out as a libation of the sacrifice and ministration of your faith I rejoice. And rejoice in common with God in like manner do you also rejoice and rejoice with me. We mentioned in the morning that the church in Philippi the saints in Philippi were as a sacrifice a burnt offering to the Lord.

And Paul said I'm most happy to be the drink offering that pours upon the sacrifice. I'm willing to add to your consecration to your sacrifice to the Lord. I rejoice with you and you rejoice with me.

In other words, the joy of the Lord has to be shared. It is much easier naturally to share sorrow than to share joy. Naturally speaking.

If you have sorrow you like to share with some people. But if you are happy you keep it for yourself. But in Christ the joy that the Lord has given must be shared.

The more you share it the more joyful. And verse 28 I have sent him therefore the more diligently and seeing him ye might again rejoice and that I might be the less sorrowful receiving therefore in the Lord with all joy and hold such in honor. Again you'll find joy is being seen, our brother and sister.

Oh, if we can meet our brothers and sisters there is joy in it. It gives us much joy. Then you turn to chapter 3, verse 1. For the rest, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.

To write the same things to you, to me, if not earthsome and for you safe. Paul said rejoice in the Lord. Brethren, you can only rejoice in the Lord.

Outside of the Lord there is no joy. Rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me, if not earthsome.

Paul said to me, if not earthsome. In other words, it's not troublesome. Why? Because it is so real.

He may maintain joy fourteen times and it is always fresh. Because it is real to him. But he said for you it is fresh.

The joy of the Lord is our safety. When a person loses his joy he is open to temptation. Because he is depressed.

When you are depressed, you are open to all kinds of temptations. But when you are rejoicing in the Lord, in other words, you see the Lord. You are with Him.

You are above Him. And the temptation with the church in Phidippi, there is another temptation there. A small problem.

And that problem is the circumcision. So he said, beware the dogs. See to evil workmen.

See to the concessions. Now suddenly he mentions these things. Sometimes you wonder why, you know.

Actually, Paul was very ironic. In other words, the Jews always look upon the Gentiles as dogs, right? The Jews always look upon the Gentiles as evil workmen. The Jews look upon the Gentiles as the uncircumcised.

So Paul turned it around and said see to dogs. And he refers to the Jews. See to the wicked workmen.

He refused to the Jews. See to the concessions. He refused to the Jews.

Why? There was, there were Jews who tried to get into the church in Phidippi and tried to teach them to keep the law of Moses. To bring them under bondage again. They are dogs, unclean.

They are evil workmen. Doing evil. And you know, Paul was so sarcastic.

He didn't say, beware the circumcision. He said, beware the concession. You know, concession means, beware the mutilated.

Their circumcision is just a mutilation. There is no value in it. You just mutilate your body.

Think of that. So sarcastic. And he turned around and said, now who are the circumcised? Who are the true circumcised? For we are the circumcised who worship by the Spirit of God and those in Jesus Christ and do not trust in flesh.

Because circumcision in the Old Testament is just a type of the circumcision of the heart. So we who have received the circumcision of the heart we are the circumcised. And what is the circumcision of the heart? We worship God in Spirit.

We do not trust in our flesh and we boast in Christ Jesus. That is the circumcision. So brothers and sisters may the joy of the Lord protect us.

Protect us. Protect us for all from all these temptations. You know, when a person is depressed he may listen to these Jewish stewardizers and may think, well, by doing this he may please God.

He will be led astray. So pause and beware of this. And then, of course, the greatest chapter on rejoicing is in chapter 4. And here you find Paul in chapter 4. Rejoice in the Lord always.

Again I will say, but how? Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice. Why? Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is near.

You know, the Lord is near here does not refer to the second coming of our Lord. Yes. The second coming of our Lord is near.

That's true. But here, the Lord is near does not refer to the second coming. The Lord is near is referred to the present.

Why is it that we do not rejoice in the Lord? It is because we strive. Oh, we are always striving for ourselves. In this world, you have to strive for yourself.

If you don't strive for yourself, if you are not taking care of your right, taking care of yourself, now who will take care of you? And when you are striving for yourself, as if the Lord is not here. You have to take care of yourself. So he said, let your gentleness be known to all men.

Your meekness. In other words, you don't need to strive for yourself. The Lord is near.

He will take care of you. Be careful about nothing, but in everything by prayer, supplication with thanksgiving, make your request known to God, and the peace of God which surpasses every understanding shall guard your heart and your thoughts by Christ Jesus. Of course.

As we live on this earth, there are many cares of life. How can we be careful of nothing? Since we have the cares of life around us. But there is a secret.

We can make known our request to God by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. In other words, hand these over to the Lord. And if we hand them over to the Lord, the peace of God will garrison our heart and mind.

It doesn't say make your request known to the Lord and he will supply everything. It doesn't say that. It says he will garrison your heart and mind.

In other words, you will be in peace. Now how God is going to answer your request, that is another question. But at least you'll find the peace of God will garrison your heart and mind.

You will not worry anymore. And you can rejoice now. You can rejoice now.

Even before the answer comes, you can rejoice. You know it's taken care of. Somebody has taken care of it.

So brothers and sisters, here you'll find this is the joy of the Lord. The joy of the Lord is our strength. We cannot live if we do not have this joy.

But if we have this joy in us, we can live more than conquerors in all things. The joy of the Lord is our portion. If we only look to him, or if we only see him, if you see his face, there is fullness of joy.

So all that we need is to see him. That's all. If you see him, there is joy.

No matter far. And there will be strength in your life. And you will find all things will be taken care of.

Lord, thou dost tell us that the joy of the Lord is our strength. And we cannot live without our strength. Lord, thou dost tell us that thy countenance is fullness of joy.

O, turn our hearts to thee, that daily we may see thy face, and our joy shall be full. O Lord, how we praise and thank thee, because thou art the source of our joy. And we do desire to share thy joy with our brothers and sisters, and receive thy joy from our brothers and sisters.

O, how we praise and thank thee. In this world, even though we may have all kinds of pressures, and yet no one can take away the joy that thou hast given to us. Lord, we do thank thee.

We praise thy name. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/0/SID0932.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/stephen-kaung/philippians-the-joy-of-the-lord/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net