

OUR JOY IS IN THE LORD



- The Apostle Paul reminds us of the source of our joy and commands us to be happy and to feel the joy of being right with God.
- This is possible because the foundation of our joy in the Lord is the righteousness of Jesus Christ that is put to our account — by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone ...

1. We are commanded to experience our joy in the Lord—to feel the joy of being right with God, 3:1.

- (Philippians 3:1 ESV) Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.

A. Transition: Finally directs our attention to matters that need attending to, or maybe reemphasized, before moving ahead in our instruction.

B. Looking to the Lord as our only true source of joy is an act of obedience based on the fact that the Lord is our only true source of joy.

C. To rejoice in the Lord is to feel happiness and to be well and thrive in the blessings that derive from our relationship with the Lord.

Rejoice ... χαίρω [chairo] – to feel happiness or joy; to rejoice exceedingly; to be well, thrive.

D. Being reminded that the Lord is our only true source of joy is a safeguard to protect our hearts and minds.

E. This repetition is necessary for us to remain firm.

EXCURSUS: SO WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THIS JOY WE ARE COMMANDED TO EXPERIENCE?

I. Our joy in the Lord is based on our confidence in the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord and being found in him.

- (Philippians 3:8a, 9 ESV) Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. ... and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.

II. Joy is the fruit of the Spirit.

- (Galatians 5:22a–23 ESV) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace.

Joy ... χαρά [chara] – joy, gladness; the emotion of great happiness and pleasure.

III. The powerful assurance of our joy in the Lord is such that even in much affliction we are able to receive God's word unquenched and with the joy of the Holy Spirit.

- (1 Thessalonians 1:6 ESV) And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit.

IV. Filled with joy and filled with the Holy Spirit seem to be synonymous.

- (Acts 13:52 ESV) And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

V. We are able to endure as Jesus did by looking to the joy set before us.

- (Hebrews 12:1b–2a ESV) ... and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross ...

VI. We are to consider meeting trials as a twofold opportunity to cause joy and to dispel gloom.

- (James 1:2 NIV) Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds.

Consider – to deem or reckon to be. Joy – anything that causes cheer and dispels gloom.

VII. The powerful assurance of our joy in the Lord is such that even while still on this earth we are able to experience joy that is filled with the glory of God.

- (1 Peter 1:8 ESV) Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory.

—END EXCURSUS—

2. We must safeguard our minds and hearts by constantly reminding each other to look out for the false teachers who would rob us of our joy, 3:2-3.

- (Philippians 3:2-3 ESV) Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.

Look out for ... βλέπετε [blepete] – to watch carefully; to be vigilant, be on the lookout; to see with the mind's eye; to discern mentally, observe, perceive; to turn the thoughts or direct the mind to a thing; to weigh carefully, examine.

A. Look out for the dogs ...

- i. Dogs are blind, ignorant, indifferent, lazy spiritual leaders who have turned to their own way for personal gain.

- (Isaiah 56:10–11 ESV) His watchmen are

blind; they are all without knowledge; **they are all silent dogs**; they cannot bark, dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber. 11 **The dogs have a mighty appetite**; they never have enough. But they are **shepherds who have no understanding**; **they have all turned to their own way**, **each to his own gain**, **one and all**.

B. Look out for the evildoers ...

- i. Evidoes are deceitful workers who disguise themselves as servants of righteousness.
 - (2 Corinthians 11:12–15 ESV) And what I am doing **I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do**. 13 For such men are **false apostles, deceitful workmen**, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 So it is no surprise if **his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness**. Their end will correspond to their deeds.
- ii. Evidoes are those who distort the gospel.
 - (Galatians 1:7b ESV) ... but there are some who trouble you **and want to distort the gospel of Christ**.
- iii. Evidoes are secretive, false brothers who corrupt the truth of the gospel.
 - (Galatians 2:4a, 5 ESV) Yet because of **false brothers secretly brought in** ... **to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you**.

C. Look out for those who mutilate the flesh ...

Mutilate the flesh is speaking of circumcision (3:2).

- (Titus 1:10–11a NLT) For there are many rebellious people who engage in useless talk and deceive others. **This is especially true of those who insist on circumcision for salvation**. 11 **They must be silenced**, because they are turning whole families away from the truth by their false teaching.

3. Paul contrasts those who put their confidence in human acts of worship with those who by the Spirit have no confidence in anything humans can do but are completely dependent on Christ alone for our right standing before God.

- (Philippians 3:3 ESV) For **we are the circumcision**, who **worship by the Spirit of God** and glory in Christ Jesus **and put no confidence in the flesh**.
- (Ephesians 2:8–9 ESV) **For by grace you have been saved through faith**. And this is **not your own doing**; it is the gift of God, 9 **not a result of works**, so that no one may boast.

A. Putting confidence in the flesh is trusting in human, physical acts of service and worship.

B. Those who put their confidence in physical, human acts **expose their false belief** that those actions serve in addition to what Christ has done to provide right standing before God—works salvation.

C. Circumcision, water baptism, tithing, church attendance, etc. are examples of mere physical, human works done by human hands (or bodies).

- (Ephesians 2:11 NIV) Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves **“the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)**.

4. Paul battled with the false teachers who required believing in Christ plus circumcision in Galatians.

A. Those who accept the physical, human act of circumcision, or water baptism, or any other human work have **exempted** their minds from the truth of belief in Christ alone and have **fallen out of a state** of being able to accept salvation by grace alone.

- (Galatians 5:2–4 ESV) Look: I, Paul, say to you that **if you accept circumcision**, Christ will be of no advantage to you. 3 **I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision** that he is obligated to keep the whole law. 4 **You are severed from Christ**, you who would be justified by the law; **you have fallen away from grace**.

B. The truth about those who believe these physical, human actions are necessary for salvation is that ... they want to look good and want to avoid persecution for hold fasting to the cross of Christ as sufficient.

- (Galatians 6:12 ESV) It is those **who want to make a good showing** in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, **and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ**.

C. Outward physical, human actions count for nothing in regard to our justification before a holy God.

- (Galatians 6:15 ESV) **For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.**

D. False teaching and false teachers rob people of assurance and joy by supporting a substandard foundation of self-righteousness that undermines the person's faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

E. Here is a **summary statement** of the danger of false teaching and false teachers.

Since the foundation of our joy is the righteousness of Christ, then any teaching that undermines who Jesus is and what he has done undermines our assurance of well being and thus robs us of the ability to rejoice in the Lord no matter what is happening in our lives.

5. Paul argues that having confidence in any gain from physical, human acts of religion is like trusting in animal excrement in comparison to the surpassing value of knowing Christ, 3:3-8.

- (Philippians 3:3-8 ESV) For we are the circumcision, who worship **by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh**— 4 though **I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh** also. **If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more:** 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. 7 **But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.** For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things **and count them as rubbish**, in order that I may gain Christ.

- A. Confidence in the flesh is trusting in human, physical actions, not necessarily sinful actions.
- B. Having confidence in the flesh (human, physical actions) is contrasted to having no confidence in any human, physical actions but complete confidence in and dependence on the work of the Spirit of God.
- C. Compared to the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus any human religious act no matter how good and sincere is like animal excrement.

Rubbish ... σκύβαλον [skubalon] – waste, any refuse, as the excrement of animals, especially solid

animal waste; of things worthless and detestable.

CONCLUSION: Whose righteousness will be found in our account when God audits the books on judgment day?

6. Our goal must be to be found in Christ having the righteousness from God in Christ and not found in having a righteousness of our own doing, 3:9.

- (Philippians 3:9 ESV) **And be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own** that comes from the law, **but that which comes through faith in Christ**, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.

Found ... εὕρισκω [heurisko] – to be discovered; to be or become encountered in a specific state or condition (**as if being discovering as such**); to find a thing sought; to find by enquiry, thought, examination, scrutiny, observation; to see, learn, discover, understand; to be found i.e. to be seen, be present.

- A. All merely religious people will one day be found (discovered as such) to be trusting in their own righteousness.
- B. Sincerity and enthusiasm for God apart from correct knowledge is not only useless for salvation but is damning evidence of a rebellious, sinful heart.
 - (Romans 10:1-3 ESV) Brothers, **my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.** 2 **For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.** 3 For, **being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.**
- C. Those who put no confidence in human, physical works but instead trust in Christ alone will be found (discovered as such) as those who have the righteousness of Christ on the books in their account.
 - (Romans 4:4-5 ESV) **Now to the one who works**, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. 5 **And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness.**
- D. The person who does not work but believes enters into the joy of the Lord.
- E. So back to where Paul began — **Rejoice in the Lord!**