

Title: JOY AS GROWTH INITIATIVE, PHILIPPIANS 1:21-30  
(Chatham, NJ; 10/05/14, AM) [Pc – Topical]

Theme: While Paul exhorts the Philippian church to rejoice, he also teaches them several other important lessons that contribute to a healthy, growing, and visitor-receiving congregation.

Purpose: To learn the lessons of service, humility, and joy that create an environment which will attract others and give peace to all.

Introduction:

1. Most of us know Philippians because it exhorts us to rejoice, to find the peace that passes understanding, and to think about what is good and noble.
2. Paul exhibits a joyful attitude toward them in numerous ways: he asks them to complete his joy (2:2), he wants to be cheered by news of them (2:19), and he calls them his “joy and crown” (4:1).
3. Such joy is infectious; it grows out of a group cemented together by camaraderie and working together for the sake of the Gospel.
4. The Book of Philippians shows us how to create a community outlook that is conducive to growth, working together, and the acceptance of new people.
5. The following things contribute to making such a community.

I. A Willingness to Serve: “To live is Christ, to die is gain,” (1:21)

- A. More personal gain or more service
  1. Paul is caught in a dilemma
  2. In death, he can enjoy the fruits of eternity
  3. In life, he endures more work and service on behalf of the church
  4. Verses 22-26 express this in detail
  5. We’ve already seen that Paul has invested a lot of joy in their well-being
- B. Choosing service
  1. Not his first choice, but God’s will
  2. He sees the need (24) and resolves to do it
  3. It is intended to result in progress and joy for them (25)
- C. A choice to serve
  1. Paul makes a choice of delayed gratification
  2. It is one of the hallmarks of maturity
  3. Not everyone will have to make the same choice between staying to serve or going on to your reward
  4. But all must choose to serve with the same willingness as well as the same contentment in the face of delayed gratification
  5. Choosing service reflects a joyful spirit and encourages others

II. Manner of Life: “Worthy of the Gospel,” (1:27)

- A. Courage in the face of adversity
  1. As infectious as joy
  2. Paul wants to find them “not frightened by your opponents,” (28)
  3. Adversaries prefer to exploit weaknesses and fear
  4. When an enemy determines that you won’t back down, many shrink back
  5. Your courage strikes fear into their hearts
  6. Like standing up to the schoolyard bully
  7. Be engaged in the conflict (30)
- B. Humility toward one another (2:3-4)

1. No rivalry or conceit, see also James 3:14-16
2. Humility supersedes pride and self-righteousness: most people will turn and walk out of such an environment
3. Consider others better than yourself, 3
4. Look to the interests of others, 4
5. From a selfish point of view, this expands the number of people interested in my welfare if everyone participates

C. The service and humility of Christ: he is the role-model

### III. Work Out Your Salvation: God works in you (2:12-13)

A. Do all things without grumbling, 14

1. Remember Israel in the desert
2. A whole generation lost their salvation because they were grumblers and fault-finders
3. Not many things ruin the spirit of a congregation more than complaining and grumbling

B. Hold fast the Word of Life, 16

1. Courage in the face of adversity strengthens you to do this
2. Joy results when we remain faithful
3. Ours is a message of life: why not hold onto that?

C. Rejoice

1. Be glad and rejoice with others, 18.
2. Humility ties us to them, and we share their joy

### Conclusions:

1. These are among the things that create an environment for spiritual growth.
2. They also create an attractive community, conducive to receiving others.
3. Be willing to serve (and find joy even in menial tasks).
4. Stand firm and have courage in the face of adversity (you'll lead others by your courage).
5. Work out your salvation (instead of grumbling, look for positive ways of looking at life).
6. Find joy in serving as Christ served.
7. We hold out the Gospel to all: invite a response.