

SCRIPTURES FOR 6/17/07 LIFEGROUP LESSON

Philippians 1:1-11

1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons: 2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 I thank my God every time I remember you. 4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

7 It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. 8 God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

9 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, 10 so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

Galatians 5:1

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

Romans 8:1-2

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

Philippians 1:7-11 (The Message)

It's not at all fanciful for me to think this way about you. My prayers and hopes have deep roots in reality. You have, after all, stuck with me all the way from the time I was thrown in jail, put on trial, and came out of it in one piece. All along you have experienced with me the most generous help from God. He knows how much I love and miss you these days. Sometimes I think I feel as strongly about you as Christ does! So this is my prayer: that your love will flourish and that you will not only love much but well. Learn to love appropriately. You need to use your head and test your feelings so that your love is sincere and intelligent, not sentimental gush. Live a lover's life, circumspect and exemplary, a life Jesus will be proud of: bountiful in fruits from the soul, making Jesus Christ attractive to all, getting everyone involved in the glory and praise of God.

Luke 24:46-48

This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

NOTE TO LEADER: There is a lot of material here. Familiarize yourself with it so you know which stuff you are most comfortable with and what you will cut if you get short on time. Try to keep the lesson/discussion 20-30 minutes in length. Good luck and let me know if you have any questions. - Ed



JOY In the Journey: Real Joy

Ed Taylor

NOTE TO LEADERS: All items in *italics* are for your information and not designed to be read aloud.

OPENING:

ICEBREAKER or GET YA THINKIN' QUESTION: _____

OPENING PRAYER NOTES: _____

INTRODUCTION:

(Have someone read Philippians 1:1-2)

- Q:** Do you think it is significant that Paul separates the “saints” from the “overseers and deacons?” *(perhaps to suggest that you don't have to be a leader to be a saint?)*
- Q:** Does it make you uncomfortable to be called a “slave?” How does this square with “freedom in Christ?” *(see Galatians 5:1 & Romans 8:1-2) – (freedom in Christ is freedom from the law, so to be a slave to Christ is to be free from the law of sin and death)*
- Q:** How about a “saint” (GR: hagios [pr: HAG-ee-oss] or “holy one”)? *(Paul says there is none righteous, so this is clearly in reference to all believers)*

APPLICATION:

Paul is in chains but says, “Grace and peace be with you.” (v.2)

Q: How do you think Paul separates his circumstances from his attitude? *(faith, trust, etc.)*

In *the Message* translation, Paul says, “Every time you cross my mind, I break out in exclamations of thanks to God. Each exclamation is a trigger to prayer. I find myself praying for you with a glad heart.” He is speaking to the saints, but I think this could apply to evangelism as well; hence Jeff’s call to pray for our neighbors. If we travel about our neighborhood, our neighbors will necessarily “cross our mind,” so if we then “break out in thanks” for our ability to reach out, it will “trigger” prayer, which will hopefully lead to opportunities for connection. I think these two verses are an excellent description of God’s ongoing call for saints to reach out in all contexts and all ages.

Q: Have you ever experienced a prayer leading to an opportunity like this? Please share...

But Jeff connects these verses to **REMEMBERING**, his first indicator of real joy. As Paul remembered the many twists and turns that got him to this place, he broke out in exclamations of thanks. Then he **INTERCEDES** with prayer, triggered by his thankfulness.

Also from the Message, vv. 7-11 read: *(read from the Message)*

These five verses perfectly describe *koinoinia* (Greek for Jeff’s next indicator of joy, **PARTNERSHIP**). Here we partner with God and with each other and “attract” others to ourselves and to God, for His glory, and is still working on you (v.6) in **ANTICIPATION** of His return, and our eternal fellowship.

Q: What role does LIFEGROUPS play in this process? Is it possible to meet in small groups and still avoid partnership?

Verse 8 suggests that with joy comes an **AFFECTION** for others that is similar to the love Jesus has for us. In Jeff’s words, “Emotion overtakes circumstances.”

Q: Is this sort of affection (that overtakes circumstances) only available to Christians? *(NO!)* What is the difference between the circumstances of a Christian being overtaken by emotion, and those of a non-Christian? *(possibly nothing, hopefully the emotion would be virtuous, while that of the non-Christian might not be).*

CONCLUSION:

Jeff asked us whether we thought joy was the first thing God thinks of when He thinks of WCC.

Q: What do you think? Why?

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

GROUP NEEDS: _____ SHUT-IN MINISTRY: _____

WHO’S LEADING...

THIS WEEK: WORSHIP: _____ PRAYER: _____

NEXT WEEK: WORSHIP: _____ PRAYER: _____