

Doesn't God Want Me Happy? - Philippians 1:1-6 - October 14th, 2018

- I want to talk about something that I have personally wrestled with in my own Christian life concerning this notion of happiness.
- In so doing, I'm hoping to answer the question of, "doesn't God want me to be happy?" Actually, Philippians answers this for us.
- However, in order for us to answer this very good question, we must first understand the difference between happiness and joy.

| HAPPINESS | JOY |
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| Happiness is predicated upon circumstances | Joy is not dependent upon circumstances |
| Happiness is volatile | Joy is balanced |
| Happiness is based on how I feel | Joy is based on how I think |
| Happiness is superficial | Joy is supernatural |
| Happiness is an emotion | Joy is a conviction |
| Happiness is shallow | Joy is deep |
| Happiness is external | Joy is internal |
| Happiness is a reaction | Joy is a response |
| Happiness is incomplete | Joy is complete |
| Happiness is temporal | Joy is eternal |

- While I realize that saying this may seem like a firm grasp of the obvious, joy is infinitely better than happiness because of this.
- That's not to say that we cannot be happy, rather, it is to say that joy is better than happiness, because joy will bring happiness.
- As such we can now answer the aforementioned question of "doesn't God want me happy?" as God wants me to be full of joy.

John 15:11 - I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

- Enter our text today where the Apostle Paul rises from the pages of our Bibles as an example to us of what this joy will look like.
- If there were ever a man of God who was a good advertisement for a joyful Christian life in spite of a hard life, it would be Paul.
- Moreover, if there were ever a book in the Bible that demonstrated this joy in the life of a Christian, it is this book of Philippians.

- Paul planted the church in Philippi some 11-years prior when God not only directed his steps, but he directed his stops as well.
- Paul uses the word joy or rejoicing 19 times in this letter only 4-chapters in length written when he was with Timothy at the time.
- Paul pens this letter while unjustly under house arrest as a Roman prisoner awaiting trial before Caesar and possible execution.

G. Campbell Morgan of this wrote, "This is Paul's great singing letter. It was at Philippi that he had sung in prison at midnight, in the company of Silas. Now he was again in prison, this time in Rome. ...It is a glorious revelation of how life in fellowship with Christ triumphs over all adverse circumstances. The triumph, moreover, is not that of stoical indifference. It is rather the recognition of the fact that all apparently adverse conditions are made allies of the soul and ministers of victory, under the dominion of the Lord."

- You'll forgive me for raining on our parade of joy, but we have a problem that we need to deal with in order to know of this joy.
- The problem is that a joyful Christian is a rarity, in the sense that the reality is the majority of Christians are joyless, not joyful.
- Thankfully, this need not be and as such, what follows are three practical ways that we as Christians can be genuinely joyful.

1. Be Thankful (Verses 1-3)

- The reason that Paul was so joyful is because Paul was so thankful to the Philippians for what they did for him while in prison.
- It's important to understand that in that day, you weren't guaranteed three meals a day and had to rely on others to feed you.
- Not only did the Philippian Christians take care of Paul while in prison, they were financially partnering with Paul in the gospel.

Luke 17:11-19 - 11 Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. 12 As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance 13 and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!" 14 When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed. 15 One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. 16 He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan. 17 Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? 18 Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?" 19 Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

2. Be Prayerful (Verse 4)

- Another reason Paul was so joyful is because he was so prayerful for the Philippians who he remembered with great affection.
- Perhaps it goes without saying, but a prayerless Christian is a joyless Christian and a prayerful Christian is a joyful Christian.
- When we get to chapter four of this epistle, we're going to see a direct correlation to the peace and joy that comes from prayer.

3. Be Faithful (Verses 5-6)

- It's this third one that I will bring it to a close with, because it speaks to the joy that can be ours when we are faithful servants.
- Notice in verse one where Paul refers to themselves as "servants" instead of Paul's usual introduction as an Apostle of Christ.
- I would suggest that there is no greater joy for us as Christians than when we faithfully serve the Lord, in the work of the Lord.