

### INTRODUCTION:

The Book of Philippians is often referred to as the 'letter of joy'. In this letter, Paul does not address specific heresies nor does he try to resolve sins and rebellions. Rather, the author shares his heart and joy for the believers in Philippi, encouraging them and revealing his own deep joy in God and for them. Throughout the letter 'joy', in one form or other, is repeated 19 times. However, in chapter 1 alone, Jesus or Christ is mentioned 18 times.

- **SHARE:** What do you think is difference between joy and happiness?

### READ PHILIPPINES 1:1-6

"1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. 6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."

## THE FOUNDATIONS OF PAUL'S JOY

It is essential to understand that Paul's joy was not something he had to 'work' for. Paul's joy was the result of something that he received from Jesus. The first six verses, along with Hebrews 12, gives us an insight for having a joy which we ourselves do not have to work for. It's a joy in which we bask, unshakable and unfading.

### 1. JESUS' WORK FOR YOU (NOT YOURS... DONE not DO)

**THROUGH THE CROSS, JESUS MADE SINNERS INTO SAINTS:**

- **SHARE:** What do you think is a 'saint'? Is this a title for the super-holy? How does one become a 'saint'?

### 2. JESUS' COMMITMENT TO YOU (NOT YOURS TO HIM)

Read Phil.1:6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

- **SHARE:** How does this bring joy and humility to a believer?

### 3. JESUS JOY IN YOU (NOT YOUR JOY IN HIM)

- **Read James Hudson Taylor:** It is the consciousness of the threefold joy of the Lord, His joy in ransoming us, His joy in dwelling within us as our Savior and Power for fruit bearing and His joy in possessing us, as His Bride and His delight; it is the consciousness of this joy which is our real strength. Our joy in Him may be a fluctuating thing: His joy in us knows no change.
- **Read Hebrews 12:1-2,** "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, 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, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."

## FROM COUNTERFEIT TO AUTHENTIC JOY IN GOD

- **C.S.L., The Weight of Glory:** Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.
  - **Share:** What are some things that you 'fool' around with, which 'spoil' your appetite for the 'infinite joys' in Christ? What does CS Lewis mean by 'our desires are not too strong, but too weak'?
  - **Pray** for each other as you have shared, that you would grow in an appetite for God's joy. This joy is a supernatural joy, and as such, pray for the Spirit to awaken your appetite and understanding of God's work for you, commitment to you, and joy in you.