

## Choose Joy (Week 3): My Joy and Crown:

### **Yesterday's Sermon - In 10 Sentences or Less**

#### Choose Joy (Week 3): My Joy and Crown:

- 1) Of the dozen instances of joy language in Philippians (the noun "joy," the verb "rejoice," etc.), 3/4 have a single commonality, which is that joy is centered on or caused by other people.
- 2) We only looked at two of those 9 passages, the first of which is Phil. 4.1: "Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I cherish, love, and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way."
- 3) What's most striking about this verse is a) its effusive, heartfelt, intimate verbiage, and b) that these words are directed toward other Christians with whom Paul hadn't spent a lot of time face to face.
- 4) How we talk to others doesn't often sound like Paul for any number of reasons:
  - a) we live in a culture that normalizes negative, not positive, message,
  - b) our social norms steer us away from it,
  - c) as we lose our emotional elasticity with age, so too our language becomes more functional, bland, and inhuman, and
  - d) maybe most fundamentally, to speak so openly and lavishly is to be vulnerable and risk being hurt or put off.
- 5) The kind of affirming, uplifting emotional language found in Phil. 4.1 has a profoundly-positive effect on both the speaker and the recipient: as rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel put it, "Words create worlds."
- 6) There is a clear connection between love, especially love expressed, and joy: the more we give love to others, the more joy both we and its recipient experience.
- 7) The 2nd passage we considered is Phil. 2.28-29, which introduces us to one of the great minor characters in the New Testament, Epaphroditus, a person from the Philippian church who had delivered a gift to Paul in Rome, fallen deathly ill, and, having recovered, returned home.
- 8) The most remarkable feature of these two verses is that Paul has to remind the Philippians church to welcome and honor Epaphroditus with all joy, proving that the simplest, most basic Christian behaviors and attitudes are the easiest to slip by our attention.
- 9) As Canadian writer Robin Sharma puts it, "We should never miss an opportunity to celebrate one another," because what we celebrate, we reinforce.
- 10) "Joy is contagious, as is joylessness", writes Dr. Assael Romanelli (Israeli prof of psychology), so let KirkWood be a place in which joy rubs off one person to another, and let it be what we offer our often-joyless culture.



## **This Week**

- Want to check out all the instances in Philippians where joy is directly tied to other people? What might you glean from these passages? Check out Phil. 1.4, 1.25, 2.2, 2.17-18, 2.28-29, 4.1, and 4.10: [Phil 1-4 NRSVA](#)
- Interested in Epaphroditus? You can read his story here - [Phil 2.19-30 NRSVA](#) and [Philippians 2:25-30](#)
- Put both Phil. 4.1 and 2.18-29 into practice this week:
  - 1) be purposeful to give others the gift of your uplifting, heartfelt, demonstrative language...take the risk, and how both you and the hearer are positively affected.
  - 2) be intentional to celebrate someone this week, take time to honor them with joy.
- A devotional about one church's simple, beautiful embodiment of joy together: [This Joy! - United Church of Christ](#)
- A short summary of the research on contagious emotions: [Emotions are contagious: Learn what science and research has to say about it](#)
- In order to talk as affirmingly as Paul in Philippians, we need to learn how to express our feelings in general...these two articles are full of pointers about how to do that better: [How to Express Your Feelings: 7 Tips](#) and [How to Express Your Feelings: Tips and Benefits](#)