

Php 1:12-30

1. The purposes of God can always be found in our circumstances
2. To be alive is to live for Kingdom purposes, to go and be with Jesus is our reward!
3. If we live with a kingdom mindset, we will walk like kingdom people.

## Joy in whatever circumstances

The word joy or rejoice occurs 16 times throughout Philippians. A key theme throughout the letter Paul wrote to the church in Philippi is Joy in whatever circumstances. How many of us have that? This is truly a hard thing for us to do, and impossible for most apart from the Spirit of God.

There are some who think they are in control of their situation, and others who think their situation is in control of them.

- It is true we make choices
- We can change our direction, take different paths, learn from our mistakes
- Often, more often than the most “in charge” people like to think, we have limited control
- Circumstances WILL come to all of us, for which we have no control, like death and taxes

### 1. The purposes of God can always be found despite our circumstances (V12-18)

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*12 And I want you to know, my dear brothers and sisters, that everything that has happened to me here has helped to spread the Good News. 13 For everyone here, including the whole palace guard, knows that I am in chains because of Christ. 14 And because of my imprisonment, most of the believers here have gained confidence and boldly speak God's message without fear.*

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- Reminder, being in a Roman prison was an awful experience! Dark, cramped, unclean.

Notice how Paul had a single-minded gospel focus for Christ even in the midst of this environment. Paul could see God's hand in his circumstances.

**Things turned out.** The KJV translation uses the phrase “the things which happened unto me have fallen out” in v12. Which is an interesting way of showing God's sovereignty. So what was the result of Paul's imprisonment?

1. Everyone in the prison knew he was in there because of Jesus

2. Paul's dedication to preaching the gospel was inspiring others to do the same

Now there is a bit of a puzzling section that follows:

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*15 It's true that some are preaching out of jealousy and rivalry. But others preach about Christ with pure motives. 16 They preach because they love me, for they know I have been appointed to defend the Good News. 17 Those others do not have pure motives as they preach about Christ. They preach with selfish ambition, not sincerely, intending to make my chains more painful to me.*

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- This section is odd on the face of it. Some were preaching what was apparently a correct gospel message, for Paul doesn't say anything negative about WHAT they were saying.
- Yet Paul was aware that they were doing it with the intention of causing Paul actual physical trouble.

How would you feel about someone doing anything to cause you trouble? Our reactions might range from being hurt, to being angry or frustrated. Maybe asking someone to tell them to stop?

But for the person who's heart and mind are focused on Kingdom purpose it doesn't matter.

- My personal hurt feelings don't matter.
- My personal situation and circumstances don't matter.
- Even my own personal comfort and safety don't matter.

**Paul, who wrote that "love always rejoices in the truth" demonstrates just that:**

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*18 **But that doesn't matter.** Whether their motives are false or genuine, the message about Christ is being preached either way, **so I rejoice. And I will continue to rejoice.** 18 For I know that as you pray for me and the Spirit of Jesus Christ helps me, this will lead to my deliverance.*

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**How do we respond to circumstances beyond our "control"?**

- **Brianna Testimony**

## 2. To be fully alive and full of joy is to live for Kingdom Purposes (V20-26)

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*20 For I fully expect and hope that I will never be ashamed, but that I will continue to be bold for Christ, as I have been in the past. And I trust that my life will bring honor to Christ, whether I live or die. 21 **For to me, living means living for Christ, and dying is even better.** 22 But if I live, I can do more fruitful work for Christ. So I really don't know which is better. 23 I'm torn between two desires: I long to go and be with Christ, which would be far better for me. 24 But for your sakes, it is better that I continue to live.*

*25 Knowing this, I am convinced that I will remain alive so I can continue to help all of you grow and experience the joy of your faith. 26 And when I come to you again, you will have even more reason to take pride in Christ Jesus because of what he is doing through me.*

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Paul expresses two joyful expectations:

1. To see others grow in their faith and joy
2. To be with Jesus and experience him fully

Verse 20 says that Paul “fully expects and hopes” to continue to be bold for Christ. It is an interesting phrase and has the idea of a **strained expectancy**. It is the same word used in Rom 8:19 when it is talking about our future glory to be revealed when Jesus comes back and says:

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*Rom 8:19 For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are.*

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It expresses longing, a current struggle, but great expectations. And we need to learn from what Paul is straining for expectantly in Php 1:20

- To be bold for Christ
- To bring honor to Christ in life or death

I notice **what he doesn't seem to care about**.

- His personal success or fame
- His comfort or monetary benefit
- His length of life, retirement, etc.

**How can we be bold for Jesus?** Being bold for Christ looks different for different times and places in history. For Paul, it meant proclaiming the gospel and establishing churches in the face of persecution from the Jews and Romans. For us, it might mean foregoing personal gain to further the kingdom of God. It might mean taking a risk of being ridiculed or made the butt of jokes to share the word of God in your work situation or family.

I know **sometimes I didn't want to be *that guy that was always talking about Jesus***. Now, I'm not talking about the person that is excited about getting a close parking spot at Walmart and makes a "Blessed!" post on Facebook. But someone that is generally always excited about something Jesus is doing in their lives. In the past year I've made it a point to bring God into my conversations at work. When guys have stuff going on I pray for them and follow up with them. When we live with that eager expectation and hope we know we will not be ashamed.

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*Rom 5:5 And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.*

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We now come to one of the most quoted verses from Paul.

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*1:21 For to me, living means living for Christ, and dying is even better.*

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Paul says he is **pressed between** two strong desires:

1. To go and be with Jesus. Face-to-face without any of the pressures of this life or distortions of sin and the fall. No more sorrow, pain, or persecution. Perfect relationship.
2. To stay and do the work that Jesus is doing in others.

How is this possible? Paul clearly explains that his view of living for Christ really has to do with living to serve others. To be with Christ would be best for Paul personally.

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*22 But if I live, I can do more fruitful work for Christ. So I really don't know which is better. 23 ***I'm torn between two desires:*** I long to go and be with Christ, which would be far better for me. 24 But for your sakes, it is better that I continue to live.*

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*25 Knowing this, I am convinced that I will remain alive so I can continue to help all of you **grow and experience the joy of your faith.***

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It is for “your sakes” so others can grow and experience the joy of the faith. Paul understands the joy that comes to a person when they grow and experience genuine faith. He knows the heart of Jesus to see the rule of Jesus extend to every human heart. And that rule and reign of Jesus by his grace in our hearts brings growth in the truth which results in true joy. **As Kirk shared last week, God’s grace** (the divine influence upon the heart that reflects in the outward life) **working in us brings us:**

- God’s power in our weakness
- The working of his power through us
- The training of the Holy Spirit in personal righteousness
- The generosity of the body meeting needs
- The outworking of grace that is visible to everyone
- Boasting in Christ Jesus

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*26 And when I come to you again, you will have even more reason to take pride in Christ Jesus because of what he is doing through me.*

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And Paul understands, it isn’t him doing it, it is what Christ does through us. It is all about the glory that rises up to Christ. Some **alternate translations** talk about boasting in, taking pride in, to glory in, or exult in Christ Jesus.

3. If we live with a kingdom mindset, we will walk like kingdom people (V27-30)

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*27 Above all, you must **live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ.** Then, whether I come and see you again or only hear about you, I will know that you are standing together with one spirit and one purpose, fighting together for the faith, which is the Good News. 28 Don’t be intimidated in any way by your enemies. This will be a sign to them that they are going to be destroyed, but that you are going to be saved, even by God himself. 29 For you have been given not only the privilege of trusting in Christ but also the privilege of suffering for him. 30 We are in this struggle together. You have seen my struggle in the past, and you know that I am still in the midst of it.*

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## **Citizens of Heaven**

This is alternately translated “conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel”.

The essence of it is live like you are part of the kingdom which comes from the gospel of Christ.

Specifically in this passage we see some key aspects of what Paul means by this.

- Standing together with one purpose
- Fighting together for the faith
- Not intimidated by our enemies
- Suffering for Christ willingly
- Struggling together

Come and suffer and struggle together! Who is ready to sign up for the team! We need to do this thing together people. It is way too heavy for any of us on our own.

In the military, the reality is that only 10% of the entire military force engages in battle. 40% of service members do NOT see combat, and of the remaining 60%, only 10% to 20% are deployed into the combat premise. Plus, the majority of these members enter the arena as supporting units. They are not the soldiers that are facing enemies face-to-face.

But as we struggle together for the Kingdom of Christ we all have a role to play. Tying this section all together is this idea that God is working through us and our circumstances to further the kingdom of God. As we live for Christ, we live for the sake of each other and for the cause of advancing the gospel. It is a life of joy, regardless of our circumstances.

I will close with one final scripture, from Col 1:11-14.

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*Col 1:11 We also pray that you will be strengthened with all his glorious power so you will have all the endurance and patience you need. May you be filled with joy, 12 always thanking the Father. He has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to his people, who live in the light. 13 For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, 14 who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins.*

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God will strengthen us with all we need.

Endurance. Patience. Joy. Thankfulness. Forgiveness of our sins. Freedom.

Let us be kingdom minded, take care of one another, and find that strength and joy to endure and rejoice in whatever circumstances this life throws our way.