

Joyful Living

I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. ²⁴

Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, ²⁶ I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. ²⁷ I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. ²⁸ Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. 2Corinthians 11:23-28

Paul's lighthearted message that encourages his readers to be people of joy.

- Paul prayed for the Philippians with a smile on his face.

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all. Philippians 1:3-4

- Paul compares staying on earth to leaving and going to be with Jesus, a joyful opportunity.

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ²² If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! ²³ I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; ²⁴ but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. ²⁵ Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith. Philippians 1:21-25

- Paul encouraged Christians to work together in harmony, and his own joy intensified as he envisioned that happening.

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any

tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.

Philippians 2:1-2

- Paul mentioned sending a friend to them, urging them to receive the man joyfully.

But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. ²⁶ For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. ²⁷ Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. ²⁸ Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. ²⁹ Welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor men like him.

Philippians 2:25-29

- Paul communicated the “core” of what he wanted them to hear from him, that he was full of joy.

Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you.

Philippians 3:1

- Paul called to mind their concern for his welfare. The joy about which he writes is one of the most upbeat passages found in Scripture.

I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. ¹¹ I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹² I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³ I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

¹⁴ Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. ¹⁵ Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the

gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; ¹⁶ for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need. ¹⁷ Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account. ¹⁸ I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. ¹⁹ And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:10-19

Christian Author Helen Mallicoat:

“I was regretting the past

And fearing the future ...

Suddenly my Lord was speaking:

“MY NAME IS I AM.” **He paused.**

I waited. **He continued,**

“WHEN YOU LIVE IN THE PAST,
WITH ITS MISTAKES AND REGRETS,
IT IS HARD. I AM NOT THERE.
MY NAME IS NOT *I WAS*.”

“WHEN YOU LIVE IN THE FUTURE,
WITH ITS PROBLEMS AND FEARS,
IT IS HARD. I AM NOT THERE.
MY NAME IS NOT *I WILL BE*.”

“WHEN YOU LIVE IN THIS MOMENT,
IT IS NOT HARD.
I AM HERE.
MY NAME IS *I AM*.”

Jesus gave us His truth so that His joy might be in us. And when that happens, our joy will be full. John 15:11

Will you choose the gift of “JOY” Jesus promises to give every one of his followers?