



“I shall always be ready to remind you of these things...” 2 Peter 1:21

Joy
By Alex Hale

Imagine that the year is around AD 62. The apostle Paul is in a dark, musty smelling room, seated on a dirty floor. He is chained to a prison guard. Paul has no freedom, bad food, and limited visitation. The prison guard who is chained to Paul looks over his shoulder and sees what he is writing. Paul is writing to the church in Philippi and the guard is shocked to see these words: *“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!”*

If that were you, would those be the first words that came out of your mouth? Could you have joy in the midst of such a setting? Some of you may be thinking, “I couldn’t find joy in those circumstances. I mean, just in coming to church this morning, I’ve already complained about the weather, my parking spot, the temperature of the building, the song selection, and the sermon topic!”

How is it, then, that someone with much worse circumstances than ours can still rejoice while we complain? From an earthly perspective, Paul should have been the last person to have joy. Yet he writes these words. Joy is a decision that is made daily. How can we grow in the area of joy?

Keep an eternal perspective (Philippians 4:5). Paul says that the Lord is near. We should remember the song that says, “This world is not my home. I’m just a’passin’ through.” The joyful person knows that things will not be perfect until the Lord returns, but he can be happy knowing that day is coming.

Express thanks and stop worrying (Philippians 4:6-7). If we will take our problems to God, He will give us His

peace. This, in turn, leads to joy. We must quit trying to blame our external circumstances. We have to take control of the fact that we do not have control. This is okay because we can go to God, who is in control!

Dwell on the positive instead of the negative (Philippians 4:8). Some offices have a “cussing jar” – I think many of our homes, workplaces, and churches need a “complaint jar.” Whenever someone complains, they have to put a nickel in the jar. A huge key to being joyful is pulling the weeds of negativity so that bitterness will not take root (Hebrews 12:15). To set our minds on things above, we have to remove those things which pollute our mind and take away our joy.

Rely on Christ in spite of your circumstances (Philippians 4:10-13). The biggest difference between the joyful person and the joyless person is that the joyless person thinks he will be content if his circumstances line up perfectly. He will say things like, “Well, when I can get that promotion ... when I can buy that car ... when I can afford that house ... when I can graduate ... when I can retire ... when I can marry a girl like that ...”

However, Paul says that he knew what it was like to have everything you could ever want or need, but that was not the secret to joy. The secret to joy was reliance on Christ. Like the weather, many of us allow our joy to be contingent on our circumstances. However, God has made us in such a way that others will see and sense a spirit of joy within us in all situations. When we show that joy to others, they can see that there is something distinctive about us as Christians.



**CABOT WESTSIDE
CHURCH OF CHRIST**

1017 S. 2nd St. (Old Hwy. 367)
Cabot, AR 72023
cabotwestsidechurchofchrist.com

When We Meet

Sunday

Bible Classes – 9:00 am

Worship – 10:00 am, 5:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Classes – 7:00 pm

Our Elders

R.D. Hopper

Norman Kemper

Our Preacher

Alex Hale