



Sermon Notes from 5 May

The Hope of Unending Joy (*Philippians 1:3-8*)

by Pastor Too Teh Hsin

Christian Joy is a good feeling of great pleasure and happiness that comes from God. In our search for worldly joy, we find that it can be unattainable, dissatisfying and temporal. But Christian Joy is more profound, satisfying, and stable. Apostle Paul tells us of this joy in the book of Philippians (his letter to the church in Philippi, written when he was imprisoned). The words 'joy' and 'rejoice' appear all throughout the book (Ph. 1:4,18,25, Ph. 2:2,17,18,28,29, Ph. 3:1, Ph. 4:1,4,10).

Paul draws his joy from 3 sources:

1) Joy of Prayer (vv3-5) In his prayer, he expresses gratitude towards 3 things: **#1 God** - A heart of gratitude towards God produces joy. *"It is only with gratitude that life becomes rich"* - Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

#2 People - Paul's remembrance of his friendship with and support from the Philippians brought much joy amidst his suffering.

#3 Gospel - Paul was not just thankful for the financial support he was receiving from the church in Philippi, but also their involvement in the advancement of the gospel.

Ph. 1:12-14 - Because of Paul's love for Jesus, the gospel had become his all-consuming passion. He looked for every opportunity to share the gospel, disregarding his personal comfort and everything else. Paul found joy as long as his mission to advance the gospel was accomplished.

2) Joy of Assurance (v6) Paul had a special fondness and love for the church in Philippi. He longed to be in their presence but was unable to. However, because of the assurance of their salvation, Paul knew that he would see them again, if not in this lifetime, then surely in eternity. This gave him joy. We would experience

the same! Continue to press on in prayer for the salvation of our loved ones!

Paul also experienced joy in the people's sanctification. Their growth was not dependent on him, but on God. What God has started in you for your salvation, he will complete! In everything that you struggle with, He will help you to overcome. Do not give up! There is hope and assurance in our sanctification! Find joy in this assurance!

3) Joy of Affection (vv7-8) Paul had deep affection towards the church in Philippi. He found joy in his affection because of the same grace God had given to him and them. That same grace has been given to all of us! We are all children of God; rejoice!

During his imprisonment, Paul discovers that the church at Philippi was with him throughout. None of them left him. He rejoices at that. When you are in a bad place in life, give thanks for the people who stick with you and do not abandon you!

Paul wanted to give the strongest kind of love: the affection of Christ Jesus, to the people. The affection of Christ Jesus; the love of Christ; is sacrificial love. The love and affection of Christ that we have received came at the highest cost to Jesus: The Son of God became a Servant of men. He came down from heaven into a filthy world; and humbled Himself to become executed on the cross so that we can be reconciled with Him.

Give thanks to God for the blessings we have, for the friends we have and let God use us for the advancement of the gospel. Joy comes from putting Jesus and others first. It cannot be found in yourself or circumstances. True joy can only be found in Christ alone.