

THE BOOK OF

philippians



WEEK OF MAY 14TH, 2023

PRAYER BUILDS A LIFE OF JOY (PHIL 1:1-11)

Speaker: Pastor Mike Burnette

**ICEBREAKER**

Which do you prefer: Rollercoaster or a bouncy house? Why?

Introduction

- Joy is something we can all recognize, but it's somewhat hard to define. What do you think about when you hear the word "joy"?
- What's the difference between secular (worldly) joy and biblical joy?
- Joy is part of the Christian experience, and having joy is something we all desire! So how do we do that? How do you choose joy? What are some practical steps we can follow to choose joy?

Joy is Part of God's Blessings (v. 1-2)

- We've all written letters to people we know and care for. Imagine being Paul, living in a prison and writing such a letter. Would your first sentence be to wish them God's grace and peace? Would you be asking for help? Or, what would it be? Why is it so hard for us to care for others more than we care for ourselves?
- The world may be crumbling down, but nothing can ever separate us from the peace that comes from knowing God is always with us. How would you feel if you got an email from The Lord promising the gifts of His Power and His Peace? How would that affect your belief in these promises?
- Define mercy and grace. How does God's grace and mercy look like in your life? Give an example.
- Based on what you have experienced in your life, do you believe you're still deserving of God's grace and mercy? Do you think these obstacles are keeping you from being joyful in life?



WEEK OF APRIL 23RD, 2023
WHEN GOD IS UP TO SOMETHING NEW
Speaker: Pastor Mike Burnette

- Romans 8.38-39 reads, "For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Do you feel like there is something separating you from God's love? What lies are making you believe this?

Prayer for Others Brings Joy (v.3-8)

- What is something that brings you joy?
- Part of building a life of joy is choosing to focus on others above your own self. Even if you're focusing on great things in your life, it's still fleeting and still better to focus on others ahead of yourself. How could you focus on others more than your own needs in your prayer time?
- Joyful people are selfless people! Joyful people are others-focused people! Joyful people believe the best in others! Joyful people choose to see good and to speak blessings on others! Do you think of yourself as a joyful person? Why or why not? What can you do to be more joyful?
- We should be praying for others, even if it's difficult, because it'll bring joy. Does this sound strange to you? When was a time that it was difficult to pray for someone, but once you did it brought an unexpected joy? How did you feel/react?
- It's worth noting that Paul keeps a good attitude about this church! His perspective is right! He doesn't highlight the negative, but keeps his focus on the good they have done! How can you remind yourself to focus on the positive in the people of your life?



WEEK OF APRIL 23RD, 2023
WHEN GOD IS UP TO SOMETHING NEW
Speaker: Pastor Mike Burnette

- What if we conducted our relationships in the same manner that Paul did? To spread the gospel and lift others up. What if we treated these relationships like a ministry?

Let God Hear Specific Prayers for Others (v. 9-11)

Pastor Mike pointed out that Paul was very specific his prayers, and he always prayed the following things each time:

1. Your love may abound more and more – Love God, Love People in abundance
2. Your knowledge (may abound) – Know God’s Word and Will in abundance
3. Your discernment (may abound) – Discern God’s Will vs. evil in abundance
4. You may approve what is excellent – Wisdom, Clarity, Godliness
5. You may be pure – Blessed are the pure in heart – Live close to Jesus
6. You may be blameless for the day of Christ – We will be Judged! Be ready.
7. You may be filled with the fruit of Righteousness in Jesus Christ – Full

- What additional, specific prayers would you add to this list for your time in prayer.
- Can you pray for others (even those you don’t particularly like) like Paul? What would make that easier? What will you do to make that happen?
- How do your preferences get in the way of praying specific prayers for people?
- Pastor Mike challenged us to pray for 5-10 people each day for the next week. What if you knew you were one of the 5 people that were being prayed for? What specific prayer would you want them to pray for you?

ACT ON IT



ENCOURAGE

Paul didn't let his circumstances affect his joy. In the face of opposition, he chose joy and wrote a letter to a church as encouragement. His passion for Jesus fueled his commitment to joy, and we need to follow his lead. We get the blessing of God's grace, the power of God in us that helps us live for God. God's grace brings us peace, that God-centered stillness that keeps us grounded no matter what. God's grace coupled with peace allows us to have joy at all times. And if we're going to be joyful people, we have to shift our focus from our woes and choose to focus on others. Self-pity will never give us joy. Focus on the positive in the people of your lives. Pray consistently, boldly, and specifically for others, and God will grow your joy



ASK

What is dictating your joy? What are some more practical steps you can take to choose joy? How do you feel about praying for others? What do you need to set aside to make it easier to pray for others?



CHALLENGE

For the next 7 days, make a list of 5-10 people each day to pray for. These could be people you love, people you don't care for too much, people who bless you, or people who stress you out. Pick 5-10 new people for each day of the week (a new 5-10 for Monday, a new 5-10 for Tuesday,, etc.) Pray very bold and specific prayers for them, not against them. Let God lead and build your heart for these people and pray scripture and promises over their lives.

PRAYER

Lord, we thank You for the gift of joy! Thank You for Your gift of grace that helps us live for You. And we thank You for the gift of peace that allows us to stand firm in You when everything around us is unknown. We know that the Apostle Paul had it so much worse than we ever could, but he kept his joy. He didn't focus on what was happening outside of him because he was grounded by The Spirit within him. Lord, we ask for the same. Help us to not dwell in our circumstances. Help us give praise for the positive things happening around us. Help us become joyful people who are selfless and always willing to speak blessings on others. Show us who in our lives we need to be praying for and direct us in how we can boldly and specifically lift them up in prayer. We want to be people who overflow with joy in any circumstance because of our assurance in You. We ask these things in Your precious name. Amen.