

# MAKE THE CHOICE TO REJOICE!

PHIL 4:4

“Joy in God’s Plan”  
Philippians 1:12-30  
Sunday, January 20, 2019

**1. Sunday Summary:** This morning we kicked off a new sermon series on the book of Philippians that we are calling “*Make the Choice to Rejoice.*” The fact is joy is a hallmark of the Christian Life, and therefore it’s something that we should be able to live with in spite of the circumstances that surround us. In this sermon series we’ll find out together how we can do that with the guidance of Philippians (and the Holy Spirit, of course!). What we’ll discover is that joy is indeed a choice we can make every day (Philippians 4:4).

This morning we learned that Paul is sending this letter to a church that is going through a difficult time - a time of both struggle that is coming from within the community, and from without. Paul says to them that the thing that will make the biggest difference in their lives, the thing that will help them to remain joyful, is how they define a successful life. He goes on to show us two things that will help us have the proper definition.

- 1) God is taking the circumstances of your life and making them serve his purposes. God is the only true alchemist, turning your life and circumstances to gold. This can give our joy some real buoyancy.
- 2) He gives us the true and real definition of Life: “To live is Christ, to die is gain.” If Christ is your bottom line, if he is the thing we are living for in our lives, our lives are secure, and will be filled with joy. If Jesus is not our bottom line, when whatever is our bottom line gets take away, our lives collapse. On top of all this, for Jesus, we are his bottom line, his reason for living... and for dying. Jesus says to each of us, “To live is [insert your name here].” It was so important that he have you for all eternity that he died and rose to make that possible.

**2. Connecting Questions:** (Interactive, life sharing, thought & feeling type stuff)

- Talk together about the circumstances and difficulties in life that most readily steal your joy.
- Do you think joy is a feeling, like happiness? What, in your estimation, is the difference between joy and happiness?
- Talk together about a time in your life that you were able to see God use a rotten circumstance and bring some “gold” out of it.
- What has been your bottom line, the thing that if you lost it, would take all the joy out of life? Can you name it?
- What insights from today’s message were most helpful for you?

### 3. Truth Questions: (What does the Bible say?)

- Think together about some other passages that deal with the topic of joy. Can you think of any? What might they add to the conversation?
- Read Luke 10:17-22. Just before this passage, Jesus sends out 72 of his followers to go ahead of him into every town he would go to, and prepare them. They return to him full of joy after their mission. What, according to Jesus, is the source of our joy? What is not? What implications might this have for our lives? Where is your source of joy? Is having your name written in the Book of Life enough to sustain your joy? Why or why not?
- Read Hebrews 12:1-3. What was the “joy set before” Jesus? How can considering this, as well as considering Jesus’ struggles, keep us from growing weary?

### 4. Formation Questions: (Taking it further, How does the Truth change the way I live?)

- What concrete steps can you make to sink the gospel truth that we dealt with today deeper into your life throughout this week? What will you do about the message you heard today?
- How will you “Make the Choice to Rejoice,” this week? What will you do? Make a list of things you will think, say, do that will help you to choose the joy that Jesus gives this week.

### 5. Resources for Further Study:

1. Mason, Mike. *Champagne for the Soul: Rediscovering God’s Gift of Joy*. (Regent College Publishing, Vancouver, BC. 2003).
2. Keller, Timothy J. *The Prodigal God: Recovering the Heart of the Christian Faith*. (Riverhead Books, New York, NY. 2008).

