

MAKE THE CHOICE TO REJOICE!

PHIL 4:4

“Shining Like Stars”
Philippians 2:12-18
Sunday, January 27, 2019

1. Sunday Summary: This morning we continued our 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 looked at what it means, “to work out your salvation” (Philippians 2:12), which is really about narrowing the gap between the “theory” or theology of our faith, and the practice and how we live our faith. What we learned is that the gospel is not opposed to effort, only earning. Once we’ve been liberated from bondage to sin and death by Christ, we need to apply our energy to work out our salvation. It’s a bit like following through on a golf swing. It’s maybe the most important part, and is the thing that most influences the trajectory of the ball. But, there are two additional things for us to consider here:

- 1) Paul is addressing this to a church. The verbs and pronouns he uses in the passage are all plural. The fact is we must work out our salvation in community, or we will not work it out at all.
- 2) Working out our salvation isn’t just a group project, it is a God project. We can only “work out” because God is working in. The fact is the standards God sets (think of his commandments, but also the life and death of Jesus) are pretty high. We’ll never live up to them, never ultimately “work out our salvation” unless he is working in us. Thankfully, His Word not only informs, it performs!

In this passage Paul also gives us an example of how we can work out our salvation: quit complaining (remember gongyosmos) and arguing. The fact is complaining and arguing are direct enemies of Joy. Joy will not take up residence in someone who is prone to complain, because a complaining person forgets to remember all that God has done.

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

- Where do you see a gap between the theory and practice of faith in your life?
- How do you feel about the fact that “working out your salvation” is a group project according to Paul? Would you rather do it on your own? What to you is more satisfying – in a group or on your own? How do you feel about the fact that your failures and successes in living the Christian Life impact the Body of Christ? Does it help your growth in faith or hinder it to know that?

- About what (or in what circumstances) are you most prone to complain? How about argue? Do these things rob your joy? What satisfaction do you derive from complaining or arguing?
- How does knowing that the “way the story has gone is not the way it has to go” help you in choosing joy? Does it?
- Have you ordered your T-Shirt? Talk about 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 Numbers 13:26-14:9. What does this story suggest is at the heart of complaining? Why do Joshua and Caleb have another assessment of the situation? How does a story like this help us to remember to “*Make the Choice to Rejoice*”?

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?
- What will you do to keep yourself from complaining and arguing this week?
- 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).