



Maintaining Joy in an Upside-Down World

Sermon #10

Philippians 4:1-9

Sermon Study Guide

March 14, 2021

Review:

Philippians is an amazing book filled with wisdom and truth, particularly concerning the idea of maintaining joy in an upside-down world.

Last time, we saw that Paul was very aware that he had not yet arrived – meaning he still had areas of his life to work on. Still, Paul also stressed the importance of “forgetting what lies behind”, that is, not focusing on his past mistakes (not going through life while looking in the rear-view mirror). Then, “straining forward to what lies ahead”, that is, pushing hard to do what God had put before him.

Paul stated that he continued to “press on toward the goal” – to be what God had made him to be and to accomplish what God made him to accomplish “for the prize” which is the “upward call of God in Jesus Christ.” There is an upward call on the life of every believer. The upward call is the purpose of God in your life in anything and everything you do.

Then, Paul told us to “hold true to what you have attained.” Do not allow past failures or present challenges to sidetrack you or get your off the road of your upward call.

Now, we pick up where we left off in Philippians 4:1. Paul really loved these people. He wanted them to stand firm in the Lord.

Review Questions from 4:1

- What is the “therefore” there for?
- What is Paul's joy and crown?
- What does Paul mean when he says that the Philippians are his joy and crown?
- What does it mean to stand firm in the Lord? Why does it say, “stand firm in the Lord” and not just “stand firm”?

Read Philippians 4:2-9

- Why do you think Paul makes such a public display of these women? Why is he so concerned for unity in the Philippian church? (vv.2-3)

- What does it mean to “agree in the Lord”? (v.2)

- What is the basis of Paul’s appeal to these women? Why might it be significant that they each labored with Paul or that their names are in the book of life? (v.3)

Note: Paul calls for unity in the church and recognizes the importance of “the peacemaker.” (See Romans 12:18)

- What does it mean to rejoice in the Lord? Why do you think he specifies “always”? Describe how it might be possible to do this even in hard times. (v.4)

- Why do you think Paul is so serious about showing our “reasonableness” or “gentleness” and “being anxious for nothing”? Why would he mention this in this context? (v.5-6) (*Think back to Euodia and Syntyche.*)

- How does praying bring peace? (v.6-7)

- What do our hearts and minds need to be guarded or protected from? How are we guarded “in Christ Jesus”? (v.7)

- How might it affect the lives of the Philippians to live out Paul’s command in verse 8?

- How might verse 8 affect the gospel ministry in Philippi? List the points that Paul makes in verse 8. Why does Paul say to “think about these things?” Can you name something personal for each word?

- What does it look like for the God of peace to be with someone? Why would this happen as a result of following Paul's teaching and example? How could Paul be so sure?

Closing:

What sorts of things occupy your mind? How does your preoccupation with these things affect your relationships? How does it affect your joy in the Lord?

Think back to a time when you feel anxious or depressed. What do you do to feel better? What would it look like for you to use prayer and your mind to fight for joy or peace like Paul is describing?

What are the concerns you need prayer for right now? What are the things which occupy your mind which you need to give up? With what would you replace them?