

A CHURCH FULL OF JOY!

Philippians 1:1-6

INTRODUCTION: The local church in Philippi in northern Greece that was truly a place of joy almost two thousand years ago. The Apostle Paul visited there about 50 A.D. and founded the first church in Europe there. Ten years later Paul wrote a letter to that local church. Sadly almost everywhere we look today, even inside most churches we don't see an abundance of joy. The Apostle Paul wrote thirteen books of the New Testament. All thirteen were letters. Philippians is the only one of the eleven letters sent to seven different churches that there is no correction of bad teaching, rebukes for bad behavior, or teaching the church how to handle a bad situation. This is a completely positive letter. Philippi was a local church full of joy! Nineteen times in the Book of Philippians we find the words: rejoice, joy and gladness.

I. ARE PEOPLE THANKFUL WHEN THEY THINK ABOUT OUR CHURCH?

The Apostle Paul started his letter this way: Philippians 1:1-3. This local church was made up of both Jews and Gentiles who had placed their faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. Philippians 1:4. I am thankful for most of the people I have pastored but I cannot honestly say I am happy for all the people I have pastored. Wouldn't it be wonderful if all the people and the pastor of our local church could honestly say "In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy"

II. ARE PEOPLE JOYFUL WHEN THEY TALK ABOUT OUR CHURCH?

Philippians 1:4: Every time Paul prayed for this church it was always with a smile on his face and joy in his heart. What was it about the church at Philippi that brought such joy to his heart as he sat in a Roman prison cell? Philippians 1:5: That word "partnership" means the members of this local church realized they were to invest their lives and their wealth into this work for Christ at Philippi. They realized they were not just attenders, they were partners together invested in this local ministry. We are all in partnership together in spreading the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

III. ARE PEOPLE CONFIDENT IN WHAT THEY HAD TRUSTED IN?

There are many things the Apostle Paul could not be sure of: Would he ever get out of prison? Would he get out of prison alive? Would his churches he had started stay true to the gospel he had given them? But there was one thing the Apostle Paul said he was absolutely sure of: Philippians 1:6. Paul was absolutely sure that the believers in Philippi would never lose their faith because of God's faithful promises: The first convert in Philippi was a woman: Acts 16:11-15. God always starts the work of salvation and what our God starts our God always finishes. We are either 100% saved or 100% lost: there is no in between. When God saves He saves completely: body, soul, and spirit. When God saves a person, He saves that person permanently. God saves us eternally: Philippians 1:6. The day of Christ Jesus is the day our Lord comes back for His church and it continues for all eternity. God is doing a good work in us so He can do a good work through us! If we are going to be a joyful church that causes others to be filled with joy we must be willing to stand up for Jesus Christ and become partners in the spread of the gospel message for our Lord's glory and our neighbors good!