Rejoice Because We Can Bring Joy To Others

Intro: Paul is writing to his sweetheart church: The Philippian brethren. He expresses his love for them. One of the purposes of this great book is to express thanks for the monetary gift they had sent to Paul by the hands of Epaphroditus who made a 700 mile trip to bring it to Paul. This gift and Paul’s thanks is the background for our study in the closing section of Philippians.

I. DEMONSTRATION OF MASTERY
   A. Paul’s Contentment
      1. Phi. 4:10-13 “But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. 11Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. 12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”
      2. Paul’s rejoicing
         a. Phi. 3:1; 4:4 “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe....4:4Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.”
         b. True joy is found in Christ.
      3. The occasion for his rejoicing.
         a. The monetary support they had sent.
         b. While they had been hindered previously, they now had the opportunity to send support once again.
      4. Paul’s contentment.
         a. It was not because his physical needs were being met.
         b. Content:
            (1) It is from the Greek, αὐτάρκης (autarkes).
            (2) It means “self-sufficient, needing no assistance, then contented with one’s lot or with one’s means even if it is small.”
         c. It was something learned.
            (1) It is from the Greek μαθάνω (manthano).
            (2) It means “to learn by use and practice and thus to acquire the habit.”
               (a) A child is never content; desiring a toy but when he gets it, he no longer wants it but another.
               (b) Contentment is something we all must learn.
            (3) Wayne Jackson notes: “The passive voice of the verb would suggest that the ‘learning’ or ‘instruction’ came from a source outside of Paul (namely the Providential events that had shaped his ministry), and the perfect tense stresses the abiding effect of these strengthening lessons in the apostle’s life” (The Book Of Philippians (Abilene, TX: Quality Publications, 1987), p. 86.).
         d. Lack of contentment comes from self-centeredness.
            (1) When we lose ourselves in Christ and His cross we become content in whatever state we might find ourselves.
            (2) Gal. 6:14 “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”
      5. Paul knows both sides.
         a. Paul knows how to be in a state of need.
            (1) To be hungry.
(2) To be devoid of the necessities of life.

b. Paul knows how to have plenty.
   (1) To be satisfied with food.
   (2) To abound.

c. Either circumstance has its own difficulties.
   (1) Either can cause one to apostatize.
      (a) When one is in need he can be tempted to distrust God and His goodness causing him to think he must do everything himself.
      (b) When one has plenty he is tempted to forget God and his need for Him, becoming proud and self-sufficient.
   (2) Pro. 30:8-9 “Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.”

6. The source of Paul’s greatness.
   a. It was not his formal education, powerful mind, or intellect.
   b. Paul’s greatness was because Christ was with him.
      (1) Phi. 4:13 “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”
      (2) With Christ present in his life he would be strong.
         (a) Eph. 6:10 “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.”
         (b) Paul had received God’s grace; 2 Tim. 2:1 “Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.”
         (c) 2 Cor. 12:9-10 “And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness: Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.”
      (3) The misuse of this passage by some.
         (a) Has been used to try and deny God’s existence all the way to man’s power to do anything (unlimited power).
         (b) Must be understood within the context.
            i) Immediate context:
               a) The physical circumstances in which he (or another) might find themselves.
               b) It is limited to the state life might throw at us.
               c) Heb. 13:5-6 “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”
               d) Thus, I can be content in any situation.
            ii) General context: our ability to
               a) love; Phi. 4:1 “Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.”
b) forgive, have the same mind, be a peace with others (reconciled); Phi. 4:2 “I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.”

c) be a peacemaker; Phi. 4:3 “And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.”

d) rejoice; Phi. 4:4 “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.”

e) moderate or gentle; Phi. 4:5 “Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.”

f) overcome worry; Phi. 4:6 “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

g) be at peace; Phi. 4:7 “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

h) think proper thoughts; Phi. 4:8 “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

iii) remote context would include doing all that God demands of the Christian.

c. Paul was an optimist.

(1) Paul said I can, not I cannot.

(2) But it is important to say it like he did, “I can through Christ,” not by my own power.

(3) John 15:4-5 “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. If I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”

B. Paul’s Gratitude For Their Gift

1. Phi. 4:14-18 “Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.”

2. Paul’s commendation of the Philippians.

a. They were doing well, doing what God wanted them to do.

b. Communicate

(1) It is from the Greek συγκοινωνέω (sugkoinoneo) elsewhere translated “fellowship with.”

(2) By their fellowship with Paul (in sending financial support) they were doing well and bring joy to Paul.
3. Their financial support.
   a. They had supported Paul from the beginning.
      (1) When Paul (and his company) first came to Philippi Lydia took them into her home; Acts 16:14-15 “And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.”
      (2) When he left Philippi, he went to Thessalonica where they sent money to him to support him in his preaching.
      (3) He continued to Berea, Athens, and Corinth.
   b. While at Corinth.
      (1) 2 Cor. 11:8-9 “I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service. And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself.”
      (2) We learn a valuable lesson here:
         (a) Paul robbed other churches (plural).
         (b) Only the Philippians sent financial support.
            i) “giving and receiving” denotes “debit and credit.”
            ii) The Philippian church was keep the books (receiving funds from other churches and then distributing them to Paul).
            iii) Some have incorrectly claimed it is wrong for one congregation to send money to another congregation in the support of preaching the gospel.
      (3) It is right to support the preacher financially for their work of preaching:
         (a) Mat. 10:10 “Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.”
         (b) Paul argued this right in 1 Cor. 9 and 2 Cor. 11.
         (c) It is wrong of congregations to make a preacher go without because of lack of pay.
         (d) It is also wrong of preachers to take advantage of congregations.

4. The occasion of Paul’s rejoicing.
   a. It was not the money they sent.
      (1) Paul would be fine no matter what state he was in.
      (2) If they had not sent the money, he would be fine.
   b. Paul was seeking fruit that would abound to their account.
      (2) Acts 20:35 “I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”
      (3) Albert Barnes wrote that Paul "wished that it might be set down to their credit. He desired that when they came to appear before God,
they might reap the benefit of all the acts of kindness which they had shown him.” (Barnes Notes: Notes on the New Testament, “Philippians” ed. Robert Frew, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1972), p. 221.)

(4) Paul’s work would be credited to their account.
   a. The principle that what one does through another, he is credited with.
   b. The Philippians were being credited with Paul’s good works and success.

5. Paul’s reception of their support.
   a. It was sent by the Epaphroditus.
   b. It supplied all of Paul’s needs.
   c. It was a sacrifice.
      a. 1 Pet. 2:5, 9 “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ...” But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;”
      b. Rev. 1:5-6 “And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, “And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

(2) As priest we offer up spiritual sacrifices.
   a. Heb. 8:3 “For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.”
   b. Rom. 12:1 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”
   c. Heb. 13:15-16 “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. 16But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”

(3) This sacrifice (the gift they sent) was well-pleasing to God.
   a. Because it was done out of a loving heart of obedience to God.
   b. Thus it was a sacrifice that smelled sweet to God.

C. Sufficiency God Supplies

1. Phi. 4:19-20 “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. 20Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

2. The giving of the Philippians is accompanied by the precious promises of God.
   a. The principle of sowing and reaping.
      a. Gal. 6:7-8 “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”
      b. As we give, God provides those things necessary to serve Him according to His riches.
         a. Luke 6:38 “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your
bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.’

(b) 2 Cor. 9:6, 8 “But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully....And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:”

(3) This promise would be especially encouraging to them.
(a) Philippi was in Macedonia.
(b) Paul used the Macedonians as an example of giving out of deep poverty.
(c) 2 Cor. 8:1-5 “Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; 2How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. 3For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; 4Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. 5And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.”
i) It appears that they were so poor that Paul did not want to accept the gift.
ii) Only after “much intreaty” did he accept it.

(a) The President—My God
(b) The promise to pay—shall supply
(c) Amount—all your need
(d) Capital of the bank—according to the riches in glory
(e) The Cashier—by Jesus Christ

3. The thought of this promise leads to a beautiful doxology (a statement of glory or praise).
   a. The object is God.
      (1) He is worthy to be praised.
      (2) Often we glorify man instead of God.
   b. Our relationship to God: He is our Father.
      (1) There are two spiritual Fathers.
         (a) Satan; John 8:44 “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”
         (b) God
            i) We can become children of God by the faith.
            ii) Gal. 3:26-27 “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”
            iii) When we are baptized we are born again; John 3:3, 5 “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God....Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except
a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

(2) As children of God we receive the blessings He gives.
(a) Mat. 7:11 “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”
(b) Jam. 5:11 “Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”

c. The Message: Glory to God.
(1) Inherent in glory is the idea of respect, praise, honor, and adoration resulting from one’s good opinion of someone.
(2) He is worthy to be praised, because of who He is and what He has done.
(a) He is the Creator; Gen. 1
(b) He is the Sustainer; Acts 17:28 “For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.”

(3) Scriptures giving Him praise.
(a) Rom. 16:27 “To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.”
(b) 1 Tim. 1:17 “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”
(c) A corollary to these verses; Eph. 3:20-21 “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”
(d) Jude 25 “To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

d. It is extended proportional to the nature of God: for ever and ever.
(1) God is eternal in nature.
(2) Psa. 90:2 “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.”
(3) Isa. 40:28 “Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.”
(4) Gen. 21:33 “And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God.”
(5) Let us glorify God in time, so we may give Him glory throughout all eternity.

II. CLOSING
A. Phi. 4:21-23 “Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you. All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar’s household. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”

B. Christianity is a religion of goodwill.
1. Luke 2:13-14 “And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”
2. Salutations are expressions of this nature of Christianity.
(a) Salute and greet are from the Greek ἀσπαζόμαι (aspazomai).
(b) It means “to draw oneself” and applies itself to wishing one well.
c. He wishes every saint well.

3. Saints are Christians.
   a. A saint is not someone who has died and been canonized by a group of people.
   b. *Saint* means sept apart, and has 2 applications.
      (1) One who has been set apart or freed from sin (this is done in the act of baptism).
      (2) And one who has been dedicated or consecrated to the service of God.

4. The brethren with him
   a. This would include Aristarchus, Mark, Justus, Epaphras, Luke, and Demas (those mentioned in Colossians and Philemon).
   b. They are brethren because they are all members of the same family (the family of God).

C. Caesar’s household salutes them.
   1. Caesar was the title of the emperors of Rome.
   2. The Caesar at this time was Nero.
      a. Nero was one of the most evil of all the Caesar’s.
      b. There were some of his household which were now Christians.
         (1) Household would include: his family, slaves, servants, officers of the court, or his guards.
         (2) Even in the most evil of households, the gospel can have its powerful effect.
            (a) One can become a Christian.
            (b) One can remain a Christian in adverse circumstances.

D. Grace
   1. Paul ends where he began.
   2. Grace is defined as “unmerited favor.”
   3. Grace is God’s love reaching out for man in saving him through the death of Christ—doing what man cannot do for himself to be saved from his sins.
   4. Salvation comes by our Lord Jesus Christ.
      a. 2 Tim. 2:10 “Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”
      b. He is Lord, or master, ruler.
      c. He is Jesus, in that He is our Savior; Mat. 1:21 “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”
      d. He is Christ, the Anointed One: anointed priest, prophet, and king.

Conclusion: A marvelous conclusion to a wonderful book. Paul shows us what it really means to “live is Christ” (Phi. 1:21 “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”) and the blessings that follow that life. He now concludes the book by showing the joy, peace, etc., we have in this life. And concludes by showing the power we have in achieving this life; Phi. 1:13, 19 “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me....” But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” Let us take heart that we may live the type of life God has given to us.