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Rejoice in the Lord
Phil. 3:1
Pastor C.E. Bowden

Text: Phil. 3:1 “Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you.”

Intro: Paul begins this chapter with the words “rejoice in the Lord” and then seemingly moves on to other things. He returns to this theme in **Phil. 4:4** “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” A sandwich is formed between v. 3:1 and v. 4:4.

—“Finally, my brothers”

—This is not intended to be a notice of conclusion, it is a writing technique that is used to end a topic and start another; the phrase is a transition point.

—There are problems in the Church, there are two ladies who cannot get along; there are also Judaistic teachers telling the Phillipians they must be circumcised to be saved—**Phil. 3:2–3** “Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh. For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh —”

—Paul is encouraging the Church not to get distracted by these issues but keep focus, by rejoicing in the Lord; what exactly does that mean.

—He defines it—**Phil. 3:7–8** “But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish...”

—Rejoicing in the Lord begins by considering accomplishments of this world as “loss/rubbish”.

—Notice the repeat of the word “loss” (ζημία zēmia); it means the loss is very difficult (things hard to give up), but to continue in those things is a detriment to growth in the Lord.

—The word “rubbish” means the sweepings from the floor; the things once precious are now considered stuff swept from the floor.

—The aim is (vv. 7-11) “... that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ — the righteousness that comes from

God and is by faith. I want to *know Christ* and the power of his resurrection...”

—One way is to achieve righteousness “*from the law*” the other way is to achieve righteousness by “*faith in Christ*”.

—The path of the law demands constant vigilance in every rule; the path of faith demands constant faith in the righteousness of Jesus.

—The word “*gain*” means to keep *a loss* from happening—*Heb. 12:1* “...*let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.*”

—What Paul seeks to “gain” is faith in Christ alone, not the principle of law once so highly valued—in “*legalistic righteousness, faultless.*” (*Phil. 3:6*)

—“*to know Christ*” means an application of truths of Christ; to live the principles of Jesus’ life.

—The deepest desire of his heart is to know the power, that not only raises one from physical death, but the greater power of being raised from spiritual death.

—The resurrection of Christ was a glorious manifestation of Divine power (*Rom. 1:4*)

—That resurrection is now a power in the spiritual life of Christians—*Rom. 6:4* “...just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, *we too may live a new life.*”

—Trusting completely in the resurrected Jesus is the only value worth attaining.

—There is only one way to attain to the life sought—*Phil. 3:10* “the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,”

—The sufferings and death of Jesus have already been defined—*Phil. 2:7–8* “but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a

servant, being made in human likeness...he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross!”

—If we share in His sufferings we will also share in His exaltation —*Phil. 3:11* “and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.”

—*Rom. 8:17* “...if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”

—*Life Goals Not Yet Reached*

—*Phil. 3:12* “Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.”

—The goal of the Christian life *takes a lifetime to obtain*; the Greek word translated “*press on*” (διώκω diōkō) means to pursue with urgency, with the sense of intensity of effort.

—The truth of *v. 12* is stated again in *Phil. 3:13–14* “Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

—Paul concentrates all his thoughts and all his energies on the one great end of life, the one thing needful.

—He cannot look back; he cannot cloud his mind with past memories; he strains every muscle in his body to achieve forward motion.

—The moment when tempted to look to past accomplishments, is the moment when the race is lost—*Heb. 12:2* “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus...”

—The Greek word translated “*fix our eyes*” means to *look with undivided attention*.

—Notice the phrase of *v. 14* “*the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus*.”

—The eyes are cast toward the heavenly goal—*Col. 3:1* “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, *set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God*.”

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—**Phil. 3:16** “Only let us live up to what we have already attained.”

—At each point in our Christian walk, we maintain and walk according to that degree of grace at which we arrived.

—**Phil. 3:20-21** “But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.”

—Resurrected life is already the experience of those who believe—**John 5:24** “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”

—But our eternal home is heaven—**Heb. 13:14** “For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.”

—One day soon, He will make it possible for us to go and live in that new city—**Phil. 3:21** “who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.”

—**Paul puts the lid on the sandwich**—**Phil. 4:4** “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”

—We are not immune to sorrow, nor should we be insensitive to the troubles of others; one of the most annoying things we do is quote **Rom. 8:28** “And we know that in all things God works for the good...”

—When Paul writes “**Rejoice in the Lord**” he means that even in the worst of circumstances we know there is inner peace with God through Christ.

—Life can be hard, but He has “... the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.” (**Phil. 3:21**)

—John gave us a glimpse—**Rev. 4:2** “At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.”

—The purpose of this vision was to remind John and us that nothing happens in the past, present, or future apart from God’s intention.

—*The colors red and green from the throne.*

—**Rev. 4:3** “And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne.”

—The jasper was the last, and the sardius the first stone of the high priest’s breastplate—“Mount four rows of gemstones on it. The first row will contain a red carnelian, a pale-green peridot, and an emerald.” (**Ex. 28:17** NLT-SE)

—Jasper represents Reuben, carnelian Benjamin; since Reuben means “behold a son” and Benjamin means “son of my right hand,” many interpret the colors of the stones as references to Jesus, the son of God.

— Some have interpreted the colors as follows; jasper referred to God’s holiness, carnelian his wrath and judgment, and emerald referred to God’s grace and mercy.

—I see the colors of the stones as indications of the glorious nature of the throne room of God.

— God does not need a gem encrusted throne on which to sit, it is a way of described the awesomeness of God; the whole scene is intended to evoke the glorious majesty of the one who sits on the throne.

—And the One who sits in heaven is in control of all things, as the rest of the book or Revelation reveals.

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