

LASTING JOY IS THE RESULT OF TRUSTING JESUS

EXPERIENCING
LASTING JOY
THROUGH DIFFICULT TIMES

PRECEPT

PHILIPPIANS 3:1-11

¹ Further, my brothers and sisters, 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. ² Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. ³ For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— ⁴ though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more.

(Read the rest of verses 5-11)

PROMISE

Joy, peace, hope, and love are the top characteristics of every Christian, and that sets us apart from the rest of people. If we truly belong to Jesus and put our faith and trust in Him, we must be joyful. Billy Sunday, a professional baseball outfielder who played for the National League for 8 seasons and became the most influential evangelist/preacher in the first two decades of the 20th century said this, “If you have no joy, there’s a leak in your Christianity somewhere.” The leak can be circumstances, people, stress, sin, doubt, problems, anxiety, sickness, grief, etc. These are all realities of life, but despite them all, joy must always be inside of us. The following is how we can experience lasting joy:

JUNK OFF RELIGIOUS RITUALS THAT HAVE NO SUFFICIENCY (V.1-3).

Paul begins Philippians 3 with a warning against those who try to turn believers from grace to law, “those who dogged the trail of the apostles and endeavored to compel Gentile converts to submit to circumcision and other Jewish practices in order to be saved.” Paul lists his own pre-Christian confidence in his righteousness through following the law in various ways (verses 4-6) and then contrasts it with the confidence he now finds in Christ alone (verses 7-11). If we think we have to work hard in order to be accepted by God, that is a false belief. The only way for God to accept us is through Christ alone. We can’t earn salvation; it comes only through faith in Jesus Christ.

OFFLOAD PERSONAL CREDENTIALS THAT CAN’T GIVE YOU SECURITY (V.4-7). Paul considers all his credentials, designation, citizenship as Hebrew, and everything else in life garbage compared to the lasting joy of knowing Christ. This is one of the reasons people are not joyful today; they perform religious rituals and rely on their personal credentials to be good enough. These things have no sufficiency and will never give us security.

YEARN TO TRUST JESUS ALWAYS, AND THAT WILL MAKE YOU TRULY HAPPY (V.8-11). Knowing here in verse 8 suggests personal experiential knowledge. It is not only about intellectual knowledge of a person but an experiential knowledge of Him. Paul’s goal is to “gain Christ,” to be in a deep and personal relationship with Him. His desire also is to know Him in every aspect, to know the power of His resurrection, a new life of victory over sin, and to share in Christ’s sufferings, which means being united with Him in every part of His life, including His death. His trust is in Christ and his hope is on the resurrection and eternal life with Him. Romans 3:21-22 says, “But now God has shown us a different way to heaven—not by “being good enough” and trying to keep his laws. God says He will accept and acquit us—declare us “not guilty”—if we trust Jesus Christ to take away our sins. And we all can be saved in this same way, by coming to Christ, no matter who we are or what we have been like.” Let us stop working our way to Christ, and instead trust Him with our lives. In that way, we can obey Him, and experience real and lasting joy.

PRACTICE

1. **Trusting Jesus.** Have you trusted Jesus with your life? Explain.

2. **Salvation in Christ.** What attitude should we have since we know we cannot merit God’s favour?

PRAYER

I. Life Worship

- May they lead our brethren into a deeper connection with God.

II. Life Kids

- Pray for wisdom and patience as they teach and guide the young minds entrusted to their care.

III. Life Link

- Thank God for their effort to create a warm atmosphere for all who enter our doors.

IV. Life Sports

- Thank God for the incredible gift of sports and the way it builds community.

V. Leaders

- May they stand firm in their faith, inspiring others to grow in their faith as well.

VI. Gospel

- Thank God for the gift of salvation and for the hope and transformation it brings.

VII. Ministries

- Let’s ask for God’s abundant blessing and guidance upon each ministry in our church.