



Building Wholehearted Disciples of Jesus

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The Leverage of Joy: a Study of Philippians
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The Leverage of Joy: a study of Philippians

Introduction:

- CS Lewis: “Joy is the language of heaven.”
- We are in a study on, what I am calling, “The Leverage of Joy.”
- We are studying through the “manifesto of joy”, the book of Philippians.
- It’s like Paul’s personal journal on how to have a life of joy. The past few weeks we have looked at:
 - **Leverage Point 1: Joy comes through A Love Relationship with Christ.**
 - **Leverage Point 2: Joy comes through Heart-to-Heart Connection with People.**
 - **Leverage Point 3: Joy comes through Dynamic Love.**

For example, four couples in our fellowship, all separately, recently said to me that they are reading and praying through Philippians and it’s changing their marriage!

Philippians 1:12-18

Leverage Point #4: Joy comes through being in Christ

Philippians 1:12

But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel,

- “things which happened to me”
- Things happen! Things happen to all of us. “Things Happen” should be a bumper sticker.

- Life is hard. It has been especially hard for Paul:
 - Persecution for his faith
 - Prison
 - Abandonment from friends
 - Loneliness
 - Betrayal
- Paul had a victory lens that he looked through. Paul is writing from prison.
- **Paul's victory mindset:** ²²*“And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, ²³ except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. ²⁴ But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy,* (Acts 20:22-24)
- Paul is no victim! He has a victory mindset; a victory lens that he is viewing his life through.
- We live in a unique time in American History. For the first time in our 250 years of existence, a victim mentality has taken over our country.
 - It's a whole industry. Peggy Noonan recent Op-ed writes, “We have been swept by social, technological and cultural revolution...The old longing for integration gave way to a culture of accusation—you are a supremacist, a misogynist, you are guilty of privilege and defined by your color and class, we don't let your sort speak here.”
 - It even has a name: Victimology.
 - The dictionary defines it as “the possession of an outlook, arising from real or imagined victimization, that seems to glorify and indulge the state of being a victim.”

- Paul would have nothing to do with such a perspective.
- Paul has had a breakthrough into joy through a radical outlook at his circumstances!
- Paul has a Victory Mindset!

Vs. 12

But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel,

- Paul viewed his negative circumstances as “actually turning out for the furtherance of the gospel.”
- Paul’s passion was for the Gospel to go out, even if it cost him his freedom and possibly his life.
- Paul could see that his suffering was being used by God to press the Kingdom of God forward. His pain was God’s gain in reaching more people for Christ.
- For example, it was the young man Jim Elliot who was martyred by the Auca Indians in Ecuador in 1956 who wrote in his journal at Wheaton, “One is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”

Philippians 1:13

so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ

- The secret to Paul’s joy in harsh circumstances! This little phrase, “My chains are in Christ.”
- **Leverage Point #4: Joy comes through being in Christ.**
- For example, the palace guards had to be chained to Paul. So, every day Paul got another palace guard who is chained to him and you know what he does? He preaches the gospel to each soldier.

- His chains are “in Christ.” Paul had done something very few Jesus disciples are ever able to do—he had baptized his entire life to being “in Christ.”
- All of the palace guard and everyone else knows that through his chains, being imprisoned, they know about Christ!
- Paul had baptized his whole life—the great times, the difficult times, the beautiful times and the harsh times—to Christ.
- Paul and Jesus never used the term “Christian.” Only found 3 times in the entire Bible. Paul never used it and Jesus never used it.
- Paul’s most used phrase is “in Christ”. 164 times Paul used this phrase to describe the wholehearted disciple.
- **Our Vision at The Road: Building Wholehearted Disciples in a Halfhearted World.**

What did Paul mean, this most important phrase “in Christ”?

- Not inside Christ, like tools in a toolbox or clothes in a closet, but rather, to be organically united to Christ.
- Like a branch growing on a tree or a limb on a body.
- **Colossians 3:3** *“For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”*
- Jesus Christ was a living reality to Paul and the reality for Paul was that Christ was Lord over all, in all, and intricately working through all to form Himself in Paul.
- Organically connected: Jesus in John 15, “I am the vine, you are the branches.”

John 15:5-10

⁵ “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing... ⁸ By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

⁹ *“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰ If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.*

- Joy breakthrough comes when we abide in Christ.

Ten Truths about being “in Christ”

1. In Christ Jesus you were given grace before the world was created. **“He gave us grace in Christ Jesus before the ages began.”** (2 Timothy 1:9).

2. In Christ Jesus you were chosen by God before creation. **“God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world.”** (Ephesians 1:4).

3. In Christ Jesus you are loved by God with an inseparable love. **“I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** (Romans 8:38–39).

4. In Christ Jesus you were redeemed and forgiven for all your sins. **“In Christ we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses.”** (Ephesians 1:7).

5. In Christ Jesus you are justified before God and the righteousness of God in Christ is imputed to you. **“For our sake God made Christ to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”** (2 Corinthians 5:21).

6. In Christ Jesus you have become a new creation and a son of God. **“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come”** (2 Corinthians 5:17). **“In Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.”** (Galatians 3:26).

7. In Christ Jesus you have been seated in the heavenly places even while he lived on earth. ***“God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”*** (Ephesians 2:6).

8. In Christ Jesus all the promises of God are Yes for you. ***“All the promises of God find their Yes in Christ.”*** (2 Corinthians 1:20).

9. In Christ Jesus you are being sanctified and made holy. ***“To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus.”*** (1 Corinthians 1:2).

10. In Christ Jesus everything you really need will be supplied. ***“My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”*** (Philippians 4:19).

Paul is indicating to us that because he was “in Christ” then it meant that even in this life, his “chains” were baptized into Christ.

Philippians 1:14

and most of the brethren the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

- Paul recognized that he was giving others confidence! We all need a model of courage.
- For example, it is why we go to the movies, read biographies, watch the Olympics. It is all about courage. We admire men and women who have courage.
- Testimony: TEST...Mony. The middle letter is an I.
- The Church in Rome was given courage and confidence because of the testimony of Paul. When you go through difficulties and struggle, people are watching you.
- Note that it says “most of the brethren” not everyone!

Philippians 1:15-18

¹⁵Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: ¹⁶The former preach Christ from selfish ambition,

not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; ¹⁷but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁸What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.

- Not everyone loved Paul. Some even used his hardship to further their own agenda, which was not pure or motivated by love.
- They were Paul’s critics. You will always have critics—some you need to listen to and others you need to not listen to.
- Margaret Thatcher, “If my critics saw me walking over the Thames they would say it was because I couldn't swim.”
- Someone once said, “Caring about what people think of you is useless. Most people don’t even know what they think of themselves.”
- Lou Holtz: “Don't tell your problems to people: eighty percent don't care; and the other twenty percent are glad you have them.”
- ***It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs, who comes up short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who have never known neither victory nor defeat (Teddy Roosevelt 1910 speech “Citizenship in a Republic” given at the Sorbonne, in Paris, France.)***
- Paul was not going to judge the motives of men but their fruit! Who is doing it out there?

- Less talk, more walk. Less talk, more do.
- Paul was rejoicing that the kingdom of God was still going out, even among unscrupulous preachers.
- Paul’s “chains in Christ” made Paul rejoice!

Leverage Point #4: Joy comes through being in Christ

1. When we are “in Christ” we can believe that God is sovereign over everything that happens in our life—God is using it. God will use it for good. Not a trite statement but a true reality.
2. When we are “in Christ” we will bear fruit for the kingdom of God. We will be used by our character and our life to be a testimony to many who are watching.
3. When we are “in Christ” we learn to live with the maxim that: *the power within me is greater than any power outside of me. Thus I can have joy from within even when circumstances and people are tempting me to give up.*