



Empowering People to Change the World

Leverage Point #1
A Love Relationship with Jesus Christ

Steve Holt

Leverage Point 1: A Love Relationship with Jesus Christ

Introduction:

- Last week I shared that the theme of the letter to the Philippians is joy
- Theme verse: **Philippians 4:4**
Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!
- I shared that when we renew our minds in Christ we discover the fulcrum of joy.
- Lever is the power of Christ.
- Fulcrum is your mindset of being joyful in Christ.
- The next few months we will look at what these points of leverage for joy in our lives.

Philippians 1:1 ***“Paul & Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ”***

- Paul had been a zealous Jew, a rising star in Jerusalem who had graduated from one of the leading universities and studied under the greatest theologian and teacher in Judaism, Gamaliel.
- Paul was converted through a vision of Christ (Acts 9) and had now become the most outspoken and bold of any Christian missionary.
 - It was on his second missionary journey that he came upon a young disciple named Timothy (Acts 16.)
 - Timothy was the son of a Jewish mother and Greek father.
 - His passion for Christ had become well known throughout Asia Minor.
 - Paul saw the pastoral leadership gift in Timothy and chose to bring along on his second missionary journey.
 - Timothy was circumcised in order to be able to enter a Jewish Synagogue, which was Paul’s main strategy for preaching the gospel.
- The founding of the Philippian Church is amazing! Full of miracles.
- It was in the Roman city of Philippi that Paul and Timothy came upon a group of women by the river and preached the gospel.

- A certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple garments, gave her heart to Christ and she and her entire household were baptized.
- Later, Paul confronts a demonized woman and cast her demon out. He is dragged before the authorities and falsely thrown into prison. It is while in prison that an earthquake occurs and the jailer gets saved, he and all his household.
- Paul is the author and Timothy his assistant. Paul is writing this letter in thanksgiving for a gift that the Philippians had sent to him.
- Paul and Timothy identify themselves as “bondservants of Jesus Christ” an interesting term.

Slavery in the Roman Empire

- Over 30% of the people in the Roman Empire were slaves.
- You became a slave 4 ways:
 1. Born a slave.
 2. Conquered and sold into slavery.
 3. Because of debt, you could become a slave.
 4. But there is a 4th way, and that is the choice to become a “bondslave.”
 - ♣ Through a love relationship with their Master, the slave wants to remain a slave.
 - ♣ One became a bondslave because they actually could go free but wanted to be a bondservant based in love.
- Paul and Timothy identify themselves as “bondslaves of Jesus Christ.” They have chosen to be slaves of Jesus Christ.
- A bondservant, a bondslave, was someone who was free but because of love for his/her master desired to be his personal slave.

Leverage Point 1: A Love Relationship with Jesus Christ

- In the Old Testament we have this cryptic passage that explains the idea of being a bondservant.
- **Exodus 21:5-6**
But ⁱif the slave plainly says, ‘I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,’⁶ then his master shall bring him to ^kGod, and he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall be his slave forever.
- It was not uncommon in the time of Paul for men and women who had developed a close relationship with their master to choose to be a bondservant to their master even though they could go free.
- It was about a love relationship. This is the first key to joy—a love relationship with your Master, Jesus Christ.
 - We are His bondservants.
 - We have chosen to follow Him.
 - Paul and Timothy did not have to become missionaries; they did not have to preach the gospel in Philippi.
 - But they did because they were passionately in love with Jesus Christ and wanted others to experience a personal vital dynamic relationship with Him.
 - We are called to be His bondservants.
- **1 Corinthians 7:22**
“For he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant is ^sa freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is ^ta bondservant of Christ.”
 - When we come into a lovingly dynamic relationship with Christ we are set free.
 - **Galatians 5:1** *“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.”*
 - We are bondservants set free from slavery of sin to serve God!
 - We were slaves to sin:

- ♣ Born into sin
- ♣ Captured by sin
- ♣ Indebted to sin
- ♣ But we are not set free from the power and entanglement of sin!

Paul identifies Jesus as a bondservant, the same mindset as Jesus Christ:

“let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus...made himself of no reputation, taking the form of bondservant...” (Philippians 2:7)

- JESUS IS OUR EXAMPLE!
- JESUS IS OUR MODEL!
- JESUS US THE FIRST BONDSERVANT OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD!
- PAUL IS ONLY FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST!

Philippians 2:2-8

We are free to serve others through a loving relationship with Jesus Christ

Joy is released in our heart when we are developing a mindset of a loving relationship with Christ.

1. Look out for the interests of others.
2. Be willing to sacrifice your reputation.
3. Walk in humility.

Philippians 1:1b *“To all the saints in Christ Jesus...”*

- You are a saint, not because of our perfection, but because of our status.
 - This is not referring to personal holiness but rather your personal standing as a Christ follower.
 - We are striving toward holiness because we have new holy desires.

- When we gave our lives to Christ, when we surrendered to Christ, His Holy Spirit entered our hearts and we were born again to a personal relationship that resulted in the Holy Spirit living within us.
- The biblical word for “saint” means consecration, dedication, set apart.
- You have been set apart in Christ, by Christ, for Christ.
- **1 Peter 2:9**
“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”
 - David was an adulterer and murderer, but before God he was a saint.
 - Paul was a blasphemer but before God he became a saint.
 - Peter denied Christ, but before Christ he was a saint.
 - Mary Magdalene had 7 demons cast out of her but she became a saint.
- You are a saint, not because of your perfection but because of who you are in Christ and He says you are a saint.
- The life of Christ flows through your veins.
- The power of Christ flows through your veins.
- The joy of Christ flows through your veins.

Philippians 1:2

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Jesus Christ is mentioned over 40 times in the 104 verses in Philippians.
- Jesus Christ is mentioned 17 times in just chapter 1.
- The most important leverage point for joy in our lives is being “in Christ,” in love with Christ.
 - It’s intimate; it’s dynamic.
 - It’s growing to pray the 1st Commandment in your life.
 - “God, today I want to love you with all of my heart, soul, mind, and strength.”
 - “Lord, would you empower me to love you with all of my heart, soul, mind, and strength.”
 - This is the beginning of true revival.
 - A bondservant is a loving slave, a passionate servant.

“Grace and peace”

- The first greeting Paul uses to the Philippians is “grace and peace.”
- Saints, you have been given “unmerited grace” “unmerited favor” from God—indeed this is the definition of grace.
- We most often think God is gracious to us because of what we have done, how good we have been, how holy we are.
- But God does not love us because of what we have done, but rather He loves us regardless of our deeds.
- For example, John Newton had grown up in a Christian home in England but was orphaned at 6 years old and was shipped off to a home where Christianity was mocked and ridiculed. His sea captain step-father began taking him out on slave ships at 11 years of age. Eventually Newton began buying and selling slaves, but on one voyage, during a severe storm, Newton gave

his life to Christ. It would take many years before Newton completely renounced the slave trade but when he did he became an Anglican Priest, and wrote a pamphlet against slavery that was sent to every member of Parliament.

- **“Thoughts Upon the Slave Trade.”** The tract described the horrific conditions on slave ships and Newton apologized for making a public statement so many years after participating in the trade: “It will always be a subject of humiliating reflection to me, that I was once an active instrument in a business at which my heart now shudders.” The pamphlet was so popular it was reprinted several times and sent to every member of Parliament. Under the leadership of MP William Wilberforce, the English civil government outlawed slavery in Great Britain in 1807 and Newton lived to see it, dying in December of that year. The passage of the Slave Trade Act is depicted in the 2006 film, also called *Amazing Grace*.
- It was John Newton who wrote the most popular hymn of all time. *Amazing Grace* is estimated to be performed 10 million times annually and has appeared on over 11,000 albums.
- God loves you with unmerited favor. Joy becomes ours when we discover this unmerited love of God!

Peace

- Paul also uses the word “peace.” This word is *shalom*.
- When the angels announced the birth of Christ they proclaimed, **“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests” (Luke 2:14)**
- Grace is God’s unmerited favor but peace is the result of that favor.
- Just before his crucifixion, Jesus knowing that turmoil and persecution was coming said to the disciples, **“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” (John 14:27)**

- After his resurrection, Jesus's first words to his disciples is "**Peace be with you**" (John 20:19).
- We do not naturally have peace with God. But when we choose to renew our hearts and minds in Christ, loving Him, seeking Him, praying over stuff, peace comes.
 - We must first have peace with God before you can experience the peace of God.
 - You must through surrender, give your life to Jesus.
 - Then we can begin to experience peace of God.
 - Jesus will give you peace if you will surrender to Him and let Him take over your life.

Most Important Principle to the Joy Leverage is: Love Jesus, become a Bond servant of Jesus!

We are going to open up worship with John Newton's powerful hymn, *Amazing Grace...*