

Damsel in Distress

#11 Find your Chief Joy in the Lord

I. God's Perspective on Joy

- A. Joy has an eternal perspective (Happiness is "here and now")

Hebrews 12:2 "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

- B. Joy is abiding and relational (to the Lord) (Happiness often involves "stuff")

John 15:11 "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."

- C. Joy is rooted in faith (Happiness is rooted in what can be seen or heard. It is a tangible experience.)

1 Peter 1:18 "Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy"

- D. Joy produces strength (Happiness is transient)

Neh. 8:10 "Nehemiah said, 'Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.'"

II. Philipians 3

"Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord." – "Find your chief joy in the Lord."

- A. His warning (vs. 2-3)

1. His warning about the Judaisers

- a. Biblical Judaism

Focused on the Law of Moses, but also on the traditions received by the Elders. The Pharisees had organized the Law of Moses into some 365 negative commandments and some 25 positive commandments.

See Matt 5:20

b. Nationalistic Judaism

Taught that before a Gentile could become a Christian, he would have to first become a Jew by submitting to circumcision.

2. His warnings, in crude terms

a. *"Beware the Dogs"*

Dogs: This term referred to the mangy, flea-bitten, vicious, starved scavengers of the streets.

See Isa. 56:10-11. These false prophets who denied the words of warning given by Isaiah. They were concerned for themselves and not for the people.

b. *"Beware of the Evil Workers"*

Evil Workers: Those who work against the gospel of grace. Maybe Paul has in mind those mentioned in Matt. 23:15...Pharisees who only want to see their numbers grow. They are simply drawing men to themselves.

c. *"Beware of Mutilators"*

Paul does not even use the term for circumcision, he calls it what it is, bodily mutilation – not a spiritual sign of faith. It's an external rite, with no focus on its significance as an emblem of faith.

B. His Own Testimony (vs. 4-9)

C. His Conclusion: "I count all things LOSS for the sake of Christ " vs. 8

III. The Point: Instead find your chief joy in the Lord

A. Jesus Christ deserves to be the center of our lives. Crown Him!

Phil. 1:21 "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain."

B. There is a world of difference between happiness and joy. Choose joy!

HAPPINESS

- Is affected by external actions
- Depends on circumstances "under the circumstances"
- Requires an absence of pain
- "Laughs" only when it's funny
- It is better when things are "under control"
- Strong dependence on others to provide
- Often focused on the distant future
- We have a "chance" at it...

JOY

- Is dependent on internal attitudes
- Rises above circumstances
- Sees circumstances as an opportunity to make Christ known...Phil. 1:12-14
- Functions in spite of pain
- See the example of Paul, 2 Cor. 2:3-8
- See James 1:2-4

IV. So what? Remember:

A. We've been given promises along the way. Claim them!

B. A quick survey of the book of Psalms:

Ps. 4:3	The Lord will hear when I call unto Him
Ps. 6:9	The Lord will receive my prayer
Ps. 9:9	The Lord will be a refuge
Ps. 29:11	The Lord will give strength to His people
Ps. 29:11	The Lord will bless His people with peace
Ps. 41:1	The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble
Ps. 41:2	The Lord will preserve him
Ps. 84:11	The Lord will give grace and glory
Ps. 94:14	For the Lord will not cast off His people
Ps. 118:6	The Lord is on my side, I will not fear