

Restore Unto Me the Joy of My Salvation / I Will Choose Joy #3 / Philippians 2:12-18

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love. According to your great compassion, blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight. Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. But you have desired faithfulness even in the womb, you desire truth in that secret place. Create in me a clean heart, O God and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you.

One of the most glorious, precious and powerful words in the English Language is this one: restoration. It means “to put something back together to its original state.” Restoration implies that the human experience is such that people who are normally joyful are not going to be joyful all the time. Restoration implies that Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall. Humpty Dumpty had a great fall. And all the king’s horses and all the king’s men couldn’t put Humpty Dumpty back together again even though they tried. But restoration also implies that the same God who first gave your pastor joy on December 27, 1990 at Furman University when he gave his heart to Jesus, is the same God who delights in restoring the joy we first had at salvation back together again piece by piece when it’s broken in our lives. For His mercies are new every morning. For restoration also implies that Jesus Christ came to our wall. That Jesus Christ died for our fall. So that regardless of death and in spite of sin, He is the One who can restore the joy of our salvation again.

In the first message of this series, we learned that no one or no thing can still the joy of the Lord within you because it’s a work of the Spirit. When last we gathered at the river, we simply looked at Jesus’ life to see how God goes about shaping our attitude. Today, we look at the passage just following the previous one. It’s a passage about how God goes about restoring joy. The Philippians didn’t have it. That’s why Paul wrote the book. And in Philippians 2:12-18.

¹²Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. ¹⁴Do everything without grumbling or arguing, ¹⁵so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.”^[a] Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky ¹⁶as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. ¹⁷But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. ¹⁸So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

Areas of Joy Restoration God Targets:

1. Trepidation (12)

- **Spare the Rod and Spoil the Child** – A creation in my woodshop solved a lot child rearing issues when my kids were much smaller. And I never even used it. It just hung on the living room wall. The creation was oak paddle I made with holes in it to make it look and sound aerodynamic. The best part about the paddle was her name: The Fear of God.
- **There’s a Healthy Place for the Fear of God in Our Lives** – (1) The "fear of the Lord" is the beginning of knowledge [Pr. 1:7] (2) Will cause one to hate evil [Pr 8:13]. (3) Provides strong confidence and is a fountain of life [Pr 14:26-27]. (4) Prompts one to depart from evil [Pr 16:6]. (5) Leads to a satisfying life, and spares one from much evil - Pr 19:23
- **So, One of the Most Important Lessons About Joy Relates to the Fear of God:** (1) The theme of Philippians is joy; (2) Command in this verse is “to work out salvation with fear and trembling.” (3) Taken out of context, people use those to cast our salvation as our doing; (4) In context, Paul’s acknowledging he’s about to leave this world and won’t be able to spoon feed the Philippians anymore. (5) So they feed themselves; which starts with

the Fear of God. (6) Nothing to do with salvation as work of God. But everything to do with where joy comes from.

- **How the Fear of God Brings Joy to Our Lives:** (1) You can't work out what you don't already possess; (2) The identification of yourself as a Christian isn't to be taken lightly; (3) Working out something with God in your life won't work unless God himself is already working.
- **The Reality:** It's not those who wrestle with essential questions of eternal realities that need to be concerned. It's those who do not.

2. Destination (13)

- **I Walked a Mile With Pleasure** – She chattered all the way. But I was none the wiser, for all she had to say. I walked a mile with Sorrow, and ne'er a word said she. But, oh, the lessons I did learn when sorrow walked with me.
- **Every Circumstance Has A Divine Author** – “It is God” / Construct of “I am”
- **Every Circumstance Has A Divine Purpose** - “who works in you” / Even in the bad circumstances, God will allow what he hates in order to accomplish what he loves.
- **Every Circumstance Has A Divine Intention** – “to will and act” / Your responsibility. God will orchestrate your circumstances to get you to behave in accordance with what you confess
- **Every Circumstance Has A Divine Destination** – “in order to fulfill his purposes” / For God causes all things to work for good for those who love him and are called according to his purpose.
- **Application** – Paul is telling you that the final outcome of your circumstances are going to be good. Joy gets restored when you see your life from that perspective.

3. Lamentation (14-15a)

- **Mother's Day vs Father's Day:** (1) On Mother's Day: I want to eat here, do this and this and this (Father's quietly lament); (2) On Father's Day: Where do you want to eat? Doesn't matter. What do you want? Nothing. What do you want to do on Father's Day. Absolutely nothing (Mother's quietly lament)
- **A More Serious Command Than You Realize:** Do everything without grumbling and complaining. (1) Lamenting, complaining and murmuring were the downfall of Israel; (2) But they complained against Moses, David, Solomon, and the Prophets; (2) Paul implies with the command that this attitude, more than any other, will sabotage joy and divine intentions in our lives.
- **Reasons Why It's More Serious Than You Realize:** (1) Don't really believe trials and circumstances are sent from the Lord; (2) You don't believe God is adequate to meet the need of every situation; (3) Like Israel, those who murmur, lament and complain, are equally the exact same ones who begin disputes with others. (4) This, more than any other, threatened the work of God in Philippi.
- **Application:** Paul takes grumbling and complaining seriously not only because it effects our joy, but because it effects our mission outside the church. If Christians complain, what makes them any different than the world? From Paul's perspective, joy in every circumstance illustrates genuine faith. Complaining is a false representation of it.

4. Illumination (15b-18)

- **Chasing the Sunrise:** (1) Window seat making the long intercontinental plane flight from Orlando, Florida to New Orleans, La. (2) As the sun rose in the east behind us, pockets of darkness became completely visible. (3) That's what happens when light hits darkness. It's what it was designed to do.
- **Illumination and Not Complaining Are Linked:** If anyone had excuse to complain, it was Paul. (1) A Gentile businessman tried to get him thrown in the pokey because his fortune teller business crumbled when he casted a demon out of his main worker; (2) Jews falsely accused him of causing a riot for the crime of bringing Gentiles to church. (3) It's why he was in jail
- **But Paul Saw His Mission from the Right Lens:** (1) Lived in a crooked generation; (2) Light only valuable if it dispels darkness; (3) It was in Paul's life; (4) When it dispels darkness, some areas respond to light and others don't. (5) Knowing that produced great joy in Paul. And restore ours.