

The Flavor of Joy
Philippians 2:1-16
Philippians #3

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope and dispense hope to others by the power of the Holy Spirit.

There is a town in Pennsylvania that was incorporated for one purpose: to be the flavor of joy in the world. This town has all the features that make a town a town. It has a central business district. It has schools, parks, public transportation, and highly zealous little league parents. But it has one thing other towns do not: a chocolate factory. The town is called Hershey, PA, home to Hershey's Bars, Hershey's Kisses, Kit Kats, and Whatchamacallits. I've toured the Hershey Chocolate Factory and plan to go again sometime in the future. I've yet to see grief, misery, sadness, sorrow, woe, or even Willy Wonka. But I've seen plenty of faith, hope, love, and joy inside that factory where cocoa, milk, and sugar come together perfectly to be the flavor of joy in the world.

There are many important lessons about biblical joy that we have and will continue to discover from the Book of Philippians. We've already seen that joy comes from God. And when last we gathered at the river, we learned that the devil would use everything in his arsenal to steal that joy away from you. But the lesson before us today is one we don't think about as much when it comes to biblical joy. That lesson is this: biblical joy in you inspires biblical joy in others.

You see, love, truth, and joy go together like cocoa, milk, and sugar. If you buy Hershey's Unsweetened Powdered Cocoa but forget to add the milk and sugar, then your homemade Hershey's Bar becomes bitter and not worthy of inspiring anyone to visit the chocolate factory anytime soon. But when you blend it according to the directions, you have flavorful chocolate that is sure to invite partakers inside your family and outside of it. As a result, my aim today is to show you from the Joy Directions Manual known as the Book of Philippians how to be the flavor of joy in your world. More specifically, how biblical joy in you can inspire biblical joy in others.

To inspire joy in others, you must have (1) The Right Ingredients. "In humility value others above yourselves, not look to just your own interests but also the interest of others. (2) The Right Example. "In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus." (3) The Right Process. "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling" and "do everything without grumbling or complaining. And finally (4) The Right Targets: "make my joy complete" and "Then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain." And we will see these in Philippians 2:1-16 as we go. But first, pray with me.

1. Right Ingredients (1-4)

- *Therefore, if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*
- **H20:** (1) I don't remember much about chemistry from high school. But I remember this: Two hydrogens and one oxygen are the right combination to produce a life-giving substance. Any variation of those ingredients and you don't have the most joyful, life-giving substance on earth, much more valuable than chocolate: water.
- **Joy Has Ingredients Also:** (1) Proper Motives: encouragement from being a Christian; comfort from his love; sharing in the Spirit; tenderness and compassion. (2) Proper Attitudes: like-minded; having the same love; being one in spirit and of one mind; (3) Proper Actions: Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit; instead, value others above yourselves; by looking also out for the interests of others.
- **Significance:** What Paul sets forth in 1-4 is significant because it defines three important things: (a) What a Biblical Christian looks like; (b) How Biblical Humility is defined; and how Biblical Joy is expressed. In that sense, being a Christian is to be humble and joyful. And vice versa.
- **An Important Note About Framing:** The entire passage before us today is a series of commands, six of them to be exact: (1) make my joy complete (v2); Do nothing out of selfish ambition (v3); In humility, value others (v3); Have the same mindset as Christ Jesus (v5); Work out your salvation in fear and trembling (v 12); Do everything without grumbling or arguing (v 14).
- **App:** Joy is not a suggest, a goal, or an ideal. It's not something Paul hoped the Philippians had. It's something that he commands they have. As a result, joy is something he commands us to dispense. Both happen with the proper motives, attitudes, and actions become our motives, attitudes, and actions.

2. Right Example (5-11)

- *⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature^[a] God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature^[b] of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross! ⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee*

should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- **Living for Jesus** – Living for Jesus, a life that is true. Striving to please Him in all that I do. Yielding allegiance, glad-hearted and free. This is a pathway of blessing for me. O Jesus, Lord, and Savior. I give myself to Thee. For Thou, in Thy atonement, didst give Thyself for me. I own no other Master. My heart shall be thy throne. My life I give, henceforth to live. O Christ, for the alone.
- **Hymns About Jesus Teach Us About His Example We Are Called to Follow. The Early Church Had Hymns Too That Worked the Same Way.** (1) Paul uses one here. The reason we know it's a hymn is because (a) we have a record of it in other sources and he uses it as a quote, similar to the way the OT is quoted, because he knows the Philippians are familiar with it.
- **It's a Hymn That Teaches Us the Following About His Example:** (1) What He Gave Up: "made himself nothing...being made in human likeness." (2) What He Did: "humbled himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross." (3) How He Was Rewarded: "Therefore God exalted him." (4) Why He Matters: "that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord."
- **It Goes Quite Nicely with Hebrews 12:2:** *Who for the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*
- **App:** If our joy comes when we look to Jesus as our example, others joy will likely come when they see us looking at Jesus as our example. For such an example is sure to inspire joy. That's why we sing hymns about it. And the early church did too. It's all about Jesus. Period.

3. Right Process (12b-16a)

- *continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. ¹⁴ Do everything without grumbling or arguing, ¹⁵ so that you may become blameless and pure, "children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation."¹⁴ Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky ¹⁶ as you hold firmly to the word of life.*
- **Microwaves Have Their Limits:** (1) There's a lot of good meals you can make in the microwave. I can make a mean bowl of Ramen Noodles and Kraft Macaroni and Cheese in under three minutes in that bad boy. (2) But there are two things I've never heard of being cooked in a microwave from start to finish. You don't cook ribs in the microwave. And you certainly don't cook brisket. Warm them up maybe. But cook them from start to finish? No way. (3) There's a right process for ribs and brisket that never changes: Turn the heat down low and cook them slow.
- **Two Imperatives in These Verses Giving Us the Process for Being the Kind of Joyful Person that Produces Joy in Others:** (1) "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling" (12b). How we shouldn't understand that verse: Scaring you into thinking you can lose your salvation. How we should understand it: "Work out" denotes the idea of "pressing on" and "striving." "Fear and trembling" was a way in the days of Paul to say have a reverence for the Lord. Put them both together and it equals: Have enough reverence for the Lord to continue walking with him – pressing on with him – in the midst of difficulty (prison for Paul). (2) "Do everything without grumbling or complaining." Not some things. Not some times. Not in some places. Do everything without grumbling and complaining all the time and in every place.
- **App:** Put them both together and you have a process of not only going about being joyful, but inspiring others to be. While I am pressing on with a reverence for the Lord Jesus, I press on by pressing through whatever God has for me at all times by not grumbling and complaining. And the only way that is possible is if you look unto Jesus, the right example.

4. Right Targets (2; 16b)

- *² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind...And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain.*
- **Little League Kids:** (1) I love watching little league sports because there is one thing that happens in every game, no matter the sport. (2) There is some child who gets into the game in spite of being about as coordinated as a one-legged man in a three-legged race. When that child – unbeknownst to himself and his parents – gets a hit, scores a goal, or makes a basket, the child always looks up in the stands first to see if his parents saw it. (2) There is nothing sweeter than the site of joyful children inspiring joy in their parents and students in their teachers. (3) And for Paul, the greatest hope that he had was for the Philippians was for their joy to move him to greater joy than he already had.
- **Verse 2 and the Last Part of 16 Form What's Called an Inclusio:** (1) The ancients didn't mark their words with verse 1, verse 2 like we read in the Bible today. That didn't come until the 1500s. They used what's called an "inclusio" to let people know what verses belonged together. (2) The inclusio for the whole passage begins with "make my joy complete." A way of saying "Philippians: if you get joy right in by doing what I'm about to tell you, then I will be more joyful than I already am. My joy will be complete. (3) The inclusio ends in the last part of v 16 with a return to the same sentiment as verse 2: "Then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run in vain."
- **App:** When the ingredients of our lives are flavorful – When we look to Jesus as our example – When we go about the process of running the race in the right way – we will inspire joy in those who have influenced us. Some are with us. Some have gone to be with Jesus. But I will assure you they are watching along with Jesus. And nothing can make them more joyful than you being the very flavor of joy to those around. And you don't need to go to Hershey, PA to accomplish it.