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Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

**The Oaks
Baptist Church**
Grand Prairie, Texas

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Rejoice in All Circumstances Philippians 1:12-21

Lesson Background and Introduction

Paul's letter to the Philippians was written to Christians in Philippi, a city in Macedonia (northern Greece). Paul founded the church there during his second missionary journey (Acts 16:11-40). Philippi was a well-established, prosperous city on a major Roman road, the Via Egnatia, which connected the east and west coasts of the Grecian peninsula. Philippi had a rich history, of which its inhabitants were proud. In 42 BC, war between factions of the Roman ruling classes came to an end with a battle fought near Philippi. The victors rewarded their soldiers by granting them nearby lands, establishing Philippi as a Roman colony. Paul wrote this letter while a prisoner (Philippians 1:7, 12-14). Though some scholars have suggested other possible places and times in Paul's life, it remains most likely that Paul wrote Philippians while under house arrest in Rome (Acts 28:16-31), awaiting trial before Nero. This was during Paul's first Roman imprisonment of AD 61-63, with another following in AD 67. For the Philippian Christians, those circumstances likely prompted a crisis of faith. Accustomed to taking pride in all things Roman and to looking up to Paul, God's apostle, they had to come to terms with their hero's imprisonment at the hands of Rome. But the church had problems in addition to this crisis. Conflict and rivalry had begun to threaten the church's unity. Paul mentions by name two who were in conflict (Philippians 4:2, 3). But the letter's contents suggest this was an example of a wider problem.

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Joy in Suffering - Paul took advantage of his imprisonment to spread the Gospel, and he exhorted the Philippian believers to rejoice in the midst of life's troubles. Paul understood he was suffering for Christ's sake and to further His message. God can use any platform to lift up His Son. Paul encouraged the believers to endure their serious challenges with patience and joy, citing himself as an example of how to do that.

Demonstrate God's Power - Paul continued to claim that the Lord was blessing him in every way. In fact, during his prison time Paul wrote three other powerful letters now in our Bible: Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon. Also, as a result of Paul's imprisonment, his guards and those in Caesar's household heard the message. The apostle's positive response to his awful situation convinced unbelievers that his message about Christ must be authentic.

Sharing Christ for the Right and Wrong Reasons - People may preach Christ for less-than-godly reasons. Some of those Paul knew wanted to prove themselves better than him, attempting to promote their own name. This group delighted in Paul's confinement. On the other hand, Paul knew others promoted Christ with a genuine heart. Paul resolved that either way, the Gospel was being preached and he rejoiced.

God's Will and Glory - We would do well to still follow Paul's example. He depended on the Lord's sovereignty in all areas of his life. His imprisonment, an impending trial, and possible martyrdom—all this could have brought about anger with God, depression, and despair. Instead, Paul remained confident in the prayers of the saints. He allowed the Holy Spirit to minister to Him, believing God is always present, and trusted Him completely. He rested in the assurance he was in the center of God's will. Paul realized his death might be imminent, but that did not matter to him. In life or death, he made it his goal to glorify God. Paul wanted the Philippian church to be clear, never associate God's goodness only when things are going well. God knows what will bring Him the most glory and deliver His message to the most people

(Adapted from the Echoes Commentary)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
Praising God in our trials turns burdens into blessings

POEM FOR THE WEEK:
Be this the purpose of my soul
My solemn, my determined choice:
To yield to God's supreme control,
And in my every trial rejoice. —
Anon.

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
*Yet I will rejoice in the Lord,
I will joy in the God of my salvation.*
(Hab 3:18 NKJV)

(from "Our Daily Bread", Dec 29, 2011)

Series: Our Love For God

UNIT: God is Worthy of Our Love

NEXT WEEK

Imitate Christ

(Philippians 2:1-11)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Rejoice Over the Advancement of the Gospel (1:12-14)

Rejoice over getting rid of hindrances (12)

By removing everything that hinders (Heb 12:1-2)

By forgetting the sinful pass and being committed to the future (Phil 3:13-14)

By enduring hardships and serving God (2 Tim 2:3-4)

Rejoice over understanding that all things are part of God's purposes (13)

God's purposes will always prevail (Prov 19:21)

Know that we are called according to God's purposes (Rom 8:28)

We need to be transformed to learn and discern God's purposes (Rom 12:2)

Seek to always make the most of opportunities that are a part of God's purposes (Eph 5:15-17)

Rejoice by praying for the bold preaching and teaching of God's Word (14)

Pray for the discernment and clarity of God's Word (Eph 6:18-20)

Praying as a group or congregation has great power (Acts 4:31)

Pray for open doors for God's Word (Col 4:2-4)

Rejoice that Christ is Preached (1:15-18)

Know that some will use God for selfish ambitions (15, 17)

Some will be greedy for money (1 Peter 5:2)

Some will have their minds on earthly things (Phil 3:18-19)

Some will be teachers of false doctrines as a means for financial gain (1 Tim 6:3-5)

Know that others follow God out of love (15, 16)

Love by voluntarily discharging the trust of God (1 Cor 9:16-17)

Love by being faithful (1 Cor 4:1-3)

Love by doing God's work free of charge (2 Cor 11:7)

Know that all that matters is that Christ is preached (18)

Christ preached has the power and wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:22-25)

One can only truly preach if he is sent from God (Rom 10:15)

Jesus Christ should be preached both in season and out of season (2 Tim 4:2)

Rejoice Over Committed Christians (1:19-21)

Committed to pray for spiritual advancement (19)

Pray for advancement through maturity (Heb 6:1)

Pray for advancement through the Church (Eph 4:11-13)

Pray for advancement through the power of the Holy Spirit in the inner being (Eph 3:16-19)

Committed to bold support for spiritual advancement (20-21)

Support through giving of oneself (2 Cor 8:1-5)

Support through godly caring for one another (Phil 2:19-21)

Support through financial giving (Phil 4:14-16)