

The Joy of Discipline

(Philippians 3:1-21)

Yearly Theme: “Joy is...”

Series Title: “The Fight for Joy”

November 8th, 2020

Something to think about:

The great evangelist and preacher, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, is quoted as saying, “I bear my willing witness that I owe more to the fire, and the hammer, and the file, than to anything else in the Lord’s workshop. I sometimes question whether I have ever learned anything except through the rod. When my schoolroom is darkened, I see most.”¹

How is *discipline* a joyful thing, and how should the Christian view the successes in this world compared to the successes of heaven?

Let’s take a look at what the Apostle Paul has to say today...

Philippians 3:1-21 (NLT),

¹ *Whatever happens, my dear brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord. I never get tired of telling you these things, and I do it to safeguard your faith.*

² *Watch out for those dogs, those people who do evil, those mutilators who say you must be circumcised to be saved.* ³ *For we who worship by the Spirit of God are the ones who are truly circumcised. We rely on what Christ Jesus has done for us. We put no confidence in human effort, ⁴ though I could have confidence in my own effort if anyone could. Indeed, if others have reason for confidence in their own efforts, I have even more!*

⁵ *I was circumcised when I was eight days old. I am a pure-blooded citizen of Israel and a member of the tribe of Benjamin—a real Hebrew if there ever was one! I was a member of the Pharisees, who demand the strictest obedience to the Jewish law.* ⁶ *I was so zealous that I harshly persecuted the church. And as for righteousness, I obeyed the law without fault.*

⁷ *I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done.* ⁸ *Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ ⁹ and become one with him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God’s way of making us right with himself depends on faith.* ¹⁰ *I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death, ¹¹ so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead!*

¹² *I don’t mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me.* ¹³ *No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.*

¹⁵ *Let all who are spiritually mature agree on these things. If you disagree on some point, I believe God will make it plain to you.* ¹⁶ *But we must hold on to the progress we have already made.*

¹⁷ *Dear brothers and sisters, pattern your lives after mine, and learn from those who follow our example.* ¹⁸ *For I have told you often before, and I say it again with tears in my eyes, that there are many whose conduct shows they are really enemies of the cross of Christ.* ¹⁹ *They are headed for destruction. Their god is their appetite, they brag about shameful things, and they think only about this life here on earth.* ²⁰ *But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior.* ²¹ *He will take our weak mortal bodies and change*

them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same power with which he will bring everything under his control.

What is the one encapsulating thought that describes this passage, and is our key point today?...

Key Point: “No matter how hard life gets for the follower of Christ, there is joy in the journey because of what lies ahead.”

Let’s break down some of the highlights that Paul speaks of in this passage that focus on our key point today:

1. **Whatever happens, rejoice in the Lord.**

Philippians 3:1 (NLT), Whatever happens, my dear brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord.

2. **Everything in this world is worthless compared to the infinite value of knowing Christ.**

Philippians 3:8 (NLT), Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

3. **Citizens of Heaven eagerly await Christ’s return, knowing that He will bring everything under His control.**

Philippians 3:20-21 (NLT), ²⁰ But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior. ²¹ He will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same power with which he will bring everything under his control.

Something to take home:

The famed American football player and coach, Tom Landry once said, “The job of a football coach is to make men do what they don’t want to do, in order to achieve what they’ve always wanted to be.”

Joy doesn’t always come naturally, but for the Christian, joy is (or, at least, should be) a way of life. Joy shouldn’t be circumstantial or based on feelings and emotions, but rather on the sheer fact that the race that we run and the battle we fight as believers in Christ has already been won by Jesus. So, all of those who have completely surrendered to Jesus and His gift of salvation, have already won this battle to by the sheer fact of His victory over sin and death.

Let me close with this. In his letter to the Romans, Paul explains that,

Romans 5:1-11 (NLT), ¹ ... We have been made right in God’s sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. ² Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God’s glory.

³ **We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance.** ⁴ **And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation.** ⁵ **And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.**

⁶ **When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners.**

⁷ **Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good.** ⁸ **But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.** ⁹ **And since we have been made right in God’s sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God’s condemnation.** ¹⁰ **For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son.** ¹¹ **So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.**

¹ George Sweeting, *Who Said That?* (Quote from *Charles Haddon Spurgeon*).