



VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS

The Journey to Joy Relentless Joy—Part 1, Philippians Tim Badal | January 12, 2020



This year we'll be going through the book of Philippians together. We'll walk through the four chapters one by one, which is a style of preaching called "expositional." It's a hallmark of our commitment to God's Word. Other methods of Bible study focus on topics or certain themes, but this method should be primary for us: choosing a book and walking through it from beginning to end.

I was recently interviewed by someone who wanted to know more about how our church has grown and what we are doing. During the interview, I was asked this question: "You say one of the reasons you've grown is because you do expositional preaching. How many books of the Bible have you gone through?" That stunned me, because I really didn't know the answer to that question. So as soon as the interview was over, I went back through my notes and our website to find the answer. I now can tell you we've gone through nine Old Testament books and 13 New Testament books. That's 22 books of the Bible during my time as pastor of this church. In other words, we've studied our way through a third of the Bible—which is really exciting.

Today we turn again to the New Testament and what a great book we've chosen to study. Philippians contains many wonderful truths. This journey goes beyond just studying a book of the Bible. I believe God has us as a church on a journey toward the much-needed reality of joy. As campus pastors, we want to encourage our church to address why so many of us are not experiencing the abundant joy God offers us as His followers. In our world filled with anxiety, cynicism and vitriol, with all that's happening in Washington and how that bleeds into our own daily lives, there is a negativity in our world that is impacting us. But God told us He sent Jesus Christ so that we might have abundant joy (John 10:10).

This morning we're kicking off a series that will be a journey toward that joy by opening a book dedicated to this theme. It is a joy that transcends all understanding. It transcends all tribulation. It transcends all circumstances. The joy God wants us to experience is a joy that comes from Him and is available to each of us if we choose to pursue it with all our hearts by pursuing the only One Who makes is available to us—Jesus Christ.

This morning I'll be giving you an introduction to the book of Philippians and to the subject of joy, looking especially at the first two verses of Philippians 1. Let's turn our attention now to God and His Word, as we read the opening verses of this incredible book.

¹ Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:

² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

As we open this book, I want to look at three things we need to learn about the book itself, then I'll scare you with seven truths about joy that are essential to our lives.

1. Three things we need to know

First, what do we need to know about the book of Philippians?

The details surrounding this letter

Turn in your Bibles to Acts 16, which will give us the context in which Philippians was written. For those of you who have been a part of our church, you know we've looked at Acts quite thoroughly. We just finished a two-year study through the book where we learned about God's work in the early church.

About a year ago we studied Acts 16 which tells of a defining moment for the Christian church. Up until this point the activities of the church had for the most part been contained in the Middle East. It had not yet gone into Europe, the center of civilization in those days. That was all going to change in Acts 16.

Paul had a vision from God in which he saw a man from Macedonia. We don't know how Paul understood where this man was from, but Luke tells that somehow he knew. In the vision, the man compelled Paul to travel with his companions to Macedonia, which is in modern-day Greece, to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with the people there. Paul obeyed that call and began to spread the gospel where it had not yet gone. According to biblical history, it was the first time the gospel had reached the continent of Europe. Paul traveled to some of the leading cities in Greece, then eventually he went all the way to Rome and Caesar's household.

Just as Neil Armstrong planted the American flag when he landed on the moon years ago, where would be the first place Paul planted the flag of the gospel of Jesus Christ when he landed in Greece? It was in the city of Philippi. Luke tells us it was a leading city in this region, named after a Macedonian king named Philip who ruled about 400 years earlier. It was also a city known for the presence of military leaders and soldiers who often retired there. It was a city that had a lot going for it, but it did not have many in it who feared God. We know there were few Jews there, because when Paul and his companions arrived, there was no synagogue for them to begin their ministry in. Synagogues actually didn't require a lot of people to start. They could be founded by as few as 12 Jewish men.

In fact, Greece had very few people in the entire nation who feared the true God. Because there was no synagogue, Paul began to look for other people in that area who were seeking after God. They found the first group of believers by a river, some women who were praying there, so they began to preach to these women. One woman in particular, a wealthy woman named Lydia, was particularly interested in learning about the gospel message. She responded by bowing her knee to Jesus. As an influential woman in the town, she was then instrumental in starting the church in Philippi.

In the opening days of ministry there, Paul and Silas were able to share the gospel freely. We also read in Acts 16 the story of a young slave girl who was inhabited by a demon and who cried out against Paul and Silas. According to Luke—I love his honesty here—Paul became aggravated by her as she followed them. So he cast out the demon, freeing the girl from her oppression.

You might think this would have excited the people in Philippi, but it was a city that embraced witchcraft and sorcery as part of their lives. This slave girl had brought significant profit to the men who owned her, because the demon in her gave her the ability to prophesy accurately. When the demon was no longer in her, their fortune-telling business was over. The men became very angry with Paul and Silas who had disrupted their world by preaching about an unknown God. So they went to the city magistrates, asking that Paul and Silas be thrown into prison which did happen.

We might think that Paul and Silas, finding themselves in prison, would become bitter or discouraged. "God, You sent us here using a vision. We obeyed what You said, but now look at what has happened. We're now in chains behind prison doors." But that's not at all how they responded. We read in Acts 16:25, "*About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God.*" In those difficult circumstances, they were able to demonstrate what God had done in their lives—they expressed joy, not anger. They were rejoicing, which is the verb form of joy. They actually sang so loudly that the others who were in the prison heard them and no doubt wondered what kind of joy would allow prisoners to sing. Then their singing was interrupted by an earthquake that was so violent the prison doors were opened and their chains fell off. It seemed as though God was giving them a chance to break out of that prison.

Instead, Paul and Silas chose not to leave, probably seeing an opportunity for their faithfulness to bear fruit. They not only stayed, but somehow they talked the rest of the prisoners into not leaving as well. The warden, assuming the prisoners had escaped, was about to take his own life. But Paul stopped him, telling him they were all there. The warden, realizing that Paul and Silas were followers of a different God, asked them, "*What must I do to be saved?*" Paul responded, "*Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.*"

Three conversions, three life-changing experiences, were the beginning, the seed, that now ten years later led Paul to write a letter to a church expressing great joy.

The demographics of this young church

Looking now at the demographics of this young church, we find them to be pretty amazing. In the times of Jesus and Paul, there was a prayer that Jewish men would pray. In it, they would thank God they weren't certain types of people. Specifically, they would pray, "Lord, I thank You I am not a Gentile. I thank you I'm not a woman. I thank You I'm not a slave." This horrific stance of superiority was because Jewish men saw themselves as being higher than God saw them. This story of the beginnings of the Philippian church was essentially a rebuttal of that attitude. God was showing them, and us, how He sees His church.

God chose to start this church specifically with a woman, a slave and a Gentile jailer, indicating that Christianity is not concerned about color, gender or race. The gospel is not for an exclusive group, allowing them to lord over other people. Rather, it goes out to all people

everywhere, no matter their social or economic status. The church in Philippi is actually a blueprint for a healthy church. It was filled with men and women, filled with old and young, filled with those who were new to the faith and those who had a religious upbringing. The church included those with ugly backgrounds and those whose lives had been relatively clean. But this great variety of people became the foundation for a very healthy church.

Ten years later, Paul wrote a letter of joy to them. In his letter, he praised God for this church, which in those ten years had grown to be a vibrant and mature congregation. As we read in Philippians 1:1, we see they had established elders and deacons, who were the teachers and servants in the church. There's no mention in the text about any uprising against these leaders. Rather, we'll see later that the leaders were loved and cared for.

We also see no evidence in this letter that the church was falling into false teaching. We see that in some of Paul's other letters, including Galatians, Ephesians and Colossians. But in Philippians, it appears they had stayed true to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Third, there was no mention of division within the church. The only place where there was any indication of disunity was a passing comment by Paul regarding two women who disagreed about the type of coffee being served at the church. I've added a little to that, but it was probably something on that level. Paul simply asked the church to help them come to a place of unity. But this is not the kind of division that we see in the church in Corinth or in Ephesus. This means we could be looking at a letter to the healthiest church in all of the New Testament. Do you think then that we might learn something from them?

The defining theme of our series

So as we look at this church that represents people of all types and from all backgrounds, what themes do we discover? There are two primary themes in this letter.

By the way, just so you know I've done my homework, there are 104 verses in this little book. That means you can read it all by the time I'm done preaching this morning. So either my message is going to be really long or the book of Philippians is really short. I'll say it's the latter.

In these 104 verses we find 19 mentions of this reality called joy. We'll see how joy can be experienced in lots of different circumstances in our lives. We'll see that we can have joy in a prison cell, just as Paul was able to communicate his own joy to the people of God while writing this letter from prison where he was chained to the imperial guard.

How are we to find this same joy in our circumstances in 21st century America? It can be found in the second great theme of the book of Philippians, which is Jesus Christ. In the 104 verses in this book, Jesus is spoken of 61 times. In other words, the primary theme here is not joy, but Jesus. He is actually the primary theme of all Scripture.

How do we connect these two themes into one overriding theme? I would put it this way. The relentless joy all of us are looking for—and all the world is looking for—can only be found in Jesus Christ. That's the theme of the book of Philippians. We'll learn more about the people in this church and about Paul's circumstances, but above all we'll be looking at and lifting up Jesus, so we can imitate Him and find in Him the joy He came to our world to bring.

2. Seven truths that are essential to living

Now let's move now to the seven truths which are essential in our lives. We know that because of this first church in Europe and because of other churches, eventually all the world would hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. To understand how the gospel was able to spread, we're now going to focus on the subject of joy. You may realize there are a lot of misunderstandings about what joy actually is. We look for joy in a lot of places, but when we think we've found it, we eventually discover we're mistaken. We need to consider some truths about joy which will lead us to ask ourselves, "Am I experiencing the joy God wants me to have?"

Joy is a common longing for all people.

Whether you are old or young, male or female, rich or poor, educated or not, whether in the church or outside the church, all of us have a desire for joy. I can't imagine there's anyone who can honestly say, "I hope and pray that my life is utterly devoid of joy and happiness." If that's where you're at, we need to talk. Something is wrong.

I would say that all people actually desire joy. The great sadness comes because we are broken, empty and anxious, yet everything in us is screaming, "I want to be joyful." In fact, one of the longest studies that has ever been done in higher education is a study out of Harvard University called the Gluck and Grant study which was done over 80 years ago. This study explored the lives of 500 men, asking the question what brings joy to people? It has been examined over the years, seeking to find the source of real happiness. Remember, when our forefathers

founded this country, they claimed that we have rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. We've been given permission to pursue an abundant life and we've been on that journey toward joy ever since. So what's the problem? We haven't found it yet.

A few years ago TIME Magazine had a cover story on the pursuit of happiness. They looked at all kinds of different ways joy might be gained—movies, technology, career advances, riches. The question they asked was, "Why are Americans wired to be happy and what is that doing to us?" They concluded that we're not finding real and true happiness or lasting joy. One article asked, "Why does Facebook bring you down?" You would think our interconnectedness through social media should elevate our joy, but in fact it may be destroying it.

While we as adults are struggling to find joy, there's a more serious problem today. Sociologists are telling us that the younger generation is being impacted in far more troubling ways. Another article in TIME is titled, "Anxiety, Depression and the Modern Adolescent." There's something in today's Millennial generation that has caused an epidemic of anxiety that impacts both men and women. We would think young people should be full of dreams and aspirations. They're not yet dealing with all the challenges of adulthood. So what is happening? One study even said they're the saddest demographic of all. We are in trouble as a society when young people are more cynical than the older people. We old folks are supposed to be cynics, right? We've gotten curmudgeonly, crotchety and angry—that's what happens when you get old. We've been drinking too much coffee. But our young people? They should be the ones who remind us there's a future. Yet what we see all too often, although not everywhere, that we have reason to be alarmed. Not only do adults lack joy, but even more disturbing, so do the young. So what are we to do?

The reason joy is a common longing is that God has given us a capacity for joy. You have at your disposal the ability to be filled with joy. It isn't based on other people, like who you're dating, who you're married to or who your boss is. It isn't based on what your grades are or what your paycheck is. You and I have the capacity to be filled with joy because it's been given to us by our Creator. We're told that we've been created in the image and likeness of God. Because we bear His image, Who He is is reflected in who we are.

I'm a byproduct of my mom and dad, so it's no wonder that people think I sound like my dad or that I look like my parents. I'm an image bearer of the Badal DNA. Likewise, God created us in His image and therefore has imprinted on each us the capacity for joy. We're told in Genesis 1 that God created the heavens and the earth, then as He went through the creation process, each day He would declare what He had done was good. Those were words of joy. God sat back, saw what He had created, then said, "Boy, not only was that fun, it fills me with joy."

We're also told in the Old Testament that God's presence is one of strength and joy. His nature includes stability and joy. One of the reasons we struggle to find joy is simply because we're not close to God Who is our source of joy. We read in the Scriptures that the joy of the Lord will be our strength (Nehemiah 8:10). The phrase, "the joy of the Lord," is mentioned over and over again. We are therefore to seek out the joy that comes from God.

God also dwells in a place where there is joy. In Luke 15 we read that when a sinner repents, there is great rejoicing in heaven. This isn't just run-of-the-mill rejoicing, but great rejoicing. Right now, heaven is a place filled with joy. So we need to start rehearsing our joy, because one day we're going to live in the presence of God where there is joy unspeakable.

We also read in Scripture that joy is one of the fruits of the Spirit. The fruits listed in Galatians 5 include love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness and longsuffering. All of these are things God has gifted to us as His people through the Holy Spirit. It is the responsibility of the Christian to live out these gifts, not as a duty, but as an expression of being a Christ follower who is indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

So joy is not determined by our personality. Problems don't dictate our joy. God has given every believer the opportunity and capacity for joy. But if this is true, where has our joy gone?

We lose our joy because of the circumstances of life.

Our joy is often lost because of the circumstances in our lives. Things happen and even though we think we have joy, we find ourselves losing it. Joy that is based on circumstances is an immature joy. It's an undeveloped or underdeveloped joy. When you get a raise, it's not hard to have joy. It's not hard to have joy when your marriage is going well. It's not hard when everyone treats you with respect. But mature joy stays strong when nothing is going right. That's what makes the story of Paul and Silas in Philippi so amazing. They're in prison. Every detail of their existence is being watched by guards, but what are these guards seeing in Paul and Silas? Joy.

God wants us to have so much joy in our hearts that it overflows to other people. God wants you to walk into your office or school with so much joy that it brightens the mundane. The reason you have joy isn't because everything is great for you when you walk into the office or school. Rather it's because the joy of God has been given to you through the work of Jesus Christ and you simply can't contain what you've been given. So like spaghetti sauce, when people get close to your joy, it gets on them as well. They're wondering, "Where did this joy come from? Why is it all over me?"

All too often our circumstances keep us from experiencing joy. One of the first deterrents to joy is our own sin. Sin robs us of our joy because it separates us from the source of joy. Our rebellion prevents us from receiving what God has for us. If you're playing with sin or if you're living in sin, you will not experience true joy. There may be a season of pleasure, but you will not have the joy God deeply desires you to have. Maybe today there needs to be some repenting of sin so joy can be restored in your life. God promises that if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). That is the beginning of joy. So what else prevents us from having joy?

Shame robs you of your joy in the past. You're enjoying life, but then the devil or someone says to you, "Remember when you made that dumb decision? Remember when you embarrassed yourself? Remember when you committed that act? Don't ever forget that. Live in the past, because you'll always be there." Shame tells you that you can't move on. You can't enjoy your past, because there are things you can't get beyond. The devil loves to bring up your past because it robs you of your joy.

What about the present? What robs you of joy in the present? Worry and anxiety. You're enjoying the present and things seem to be going well. You're excited about life and enjoying the good things God has graced you with. But then the "what if's" start to come. "I need to worry about this. I need to worry about that." Jesus told us in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), "Don't worry about that stuff," but we do anyway and it keeps us from enjoying the present.

Some of you were so anxious and worried about the Christmas season that you never got around to enjoying it. It's come and gone, so now you realize you missed out on the joy, because you were spending so much of your time worrying. All too often we miss out on God's good mercy that is new every morning (Lamentations 3:22-24).

Then there's the future. All too often fear of the future robs us of joy in the present. Fear tells us we can't dream or hope or plan, because we don't know what's going to happen. The anxiety we feel in the present starts leading us to trepidation about the future. Instead of looking forward to good things, what we see in the future fills us with dread. Fear paralyzes us and robs us of our joy.

All these things can keep us from joy, but there's one big thing these days that tops them all—comparison. With the advent of social media, you can think you have a wonderful family, until you see someone else's posts. "Wait a minute. Look at what they're doing. We enjoyed a movie at home, but they went out and had a big family activity." You're happy with your kid's report card, until you see someone who posts, "All my kids got straight A's. They're getting all kinds of awards." I'm not saying it's wrong to post those things, but we need to realize the damaging effects of comparison. We feel as though we're not living up to what others are doing and it makes us feel like a failure. We fail to realize that what we see on social media are only the good parts of others' lives. It's only part of the story. I haven't seen anyone on Facebook showing a heap of laundry and saying, "That's the third day it's been sitting there." I never see anyone post the hard conversation a parent had to have with their teenager. I don't ever find someone saying, "Hey, we got last place at the tournament." We don't show those things to the world.

Again, it's not bad to celebrate the good, but we need to realize that's only part of reality. It's like a young man or young lady looking at the flawless person on the cover of a magazine and thinking, "I can't be like that." The reason they can't is because a lot of what they see is manufactured. There's a lot in those pictures that aren't exactly real. It's not that everything is a lie, but we're only getting part of the story—just the good part.

Praise God for the good parts of our lives. But when we compare our real lives to those partially true pictures and stories, we are very likely to lose our joy. We need to be careful that the circumstances of life don't steal our joy. So what can we do? This is important—we have to choose joy. Throughout the Bible, you and I are told to be joyful. In fact, the command to rejoice is given over 30 times. Because of this command, our bitterness, anger, resentment, sorrow, worry, frustration and stress violate that command. I don't want to be heartless in this, but we need to understand that the God of the universe Who created us and loves us and Who has brought us into relationship with His Son is saying to us, "You need to live a life of joy." Why? Because He knows we have the capacity to do this and He knows if He doesn't tell us to do it, we would live in a perpetual absence of joy. Regardless of our circumstances or trials, we are commanded to be filled with joy. It doesn't matter what someone does to you, you have the choice to live with joy.

If you want to be obedient to God and His Word, you will choose joy. Can you say tomorrow, when the week begins, "I choose joy"? If you don't make that deliberate decision, then the circumstances of life will rob you of your joy each and every day.

There are many counterfeits that promise joy but leave us empty.

We must also realize that there are counterfeits which promise us joy, but in the end will leave us empty. We can say, "I choose joy, but now it's up to me to find it. Where shall I look for it?" The world advertises lots of options for finding joy. Let's consider some of these advertisements.

First, we're told finding joy can be done through process. We weren't filled with joy in 2019, but we're beginning a new year, so this is our opportunity to do those things we think will bring us joy. "I'm going to start that diet. I'm going to do that new regimen. I've come up with a plan to be more organized." We tell ourselves that will bring us joy. Then one day we're at the doctor's office or in the checkout line and we see that picture on [Men's Health](#). We see The Rock, Wayne Johnson. We tell ourselves, "He's figured it out. He's discovered processes that have made him someone who has joy. I want that kind of joy."

We are telling ourselves that joy comes from building huge biceps. We think that's the key to having inner calm. Well, of course Wayne Johnson is calm—he's worth \$280 million and he rules the world. He's found a way to "flat the belly fast." So he must have found joy. We look at this picture and think, "I want that." I looked at that magazine cover and the only thing I wanted was "The 12 best sandwiches for men." That's where joy is found.

In the process of life we try to figure out, "What did Wayne 'The Rock' Johnson do?" If that is the epitome of happiness, then I'll spend \$4.95 to discover in this magazine how I as a man can find health and vitality and joy.

Let's check out another counterfeit. What about possessions? Look at what they're advertising here. A BMW is a great car. Look how happy that guy is. He's looking good with the Fedora hat on. This picture is saying to us, "Joy is youthful. Joy is BMW." Then I don't know what the logo means, but it's got joy there. It says, "Joy seeks out the kid in all of us. There's fun to be had right around the corner, just over the next hill. Joy knows that after you experience it for the first time, there's no looking back. You're hooked for life. You may have realized a long time ago that how you make people feel is just as important as what you make. And at BMW, we make joy, joy, joy." So why are we driving Chevys? Pull out your phones and order a BMW. If I can have joy in a car, what in the world am I doing? And we buy into this, don't we? Cars are great—don't get me wrong. But if I have the right car, I will find joy?

Notice the next one advertisement: "Drink lemonade and you'll find joy." We just throw this word joy around as if drinking the contents of a glass bottle is going to bring us joy. Why? Because advertisers know we're longing for joy.

Go to the next one. Ah, ladies, you get into it too. How do you find joy? This ad wants you to be your happiest today. They've researched it. Just look on page 82—you can learn how the latest research can help you. Where is joy found? It's by making healthy recipes, by not being involved in on-line infidelity, nor by having snacks that curb your cravings so you don't ditch your diet.

I think you would agree that joy is found when you don't have migraines. That's good. Joy is when you don't have moles; let's deal with those. Joy is about good workouts. Joy is about having toned arms. We get a picture of a person, male or female, and we think, "They look happy." There's a reason why that lady isn't crying. If she's crying, you're not going to want to read that. So she's beautiful. She's in a place of great joy and we want to find out how to get there.

Maybe it's power. [Time-Life](#) did a cover story, "The State of the American Woman." A new poll shows why they are more powerful. Awesome. We should be very excited in the church when we see women using their gifts as image bearers of God to shape the church, the home and all of society. That's awesome and it's been amazing to see that happen in these recent generations. But notice what the text says. "Women thought, 'If we got power, we would be happy.' But a new poll shows that they are more powerful but less happy." Power does not bring joy.

All of these counterfeits are things the devil offers us as options to pursue instead of going to God. But when we go after these things, we never find joy. It's like drinking saltwater; the only thing it does is make us more thirsty.

Instead, we need to turn to God's Word. We're going to go on this journey together and I want you to see two truths from Philippians 1:1-2. We'll dig deeper into this text later, but today I want to set the stage for our journey.

Joy is compounded through Christian community.

We need to know that joy is compounded through Christian community. This letter wasn't written to one person. It was written to an entire church community. It's written to the saints and servants of Philippi. It was written to the leaders, the elders and deacons of the church. We'll see that it's also written to the congregants of the church.

Maybe you don't realize this, but this is one of the reasons why God wants you in church. Could it be that one of the reasons why Christians today are less joyful than ever, according to studies, is because we aren't attending church as we should? You might say, "Tim, that's an easy advertisement for you as a pastor." As we'll see, joy is enhanced through Christian community. When we gather together, we remind one another of the joy we have in the Lord. Maybe this morning you came here despondent and lacking in joy because of the circumstances of life. And yes, we have times like that. Then you walk into a room filled with people—here or maybe your small group—and you hear someone say, "The Lord met me this week. He made an inroad in a relationship I have." Their joy becomes contagious. In

your trials you may be wondering where God is, but then you hear through a song or a testimony or through the preaching that God is on the move. Knowing this, you can be filled again with joy. This place should raise up a heart of joy within you.

If we're not doing that, there can be two issues. Either we've created an unhealthy environment that is a counterfeit in itself, or else you're coming with the wrong expectations. You're focused on something other than the reality that God can meet you here. But by His grace and through His people, He will complete what is lacking in your joy.

Joy is made complete only through Jesus.

We read in Philippians 1:2, *"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."* In two verses, Jesus Christ is named three times. The only way we are going to find joy is in a relationship with Him.

Maybe today you've come here and this is all new to you. You're wondering, "Is this what I'm looking for?" The answer is a wholehearted, "Yes. Jesus is what you've been looking for. Jesus is the source of joy." In John 15:11, Jesus says, *"These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."* As you begin to develop your relationship with Jesus Christ, your joy will continue to grow. How? By His grace and His peace.

Grace tells us we can have joy, because God gives us good things even though we don't deserve them. Peace reminds us that we can experience joy because we have everything we need through a God Who supplies all our needs.

So if we have this relationship with Jesus, we don't need to worry. We don't need to be anxious for anything. We don't have to be paralyzed with fear. Instead, we now have the opportunity to be filled to overflowing with the joy of the Lord which will sustain us and which will allow us to be ambassadors of joy to all those we come in contact with. Because of Jesus, we can live in His abundance.

We've got a journey ahead of us. If you're like me, I fight at times for my joy. I need to give it over to Christ, resting in the joy that He alone can give.

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All Scriptures quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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