

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Galatians 5:22-23

Lesson 2

Joy

Paul And Silas Rejoice In Prison

Acts 16:16-40

Paul made “joy” the second fruit of the Holy Spirit. The word “joy” or its derivative appears more than 250 times in the Bible according to the NIV Exhaustive Concordance. Joy has overlapping uses in the English language and this tends to make it difficult to describe. As an example, one could say that playing an instrument, receiving a letter from a loved one, opening a present or seeing an old friend gives joy. While this is true, it is not the joy that Paul is encouraging us to have. It is easy to be joyful when good things are happening and everything seems to be going your way. However, it is the joy that shines through times of pain and disappointment that Paul is speaking of.

Introduction

Paul was on his second missionary journey when he saw a vision. The vision was of a man from Macedonia asking Paul and Silas to come help him. On their way, they entered the city of Philippi where they met a group of women who were praying. Among the group was a woman by the name of Lydia. Lydia accepted Jesus Christ as her savior. In this same city, there was a girl who was possessed by a demon. The men who owned this young girl used her abilities as a fortune-teller to make them wealthy. Telling fortunes was a common practice in the Roman culture. The Bible opposes practices such as these (Leviticus 19:26, 31; Deuteronomy 18:9-14). This is a story about a slave girl who followed Paul and Silas around saying, “These men are the servants of the Most

High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation”(Acts 16:17). While the message she proclaimed was the truth, Paul was troubled because good and evil do not mix. He did not want the Gospel to have any kind of a link to the demon world.

Progression of Events

Just because things are not going right and you may be discouraged or sad on the inside, does not mean that attitude should be reflected on the outside. While in prison, Paul wrote a letter to the church in Philippi. He urged them to be joyful. He said, “Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, rejoice” (Philippians 4:4).

- After Paul had a vision to help a man in Macedonia, he and Silas set out immediately for Philippi. Philippi was the chief city of that part of Macedonia and a Roman colony.
- Following behind them each day, was a slave girl that was possessed with a spirit of divination that brought her master great gain. A spirit of divination means she was possessed by a demon. In today’s society, “occultism” is just as popular as it was then. Why do you believe people then and now turn to witchcraft and sorcery? Could it be they are fearful and have a sense of hopelessness?

The slave girl spoke the truth when she said; “These men are the servants of

the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation” (Acts 16:17). Paul did not like this because he did not want the teachings of Jesus Christ to be confused with fortune telling.

- At last Paul became so annoyed, he commanded the evil spirit to come out of her. The evil spirit came out.
- When the masters of the girl saw this they were mad because their business was ruined. No longer could they make a profit from her fortune-telling skills. These men caught Paul and Silas and took them to the rulers of the city, saying: “These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe”(Acts 16:20, 21).
- A multitude of people rose up against Paul and Silas. The magistrates tore off their clothing and commanded them to be beaten. After the beating, they were put in prison. The jailer was told to keep them secure. Following orders, he thrust them into the inner prison and locked their feet in the stocks. Stocks were iron bolts attached to wooden posts. The bolts would attach around a prisoner’s hands and feet. Imagine what it must have been like for Paul and Silas. Their backs were bleeding and their hands and feet were clamped tightly into a wooden form. They were surrounded by darkness. It would appear they had every right to grumble and complain, but they did not. Instead they did what Paul wrote in Philippians 4:4, “Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say rejoice.”
- At midnight, Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns to God while the other prisoners listened. Suddenly there was a

great earthquake that opened all the doors of the prison cells and the chains around the prisoners were loosened.

Climax

- When the jailer awoke from his sleep and saw all the doors open, he drew his sword to kill himself. He assumed all the prisoners had fled. Jailers were put to death if their prisoners escaped. But Paul cried out with a loud voice, “Do yourself no harm, for we are all here” (Acts 16:28).
- The jailer called for a light, and ran into the cell trembling. He fell down before Paul and Silas and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30). It is obvious that the jailer had heard Paul and Silas rejoicing and now they had saved his life. How do you react when things are difficult and painful? Do you lash out in anger and say unkind words? _____

Instead, believe that Jesus Christ is there for you, and do as Paul said, “Rejoice in the Lord”.

- Paul and Silas answered the jailers’ question. They said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household” (Acts 16:31). In other words, the jailer and his entire family all had a choice to make. They could choose life or death. Romans 6:23 says, “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Everyone has the opportunity to make a choice. Living a life of sin will reap death. To receive the gift of eternal life, one must repent of his sins; profess a sincere faith in the message and sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

- The jailer took Paul and Silas out of the prison and washed their wounds. Afterwards, the jailer and his family were baptized. He then brought them to his house, feed them and rejoiced, believing in God with his entire household.
- When it was day, the magistrates sent the officers saying, “Let those men go.” When the jailer told Paul and Silas they were to depart and go in peace, Paul said, “They have beaten us openly, uncondemned Romans, and have thrown us into prison. And now do they put us out secretly? No indeed! Let them come themselves and get us out” (Acts 16:37).
- When the officers told the magistrates what Paul had said, they were fearful. To be a Roman citizen meant one had certain rights. If a citizen felt he had been unjustly imprisoned, as Paul and Silas had been, they had the right to appeal directly to Caesar. The magistrates worried that Paul would do just that. Paul’s ancestors received their Roman citizenship over half a century prior to this event. The magistrates decided it would be best for them to give Paul and Silas their freedom. After the magistrates personally led Paul and Silas out of prison, they went to Lydia’s house where they met with other Christians whom they encouraged and then departed.

Joy

Joy is second in Paul’s list of the Fruit of the Spirit. It is not easy in today’s culture to cultivate the kind of joy that Paul was speaking of. Our society believes that beautiful well-toned bodies, living in expensive homes and having lots of money to dress stylishly will bring true happiness. The joy Paul speaks of comes because you trust and believe in God’s never ending love and care. The world’s brand of happiness is all about possessions and feelings. While suffering in prison, Paul and Silas were able to rejoice because their joy came from the Holy Spirit. They knew God had a plan and they desired to serve Him. We do not always know or understand what God’s purpose is in allowing us to go through difficult times. When faced with a difficult situation, ask God in prayer to help you understand why and then look for the positive lessons you will learn. Paul believed that one must rejoice in the Lord even in hard times. He also believed that “in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28). It is having the attitude of joy that God can and will cause all things to work for good. This is the difference between God-given joy and human happiness.

Memory Verse

“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, rejoice” (Philippians 4:4).

Answer the following questions:

1. Why were Paul and Silas going to Macedonia?

2. Who was possessed by a demon?

3. When Paul commanded the demon to leave the girl, why were her masters upset?

4. Since the girl spoke the truth about what Paul and Silas were preaching, why didn't Paul like it?

5. What are stocks?

6. What did Paul and Silas begin doing at midnight in prison?

7. Why do you think Paul and Silas were inspired to sing hymns of praise?

8. Did the prisoners leave when the prison doors opened?

9. Why did the jailer draw his sword to kill himself?

10. Who stopped him?

11. What did the jailer ask Paul and Silas?

12. Who was baptized with the jailer?

13. How do you react when you are faced with difficult times in your life?

14. What is the second Fruit of the Spirit? (Give Definition)

15. Is joy the same as happiness? (Explain)

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Lesson 2 Map

The Life of Paul

