

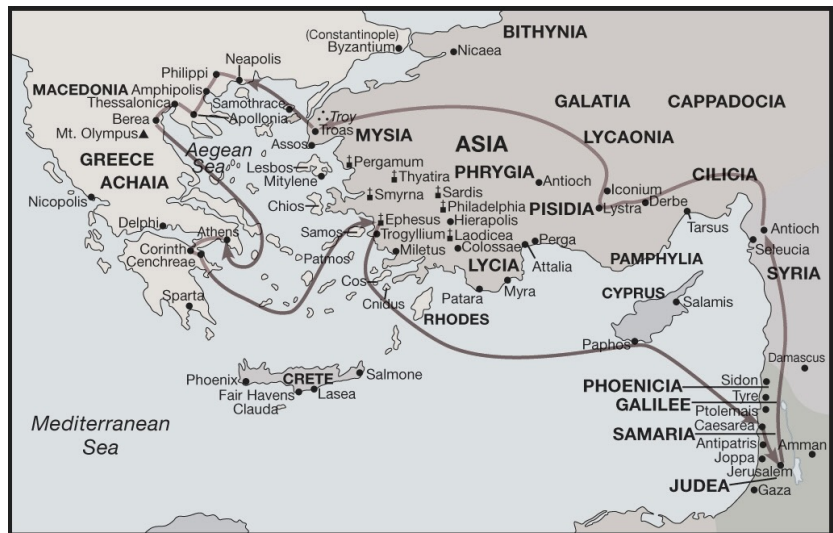
JOY IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING
Introduction to Philippians
Sermon Outline & Devotional Guide
May 3, 2026
Kelly Stanley

- + *Psalm 126:2, We were filled with laughter, and we sang for joy. And the other nations said, ‘What amazing things the Lord has done for them’ (NLT).*
- + *Proverbs 15:13, “A glad heart makes a happy face; a broken heart crushes the spirit” (NLT).*
- + *Proverbs 15:15, “For the despondent, every day brings trouble; for the happy heart, life is a continual feast” (NLT).*
- + *Proverbs 17:22, “A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit saps a person’s strength” (NLT).*
- + *Ecclesiastes 3:4, “A time to cry and a time to laugh. A time to grieve and a time to dance” (NLT).*

(Table From Charles R. Swindoll, Swindoll’s Living Insights New Testament Commentary, “Philippians,” p. 5).

- Jewish cultural law stated that in order to have a Jewish synagogue, a minimum of _____ adult Jewish males must be present.
- Acts tells that the church at Philippi was started by _____. We see this in Acts 16:13, 16.
- Paul established the church at Philippi on his _____ missionary journey around _____ AD. See map below.
- Paul wrote 4 epistles: Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians and Philemon. These are called the _____ Epistles. This church had been in existence for about _____ years before Paul wrote them.

SECTION	JOY IN LIVING	JOY IN SERVING	JOY IN SHARING	JOY IN RESTING
PASSAGE	1:1–30	2:1–30	3:1–21	4:1–23
THEMES	Joy in spite of unfulfilled desires	Right attitude	A warning A testimony	Unity Peace
	Joy in spite of circumstances	Right theology	A goal	Contentment
	Joy in spite of conflicts	Right models	A command	
KEY TERMS	Joy, to rejoice		To regard	
	Prayer/ supplication Day of Christ	Form To Make Empty	Righteousness Mutilation/ circumcision	To Worry Peace



Four Reasons Paul Wrote The Church At Philippi

1. To _____ them for their support in his ministry (Philippians 4:14-16).
 2. To _____ them about false teachings (Phil. 3:2, 17-19).
 3. To _____ them to stand firm and strive for their faith in Christ (Phil. 1:27-28).
 4. To encourage them to _____ in the Lord regardless of their suffering and circumstances (Phil. 4).
- Multiple times he uses the Greek New Testament verb [φρονέω; froneō] in connection to the word translated as joy. Which suggests that our opinions, thoughts, and even feelings are acts of the _____ and are thus able to be changed and conformed to the humble, self-sacrificial mind of Christ (2:5).
 - Philippians is not a theological treatise; it is a _____ letter from the Apostle Paul to encourage this church to live out their faith with Spirit-filled powerful joy in the midst of suffering and persecution.

- † 2 Corinthians 11:23-28, “I have worked harder, been put in prison more often, been whipped times without number, and faced death again and again. ²⁴Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me thirty-nine lashes. ²⁵Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea. ²⁶I have traveled on many long journeys. I have faced danger from rivers and from robbers. I have faced danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the seas. And I have faced danger from men who claim to be believers but are not. ²⁷I have worked hard and long, enduring many sleepless nights. I have been hungry and thirsty and have often gone without food. I have shivered in the cold, without enough clothing to keep me warm. ²⁸Then, besides all this, I have the daily burden of my concern for all the churches” (NLT).
- † Acts 16:17, “These men are servants of the Most High God, and they have come to tell you how to be saved” (NLT).
- These stocks mentioned in Acts 16 that Paul & Silas were put in were a form of torture. The Greek New Testament word is [ξύλον; xulon]. This refers to a long block of wood with numerous holes so that, depending on their height and build, their legs would stretched apart as far as possible – until their tendons and joints would be terribly stretched – and then their feet would be locked into position. On top of that, to lie down would bring even more excruciating pain from their lacerated backs and bloody wounds.
- † Acts 16:25-34, Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening. ²⁶Suddenly, there was a massive earthquake, and the prison was shaken to its foundations. All the doors immediately flew open, and the chains of every prisoner fell off! ²⁷The jailer woke up to see the prison doors wide open. He assumed the prisoners had escaped, so he drew his sword to kill himself. ²⁸But Paul shouted to him, “Stop! Don’t kill yourself! We are all here!” ²⁹The jailer called for lights and ran to the dungeon and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰Then he brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” ³¹They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, along with everyone in your household.” ³²And they shared the word of the Lord with him and with all who lived in his household. ³³Even at that hour of the night, the jailer cared for them and washed their wounds. Then he and everyone in his household were immediately baptized. ³⁴He brought them into his house and set a meal before them, and he and his entire household rejoiced because they all believed in God” (NLT).
- Imagine with me, sitting in that congregation is a fashionable businesswoman; a former demon possessed girl; and a blue collar Prison Warden along with his family and all their friends. These first three charter members represented three different nationalities; Asiatic, Greek and Roman; They were from three different levels of society; Lydia was wealthy; the girl had been a slave; the Jailor was a member of the middle class; they represented the top, the bottom and the middle of society. Do you really think this was a coincidence? This means that no one is too _____ or too low to be _____.

Next Steps Devotional Guide

1. When it comes to your joy, do you let circumstances impact your joy? Why or why not?
2. When Paul & Silas were thrown into prison for casting a demon out of a slave girl, they were beaten with wooden rods, thrown into prison and put into torturous stocks. Their reaction was to start singing hymns to God. When something bad happens to you or you get bad news, is your first response to break out praising God? Why or why not? If not, what does this tell you?
3. What bad situation in your life do you need to look at through the lens of spiritual joy and a good sense of humor?
4. How often do you play the “If only . . . “ game? — “If only I had . . . I would have joy.” What percentage of your life is characterized by joy? Do you have as the children’s song says, “I have the joy, joy, joy, joy, down in my heart. Where? Down in my heart. “I have the joy, joy, joy, joy, down in my heart. Where? Down in my heart.”
5. Philippians is only 4 chapters but it is packed. It is probably the most quoted book in the Bible. Here are the top 16 passages people quote and/or memorize: Phil. 1:3; Phil. 1:21; Phil. 1:23; Phil. 1:27; Phil. 2:2-4; Phil. 2:5-10; Phil. 2:12-13; Phil. 3:8-9; Phil. 3:13-14; Phil. 3:20; Phil. 4:4; Phil. 4:6-7; Phil. 4:8; Phil. 4:11; Phil. 4:13; and Phil. 4:19. Which of these bring the most joy and why?