

COUNT IT ALL JOY:
The Joy of Community
July 22, 2018
Philippians 1:1-11

Salutation

1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

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

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

Paul's Prayer for the Philippians

3 I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that on the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

3 I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you,

because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now.

Purpose (according to EUGENE Peterson's commentary)

Paul's primary purpose in writing this letter was to thank the Philippians for the gift they had sent him upon learning of his imprisonment (detention) at Rome. However, he makes use of this occasion to fulfill several other desires:

(1) to report on his own circumstances ([1:12-26](#); [4:10-19](#));

(2) to encourage the Philippians to stand firm in the face of persecution and rejoice regardless of circumstances ([1:27-30](#); [4:4](#));

(3) to exhort them to humility and unity ([2:1-11](#); [4:2-5](#));

(4) to commend Timothy and Epaphroditus to the Philippian church ([2:19-30](#)); and

(5) to warn the Philippians against the Judaizers (legalists) and antinomians (libertines) among them (ch. 3). **Definition of Antinomian by**

Merriam-Webster Definition of antinomian. 1 : one who holds that under the gospel dispensation of grace (see ¹grace 1a) the moral law is of no use or obligation because faith alone is necessary to salvation. 2 : one who rejects a socially established morality.

Paul expresses the Joy of community for the faithful! Let's look at **three phrases** he uses:

To all the saints

I remember you,

you hold me in your heart,

To all the saints

Paul's letter to the Philippians is addressed to "ALL THE SAINTS in Christ Jesus in Philippi!"

Paul uses the term Saints some 40 times in his New Testament letters. It is rarely used singularly as in "SAINT" ... instead to the 'SAINTS!'

Half of those times are used in ROMANS / 1 & 2 Corinthians:

Paul's favorite way of speaking of the community of faith and all the people is to use the word: "SAINTS."

Romans 1.7:

To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

1 Corinthians 1.2:

To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints,

2 Corinthians 1.1:

To the church of God that is in Corinth, including all the saints throughout Achaia:

Ephesians 1.1:

To the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus:

Philippians 1.1:

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

Colossians 1.2:

To the saints and faithful brothers and sisters* in Christ in Colossae:

Philemon 1.5:

because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith towards the Lord Jesus.

Philemon 1.7:

I have indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, my brother.

When you think of those you share faith life with and the community of joy ... think of one another as SAINTS ... so the Apostle Paul would call us! (ever thought ... I know 'so and so ... and she / he is no saint!) AND YET ... Paul would have us to remember that though you may not individually be a saint ... you are guilty of being ONE OF THE SAINTS...

You see ... Birds of a feather flock together ... and collectively we raise us all up ... individually we struggle / collectively we are lifted up!

I remember you.

From Eugene Peterson's THE MESSAGE:

2 *We greet you with the grace and peace that comes from God our Father and our Master, Jesus Christ.*

3 *Every time you cross my mind, I break out in exclamations of thanks to God.*

Our Sisters and brothers of the Jewish faith annually remember the saints of their lives with this:

IN THE RISING of the sun, and in its going down, we remember them.

From the moment I wake till I fall asleep, all that I do is remember them.

In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter, we remember them.

On the frigid days of winter and the moments I breathe the cold air, I warm myself with their embrace, and remember them.

In the opening of buds and in the rebirth of spring, we remember them.

As the days grow longer and the outside becomes warmer, I am more awake and I remember them.

In the blueness of the sky and in the warmth of summer, we remember them.

When I look above and see the images of the clouds and when I am comforted by the sun that shines down on me, I remember them.

In the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn, we remember them.

From the time in which I feel the cool, crisp breeze and see the colors of the leaves, I remember them.

In the beginning of the year and when it ends, we remember them.

On the day I make resolutions for myself and on the day I reflect upon how I've grown, I remember them.

When we are weary and in need of strength, we remember them.

As I am faced with challenges that enter my life, I remember all that they taught me, and remember them.

When we are lost and sick at heart, we remember them.

When I have gone astray and feel uncomfortable, I ask for help and remember them.

When we have joys we yearn to share, we remember them.

From those times of celebration, love, and happiness, I remember them.

So long as they live, we, too, shall live, for they are now a part of us, as we remember them.

On every day, and in every way, I know that they are with me and I remember them.

Song sung by Jerry Jacks:

We had joy, we had fun
We had seasons in the sun
But the stars we could reach
Were just starfish on the beach

We had joy, we had fun
We had seasons in the sun
But the wine and the song
Like the seasons have all gone

We had joy, we had fun
We had seasons in the sun

But the hills that we climbed
Were just seasons out of time
Writer/s: JACQUES BREL, ROD MCKUEN
Publisher: CARLIN AMERICA INC

Who do you remember when you think of powerful moments of fellowship and faith and shared life?
Childhood friends/ High School friends / Those who shared your military service / colleagues you stood next to / those present in the moments of birthing new life / who do you remember when you know that there are saints in this world ...

We remember them!

We remember them fondly and we join Paul with his words to the Philippians:

3 I thank my God every time I remember you, ⁴constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, ⁵because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now.

you hold me in your heart,

*⁷It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because **you hold me in your heart,** for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus.*

From Eugene Peterson's THE MESSAGE:

*⁷It's not at all fanciful for me to think this way about you. **My prayers and hopes have deep roots in reality. You have, after all, stuck with me all the way from the time I was thrown in jail, put on trial, and came out of it in one piece.***

We are all in this together! Yes we are ... For all the Saints who we remember and now ... it's our time to keep one another in our hearts!

The Apostle Paul knew that he was benefiting from the COMMUNITY OF JOY in Philippi!

Stephen Funderburk reflected on Community this way:

Here's a great way to illustrate community:

A story comes to us out of the long ago of a king who organized a great race within his kingdom. All the young men of the kingdom participated. A bag of gold was to be given to the winner, and the finish line was within the courtyard of the king's palace. The race was run, and the runners were surprised to find in the middle of the road leading to the king's palace a great pile of rocks and stones. But they managed to scramble over it or to run around it and eventually to come to the courtyard. Finally, all the runners had crossed the finish line except one. But still the king did not call the race off. After a while one lone runner came through the gate. He lifted a bleeding hand and said, "O King, I am sorry that I am so late. But you see, I found in the road a pile of rocks and stones, and it took me a while, and I wounded myself in removing them." Then he lifted the other hand, and in it was a bag. He said, "But, Great King, I found beneath the pile of rocks this bag of gold." The king said, "My son, you have won the race, for that one runs best who makes the way safer for those who follow."

Together and individually we make the way safer for those who follow ...

Life is better in the community of Joy!

3 I thank my God every time I remember you, ⁴constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, ⁵because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now.

To all the saints

I remember you,

you hold me in your heart,

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

The United Methodist Hymnal Number 089

Text: Henry Van Dyke

Music: Ludwig van Beethoven; Arr. by Edward Hodges

1. Joyful, joyful, we adore thee,
God of glory, Lord of love;
hearts unfold like flowers before thee,
opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;
drive the dark of doubt away.
Giver of immortal gladness,
fill us with the light of day!

2. All thy works with joy surround thee,
earth and heaven reflect thy rays,
stars and angels sing around thee,
center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
flowery meadow, flashing sea,
chanting bird and flowing fountain,
call us to rejoice in thee.

3. Thou art giving and forgiving,
ever blessing, ever blest,
well-spring of the joy of living,
ocean depth of happy rest!
Thou our Father, Christ our brother,
all who live in love are thine;
teach us how to love each other,
lift us to the joy divine.

4. Mortals, join the mighty chorus
which the morning stars began;
love divine is reigning o'er us,
binding all within its span.
Ever singing, march we onward,
victors in the midst of strife;
joyful music leads us sunward,
in the triumph song of life.