

**MESSAGE TITLE:** If you need joy, then look to Jesus.

**SCRIPTURE:** Philippians 3:1

### **KEY TRUTH**

During Advent we celebrate the coming of Jesus. This lesson reminds us that Jesus came to bring us unending joy.

### **GETTING STARTED**

Paul plainly called on believers to rejoice in the Lord. He said he would never tire of entreating believers to do this. The word 'rejoice' appears several times in this letter. It seems from this repeated emphasis that the Philippian believers needed this word. Most of God's people need this challenge often. It is easy for believers to let circumstances discourage them. The cure for discouragement is to rivet one's attention on the Lord and to rejoice in Him. It is significant too that a Roman prisoner would encourage people who were free to be joyful in their Savior. It seems that it should be the other way around. Paul learned what every child of God needs to learn – there can be rejoicing in the Lord even when outward circumstances are contrary to a spirit of rejoicing.

### **OBSERVATION**

This is not the only time the Bible commands believers to rejoice in the Lord. Check out these other passages in Psalms that stress the importance of rejoicing in the Lord:

*Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!*

*Psalm 32:11*

*Let the righteous one rejoice in the Lord and take refuge in him! Let all the upright in heart exult!*

*Psalm 64:10*

*Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name!*

*Psalm 97:12*

### **APPLICATION**

*Paul wrote to the believers in Philippi while in a Roman prison. He wanted to visit Philippi but his imprisonment kept him from encouraging his brothers and sisters in person. Yet, he insisted that the Philippian believers rejoice in the Lord. What circumstances keep you from doing what you want to do? How have you responded to these roadblocks? Decide to rejoice in the Lord anyway!*

*How have you tried lately to find your joy in people and things other than Christ? How have those pursuits left you feeling empty? Ask God to help you set your mind on Jesus and not on the things of this world (Colossians 3:1-3). Find your joy in Him.*

## **PRAYER**

*Teach me to rejoice in You Dear Lord. May I never weary of finding joy in You alone. Please forgive me for trying to find lasting joy and peace in anything but You. Don't let me settle for digging for joy in empty places like my identity, my achievements, my money, my reputation or my possessions. Draw my attention to You. May I see You as all glorious and worthy of my worship and praise.*

## **SHARE POINT**

Read and review the application questions. Share with someone in your life how God's Word is changing you into a growing disciple. Encourage that person to do the same. That person could be a family member, a friend, a co-worker or a neighbor.

## **COMMENTARY NOTES**

Paul begins this section of his letter by calling the Philippians to rejoice in the Lord. He then goes on to warn them about the Judaizing opponents of the gospel. In contrast, Paul has renounced his spiritual and ethnic privileges for the sake of knowing Christ; his righteousness comes through Jesus, not the law. He then calls the Philippians to follow his example of commitment to Jesus as Lord.

## **SOURCES CONSULTED**

ESV Study Bible

The Bible Knowledge Commentary on the New Testament