



SPRING 2020 DEVOTIONAL

WEEK 3: June 1st – 5th



**Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church
Dr. D.Z. Cofield, Senior Pastor
Mark Slone, Devotional Editor**



Monday, June 1, 2020

“The Joy of a Godly Perspective”

By all this we are encouraged. In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was, because his spirit has been refreshed by all of you.

2 Corinthians 7:13 (NIV)

Martin Luther King didn't set out to become an iconic civil and human rights leader. Born and raised in the segregation era of the south, King witnessed the inhumane treatment of African-Americans through out his early life. As a young child, King recalled his anger at the injustices that Blacks were exposed to. However, as he completed seminary, King experienced a change of heart. Instead of allowing the Jim Crow South to cause him to be angry, King, began to see this environment as an opportunity, for God to be glorified. His thoughts of burning outrage, were changed into thoughts of fresh optimism and positivity. The dormant mental and emotional seeds of festering aggravation in King's heart, had been replaced with a flourishing garden of hope and love toward others. The turning point for King was his change of perspective, about the power of the gospel, when it is practiced in our daily lives.

The apostle Paul had sent a letter to the church at Corinth. In his first letter, Paul had to give some very tough but loving words of discipline to the members of the church there. Shortly after his letter, Paul then sends his assistant, Titus, to Corinth. Titus went going to Corinth to collect

funds from the church for the poor in the Jerusalem church, (see 2 Corinthians 7:6-7). Titus must have been aware of Paul's earlier letter of discipline to the Corinthians. However, when Titus arrives in Corinth, he is not only greeted, but he is welcomed with love and served with respect. When Paul is told about the actions of the Corinthians toward Titus, his heart was encouraged, and his attitude of joy, was based on the response of the Corinthians to the word of God. In other words, Paul found joy in how and why the Corinthians served Titus. Their attitude and service toward Titus was a powerful testimony and example for others about the joy of having a godly perspective.

Are times tough in your life right now? Have you reached the place of frustration where every little thing angers you? Does it appear as if you're not getting anywhere in life? Do you feel as if you're not making the progress that you think you should be making?

Like the Corinthians you may not be in the ideal circumstances. You may be dealing with some very tough times in your life right now. When these situations arise, it's in these moments that our true joy starts with keeping our mind focused on God's word (see Isaiah 26:3). Our joy-filled godly perspective starts with our joy-filled godly insight. Remember your attitude determines your altitude. No matter what is going on around you, it should never overshadow Who is in you. The Holy Spirit of God resides in you! Your godly perspective is the thermostat that sets the temperature in your life, home, workplace, and relationship with others. Be on the look-out for opportunities to serve someone in a godly way. Look at every relationship in your life as an opportunity to share God's word through serving

others. Your joy, should in-turn encourage and motivate others. By watching your actions, people should see and know, they too can have this same type of joy. You can bring joy to someone, simply by how you treat them today. Make an effort to allow others to see joy-filled evidence of the power of God's word, in how you treat and help others today. Let God use you today, so that through your actions, you can be a source of happiness for the people in your life.

"What you see depends not only what you look at, but also on where you look from." James Deacon

Your attitude determines your altitude.

– Min. Chris Johnson

Tuesday, June 2, 2020

"The Joy of Unity"

Make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.

Philippians 2:2 (NASB)

There is a story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody.

There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done

it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

This poem captures the challenge of people working together. Few people understand this better than coaches and band conductors. Their success or effectiveness is intimately tied to finding a way to get a group of individuals to operate as a unit. Getting people to function as one is harder than it appears.

Self-centered living vs. God-centered living comes from how we think. If I live like life revolves around me, it's the result of how I think. Thinking always determines beliefs and beliefs always determine behavior. Which is why living a God-centered life is so elusive, even in the Church. Many fail to realize that this life is not about their happiness, pleasure or popularity, but God's glory.

This is why the Apostle Paul makes this appeal in his letter to the Philippians saying, "*Make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose*" (Philippians 2:2, NASB).

Unified thinking inspires unified living and unified living gets the world's attention. This is what we see in the early Church, as is noted in Acts 4:32 (NIV), "*All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had.*"

There is a power that comes from unity that enables those unified to accomplish actions far greater as a unit than the individuals could accomplish on their own. We see this at the Tower of Babel when, *“The Lord said, ‘If they have begun to do this as one people all having the same language, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them,’”* Genesis 11:6 (HCSB).

This is why coaches and band conductors strive to help the teams or musicians reach this point. Because the achievements of the group can far eclipse the achievements of an individual. So why did Paul find such joy in the unity and harmony of the Philippian Church? It spoke to those around them that God was among them. That God-centered thinking was driving their day to day living rather than self-centered thinking.

In Romans, Paul put it this way, *“Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires,”* (8:5 NIV). The Spirit ALWAYS desires the will of God be done in our life as individuals and as a faith community. When the will of God is done in our life, it reveals the presence of God in our midst. When the presence of God is seen in our midst, it attracts people to God much like the burning bush attracted Moses to God in the desert. This is the “one purpose” Paul finds joy in this Church fellowship more than any other. They were intent on making Christ known in how they lived. Is this true for you? Are you part of a local body of believers “intent on one purpose?”

“How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!” Psalms 133:1 NIV

**Are you striving to live in unity and joy
with other Believers?**

– Min. Dana Thomas

Wednesday, June 3, 2020

“Where to Find Lasting Joy”

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Galatians 5:22-23 (NASB)

We have all experienced a moment of joy when we obtain something new. A new car with all the latest upgrades. Most engaged folks experience joy on their wedding day. Purchasing your first home can bring you joy. Parents experience joy at the birth of a child. Graduates experience joy when they walk across the stage to receive their hard-earned diploma. With the enormous expansion of new technology, mass production companies are creating new products that have allowed us to live joyful lives. Verizon Wireless and T-Mobile are producing new cell phone devices that have changed how we communicate. Fiber optics cable enables us to download or upload massive amounts of data over the internet within seconds. Cars

companies are competing for being recognized as the first to produce an efficient self-driving car. As a result of these products, people experience joy in using a new cell phone, surfing the internet, or maybe pleasure in traveling in a self-driven vehicle, as long as it does not malfunction. Do you seek to find joy in people, places, and material things? The truth is, the joy you experience in these avenues are short-lived. It just does not last. Why? Because new products of today always become a thing of the past tomorrow. People will disappoint you. Things get old. The temporal joy associated with these things is just a vapor; here for a moment and gone the next. So, where do you find lasting joy?

In Galatians 5:22-23, the Apostle Paul declares that real joy is produced by love. Paul then presents a list of attributes that results from walking in love. In New Testament genre or writing, lists have significant meaning. Lists are essential in that, whatever is first on the list either gives birth to the items that follow or the things that follow comes underneath the umbrella of what is listed first. In Galatians, Paul is essentially saying that the Fruit of the Spirit is love and love produces joy. But is joy? Joy is a satisfying internal and calm disposition of the soul. The word “joy” in Galatians 5:22, is defined as a deep-seated gladness that is not contingent upon the mundane problems of life.¹ In other words, to have joy is to be delighted with God, at peace with self, to be delighted with others, and to have deep-seated gladness even in the most unfavorable circumstances, situations, and events. When you have joy, it compels you to be grateful about God’s grace, to be thankful

¹ Constable, Tom. *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible*. Galaxie Software, 2003.

for His forgiveness, to be grateful for your Savior Jesus Christ, and excited about being a recipient of everlasting life in the kingdom of heaven.

The Result of walking in Love? Those who are alive in Christ and exhibit the Fruit of the Spirit are not subject to the law. What law? The command to love God and others.

So here is the question, are you experiencing joy in your life right now, or is your heart weighing heavy on you? It may be that you are looking for joy in the wrong place. The Fruit of the Spirit is Love, and love produces joy. Then, take it to God in prayer. Confess, repent, and commit to walk in love. Then you will experience joy; overflowing, pressed down, and shaken together.

“Love is appreciating to such a degree that you fell overwhelmed with Joy” – Anonymous

To find joy, love the way God loves.

– Min. Darrell Rose

Thursday, June 4, 2020

“Joyful Intercession”

Always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all.
Philippians 2:4 (NASB)

In July, America celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 mission and the first human beings to walk on the moon. The whole world was praying for the mission and the lives of the three astronauts and the whole world rejoiced at the words of Astronaut Neil Armstrong: "Houston, Tranquility Base here. The Eagle has landed." President Nixon called soon after and said: "For one priceless moment in the whole history of man, all the people on this earth are truly one." What a wonderful moment in the history of mankind when three men had practically the whole world interceding on their behalf and rejoiced in their success. How wonderful would it be if the church operated in that unity in support and interceding in prayer for one another?

At the writing of his letter to the Philippians, we find Paul, a prisoner of the Roman government, facing execution in the near future. Yet, he is reflecting on some very warm and positive memories as he starts off expressing thankfulness to God for the saints in Philippi. He is excited and has great joy in praying for them all every time. He prays because of their continued support for him on the Gospel journey, since the beginning when he met them until the time of his letter. These are folks who have had his back from the start of his journey. No matter what, they had faith in him and displayed that both financially and with fellowship. His joy for them is evident up front including what he is so excited about concerning them in his prayers. His prayers were that the love they showed and possess would increase even more with all knowledge and discernment.

How about your own prayer life? Does it mirror the great example Paul gives us of a life of intercessory prayer? The Bible tells us in 1 Thessalonians 5:18 that we must pray all

the time. In James 5:16, it tells us to pray for one another. In Ephesians 6:18, it tells us to intercede for all saints. Therefore, not only are we to pray always, but we're also commanded to be sure to lift up others in prayer as well. The Bible provides for us many examples of godly folk serving as mediators such as David, Daniel, and including the Lord Jesus Himself.

Paul had great joy in his prayers for the Philippians for a specific reason he mentions in his letter. However, our joy in praying for others doesn't necessarily have to be based on a specific reason such as blessing those who have blessed you. Our joy can be based on knowing the Almighty God has power to move on behalf of those we love and lift before Him. Because they share time on the battlefield with us, and are partakers of the same grace, let us intercede for each other with fervor and joy knowing that the same God working in our lives will be working on their behalf as well.

Let us pray for others as we keep in mind that things are as well as they are in your own lives because somewhere, others have prayed for you.

You are never more like Jesus than when you pray for others. - Max Lucado

- Min. Aaron Simpson

Friday, June 5, 2020

“The Joy of Honoring Faithful Servants”

Welcome him in the Lord with great JOY, and honor men like him.

Philippians 2:29 (BSB)

A few years ago, researchers asked two thousand eighth graders to name prominent people they admired and wanted to be like. After the results were published, a columnist for the Chicago Daily News, Sidney Harris, lamented the fact that every one of the 30 prominent personalities named was either an entertainer or an athlete. Unlike earlier years, statesmen, authors, painters, musicians, architects, doctors, and other such leaders no longer captured the imagination of young people. Harris concluded: “the heroes and heroines created by our society are people who have made it big, not necessarily people who have done big things.” Such is not the case in our Scripture. We learn of a man who proves to us that the joyful life is the life of sacrifice and service and we are encouraged to hold in honor such people to the glory of God.

In Philippians 2, we learn of a man named Epaphroditus who is commended by the Apostle Paul because he was prepared to risk his life in order to serve God. Paul proposed that Epaphroditus was to be honored and esteemed by the Philippian church for his serving, suffering and working himself near death, for the cause of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Epaphroditus was a blessing to Paul and did not allow his own sickness to hinder his service. Paul admonished the Philippians to welcome Epaphroditus with

open arms and honor this dear man of God. For he was chosen by them to take their gifts to Paul, when he was in need. He became their servant to advance the cause of Christ. Paul admonishes the church to honor him because of his sacrifice and service. He served above and beyond the call of duty, sacrificing himself with no thought of reward, making him worthy of honor and imitation. Paul wanted the Philippians to know how highly he regarded Epaphroditus, so he characterized him as a “brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier,” (2:25). In our day, many Christians risk their livelihood, reputations, their very lives for Jesus. Each missionary assumes great risks to advance the cause of Christ. Each pastor is risking far more than people might imagine in order to stand true to the charge. Paul compels us to remember servant-hearted men like Epaphroditus should be celebrated with joy and held with great esteem.

As we look at the example of Epaphroditus, he is a believer who was humble, genuine and a servant of God, who left to personally care for Paul, to deliver money to him, and bring encouragement. Are there people in your life, in your church who exemplify this type of faith? Take time to prayerfully examine the church community God has put you in. Consider ways you can humbly serve others by word and deed, seeking to align the interests of Jesus with a genuine care for your community.

All who serve God with humility and sacrifice should be honored by their fellow Christian brothers and sisters. Such workers are of importance to those serving on the front lines of ministry. We should honor them for their work.

All who serve God with humility and sacrifice should be honored by their fellow Christian Brothers and Sisters. Such workers are of importance to those serving on the front lines of ministry. We should honor them for their work.

**“A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself.” – Joseph Campbell
(Author and Teacher)**

– Sis. Deshuandra Walkler