



Sermon Growth Guide

November 22, 2020

Give Thanks – With Joy

Philippians 4:4-13

Key Verse: Philippians 4:4

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”

Big Idea: Rejoice in the Lord always!

Foundations

In our fourth and final week in the book of Philippians, we learn to give thanks with joy in every season of life. Recall that the main crux of this series has been this: God’s gifts are grounds for gratitude. Philippians teaches us to give thanks in all circumstances and to find our joy in the Lord.

“It’s something to realize that ‘rejoice’ is not a suggestion,” writes Pastor Tim, “but a command.” The people of God are called, commanded, to rejoice. Rejoice in the now of your life. Rejoice on the mountain top. Rejoice in the valley. Rejoice in an afternoon nap with the sun warming your skin as well as in the moments of your life when it feels as though your very life has been taken from you. Rejoice always. How?

One of our values is “Live for God—worship trains our hearts to beat for God.” Sunday worship is a training ground for our souls. There is simply no way to “rejoice always” outside of a faithful commitment to God and His people where we are built up together by the Lord, empowered by the Spirit to begin to rejoice in all circumstances.

Gathered together with your circle, in-person or online, open your time of study in prayer. Ask the Spirit to guide and guard your thinking and growing.

Understanding God’s Word

Take time combing through verses 4–9. Name the imperatives that Paul issues to God’s people. What stands out to you as most important here?

Looking at verse 8, identify examples of things that are “true,” “noble,” “admirable,” “excellent,” and “praiseworthy.” Host a conversation on how natural it is for conversations you find yourself in to stay within these Kingdom parameters.

Often misunderstood and misapplied, within its context verse 13 is clearly strengthening Paul’s argument in verses 10–12. Looking especially at verses 11 and 12, what is the believer able to do in verse 13 by God’s strength?

Applying God’s Word

How can you “put into practice” (Philippians 4:9) the command to rejoice always? How can your Life Group help you to this end?

Witnessing God’s Word

As you build your “rejoice always” muscles, think of one person or one group of people that you interact with that are not yet desiring to follow the Lord in all things. Pray that the Spirit gives you His strength to visibly “rejoice always” so that the watching world will have the opportunity to see Jesus through the way you respond in all circumstances.

An Interview with Jim DeJarnette

Tim: Today's a little different. Our message time is a little different. I'm seated here with Jim DeJarnette. Jim is our Minister of Music and has been serving with us for quite some time. And we've got some big news that we're going to talk about and share as we continue in our series, Give Thanks. And today we're talking about Give Thanks With Joy. Well, Jim, you've been at work here in the Lord for many, many years. We have shared the news with the whole church this week—some emails have gone out, some videos have gone out, lots of posts and news—but for the benefit of those who may not have heard, could you share with us what's going on in your life and ministry?

Jim: Absolutely. Well, for all of us that are gathered in the room and for those that are online as well, just want to say my goodness, you are all cherished and loved deeply. You have no idea how much my beloved bride, Barbara Jean "Jellybean" and I love you all very, very much. And we have sensed that the Lord is leading us to retire in August of 2021. And so, we're moving in that direction. And Barbara and I have been in prayer about this for really a couple of years now, because we knew that eventually that time must come and it comes for all manner of people, including Scriptural characters, like Methuselah and so on. It's kind of inescapable. We knew the moment would come and we wanted to prepare our hearts and try to seek the Lord's leading as best as we possibly could.

Tim: That's a big moment, one that I know you and Barb came to through a lot of prayer and discernment. While we are sad, we also celebrate

with you a life of service to the Lord in the most profound and beautiful ways. It naturally makes us think of how this all began. Could you share a little of what brought you to First Pres and what you hoped to accomplish when you came?

Jim: I hope that my story could perhaps be a great encouragement for any of your stories, and I could say very truly that I have learned so very, very much from our church over these many years, in terms of understanding how God works in our lives. So, way back in 1982, when I was 28 years old, I was overseas, and I was pursuing an entirely different kind of life. I was in pursuit of an opera career in theater and so on. And literally the Lord simply moved into the midst of that experience. And He said, I want your life to follow My plan for you. So, He simply picked me up out of that circumstance and plunked me right down in the middle of First Pres in an astonishing, really short period of time. And the joy that I have in that is that I came to understand that my plans were different from the Lord's plans and His plans are the best plans.

When I first came here, what I hoped to do was to be adequate. First Pres was such an exciting place to come. Can you imagine for a young guy, how exciting it would be to come to a place like this? So, I hoped to be adequate to the ministry and to Big Blue. And what I really desired was right in line with what we're trying to accomplish these days as passionately as ever. And that was to speak into the lives of young people and to try and build up opportunities in ministry for the young folks that were gathered at that time.

Tim: Amen. Most of you would know Jim over in the Sanctuary area of our church, but what you might not know is how much Jim and his heart for reaching the next generation—reaching out in the best ways that we can—was energy and impetus behind worshiping in the way that we do in the Worship Center and even setting everything up here and that kind of a push forward



into the next era. And Jim, you're just a cheerleader for worshiping the Lord in all the best ways. And I'm glad that it's not this week (you're retiring), because I don't know what I'd do, but we have a good long time to celebrate with you. And when we come to August 2021, we're going to have a lot to celebrate. And at that time, we're going to be celebrating 39 years of faithful, energetic, just life-giving ministry from this man, Jim DeJarnette.

And our passage is about giving thanks with joy. And I thought the best way for us to receive that passage today is to sit with you and talk about that. So, the real key verse for us, the key passage comes to us from verse 4, as Philippians continues to teach us that the gifts of God are grounds for gratitude and that we give thanks to God in all circumstances, in all circumstances. And we find our joy in the Lord in doing that. We want to pick up at verse 4: "Rejoice in the Lord always. I'll say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, the peace of God" that can kind of bind us together even when we're at home and worshiping at home, the peace of God will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Well, Jim, this was so fitting to do this just because when I read this passage, I see you. You're a man who rejoices in season and out of season. We've been in ministry for four-and-a-half years together—seems very short—but it's a wonderful time. And we've been through highs and lows. Both of us, we've been through easy times, hard times. And in every occasion, I've seen you living into this command to rejoice, because Jim you're one of the most joy filled, joyful and joy grounded (people). You guys that know Jim, you know what I'm talking about, a joy-grounded man of God. "Let your gentleness be evident to all." People

know your gentleness. The Lord is near; Jim lives in that presence. Jesus is right here. He's never far from us, and you're a man of prayer. You're a man of the peace of God. All of these things come through when spending time with you, and don't blush because we've all seen it. Haven't we? And we all celebrate the grace of God in your life. And so I just thought we could just talk about this passage together. When you think about this passage, rejoice in the Lord, set your prayers to the Lord, how do you understand this, Jim?

Jim: Well, firstly, Tim, thank you for such kind words. It's humbling to hear you say such things and it means so much. Thank you. I think that you could, in some ways, summarize this great passage out of Philippians by just looking at Nehemiah 8, the joy of the Lord is our strength. The joy of the Lord is our strength. When Paul wrote the book of Philippians, he was in prison, he was going through extraordinarily difficult times. How could he say something like rejoice in the Lord? Again? I say it rejoice in the Lord. How could that be possible? And you know, I'm, I'm certain in our gathering right here in the worship center and for all who are online, we know that there are so many who are struggling with all manner of things right now. And how can you possibly say rejoice in the Lord?

Again, I say it, rejoice. I think that it calls us to understand that the joy that is being spoken of here is a deep, deep joy. It's not something that is just kind of an off-the-cuff statement. Like, it'll be all right. It'll just be OK. You'll get along. No, it's not like that at all. This is joy that comes from the nearness of Jesus, joy that comes from confidence in knowing that our Lord takes upon Himself, all of the struggles of our life. It is a deep, deep joy. It is the exact opposite of something that's shallow. The Lord takes the hard things that we go through upon Himself. He even takes these things to the cross. It is something that we can depend upon, not because the joy has its source



within us or that somehow we've got to figure out how to rise it up within us, raise it up, know it exists within Him. And we follow Him. It's His nearness that makes all the difference in the world. Things change in our lives, but with Jesus, He is always dependable, always able, always faithful, always present. And in Him, there is joy. And so, we can say rejoice.

Tim: Amen. Amen. And I know for you that joy foundation grew kind of in three kind of incremental steps in your life. Can you just share a little bit of that?

Jim: Absolutely. You know, we all have our own story and I hope that my story can encourage yours to a certain extent. And it's good to hear one another's stories of how we came to the Lord, isn't it? Amen. Well, so I'm every Sunday school teacher's dream. So when I was just a little kid, a little kid in the early grade school years, I went to a Sunday school class and there was a teacher in that class who asked a question. And as just a little guy, I shot my hand up in the air, my little stubby hand, because I was just filled with sparkle because I knew somehow I could answer that question. Now, I don't even remember what the question was, but somehow I knew I could. I was filled with a sparkle about it at the end of that class, when everybody had walked out the door, the teacher came over to me and she got down on her knees in front of me and she put her loving hands on my little shoulders and she encouraged me. And I know at that moment the Spirit was at work. I don't know what her words of encouragement even were. I don't even remember her name, but I know that the Spirit was at work in that moment. And that, for me, was the beginning.

And then years later in high school in an altar call, I came forward and gave my life to Jesus. And as the years went on, I didn't benefit from having any mentors. Oh, my goodness, I wish that I had. And for all of you who are here

today and online, one of the greatest encouragements I would try and give you is please mentor young people and come alongside them. They need you. They need you. Eventually I was to meet my beloved and we were to get married. And she was the one who really brought me up in the Lord. She was the one because when Barb came to Jesus, she was hard-wired for the faith. And she just immersed herself in the word. And as she grew, she grew me. And so, I credit my beloved with really discipling me and growing me up in the Lord.

Tim: We see that this Sunday school teacher who the Lord used to plant that seed of His gospel in your heart, and we give thanks for her. We give thanks for the boldness of a preacher that called the question to where are you with Jesus and for Barb. We give thanks for faithful husband's wives that lead us and stick with us when we need that encouragement.

Well, Paul said rejoice again. I say it again, rejoice. And he's writing from prison, as Jim said. And I almost think it's like maybe he has to repeat himself because the people around them wonder, did I hear you rejoice? Sorry. You know, Paul, I'll rejoice later, right? I mean, when things start to turn a little bit better, I'll rejoice, but I'll rejoice in 2021. But right now, you know, it just wouldn't be genuine. It wouldn't be authentic now, but Paul says, no, no, no, rejoice. And it's not a suggestion. It's a command. It says, give thanks in all circumstances, God's gifts are here and God's gifts are always grounds for gratitude. How are you going to break through to that? So, Jim, I think about that as a command. And I wonder, how have you lived that out to rejoice in the Lord?

Jim: It is a command and it's a beautiful command. And the way that I like to think of it is that it's a command coupled with a hug, a command in a hug, because that command is based upon a Lord who loves us so much. He's commanding us to do something



because He knows what's best for us. And His love is so great for us, if we will just run toward Him within that command, we'll find that His embracing arms just surround us, and we can depend on Him. I want to tell you a little story about my own life and my wife, Barbara Jean's, because our story is not fully an easy one. And we know what it is to have to grow into an understanding of what rejoicing means. Twenty-seven years ago, Barb encountered a life-threatening situation, a surgery that went terribly, terribly wrong. And, and so it very nearly took her life and we lived in Penrose Hospital for weeks. I can remember so well doing rehearsals here at the church and then late at night, I would go over to spend the night in Barb's hospital room. And that's how we spent those days. It was a hard, hard time. And Barb and I are kind of fond of saying all these 27 years later, we're so grateful to be where we are. We just didn't want to get here this way. We had to lean heavily into our Lord and our Savior. We had to lean into the faithfulness of our Lord. There was no way that we could somehow accelerate her healing. We couldn't accelerate getting out of this very difficult circumstance. It would change our entire lives, in fact, but here's the incredible thing after all these years: Barbara and I can actually say we're grateful. We're grateful for the lives that the Lord gave us. We didn't choose for it to go this way,

but He drew us so close to Himself.

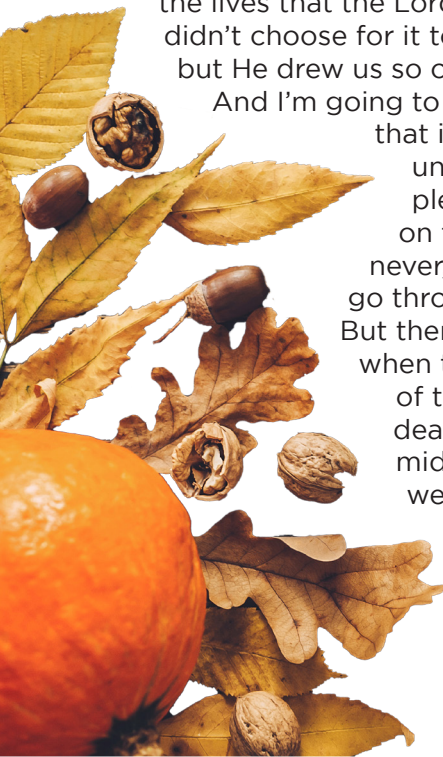
And I'm going to say something that is pretty hard to understand, but please hear me on this. We would never, ever want to go through that again. But there are times when the nearness of the Lord was so dear to us in the midst of it all that we would almost revisit it.

Rejoice in the Lord always.

He is our strength and our song. It is His joy in which we find our strength. And so we find that when we get close to Him, He gets close to us and we can rejoice.

Tim: Amen. Thank you. And I know the activity of weekly worship sustained you in some ways. I think about this as a command: rejoice. Listen, to rejoice when things are hard is hard. It's easy to rejoice when things are easy, but to rejoice when things are hard—is hard. So I think, how am I going to grow in my strength in this? I'm going to need training. I'm going to need help. And worship is a training ground. We worship to give God the glory that He's due and God meets us in that time of worship. And He trains our souls. In fact, what I think about when I'm thinking about this command to rejoice, is we came out with the First Pres Way—7 Values in Our Pursuit of Jesus. And the first one is this: Live for God. And then the little subtext here is "Worship trains our hearts to beat for God." Now, Jim, you and I devote our lives to leading people in worship. How do you understand this idea that worship trains our hearts?

Jim: It is probably dearer to my heart than anything. I think to try and summarize something as succinctly as is possible, I can draw upon one, the great hymns of the faith, Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing. Remember the words, "Come thou fount of every blessing, Tune our hearts to sing Thy praise; Streams of mercy, never ending, call for songs of endless praise." But let's think about those first lines. And Tim, let me just trade out the word, "tune" our hearts for "train" our hearts. Come thou fount of every blessing, train our hearts to sing thy praise. Now we know that when it comes to following our Lord and to worshiping Him, we continually think about relationship. We want the joy of relationship with our Lord. We want to be in intimate relationship with Him and our hearts require continual tuning—tuning so that they're open to Him, open to His presence and His



worthiness. That is what we're doing when we worship; we're training ourselves week by week by week. In the musical world, we would call it rehearsing. We're rehearsing ourselves to be able to do the most important things well. There's nothing more important than being in relationship with the Lord and to worshipping him well. And so like anything else relationally, if you love somebody, you love a spouse, you love a friend, you love kids, your kids, your grandkids, you want those relationships, you yearn for those relationships. And so you draw near to them. That's what we're doing in worship. We're drawing near to the Lord in relationship with Him. We don't want it to grow dry. We want it to be rich and renewed and retrained and rehearsed. We want worship to tune our hearts, train our hearts for relationship with the Lord.

Tim: Amen. That's one of the things I love about leading worship with you is that sense of this is really about getting close to Jesus and celebrating that relationship that we're together. And it's not simply a kind of reverent act of giving the Lord His due, and it's not simply a sort of training like yoga for the soul or something. It's this real celebration of being with Jesus. And to rejoice as a command. Worship trains our hearts in so many different ways. It trains us to value what's worthy of value, to adore the Lord over and above all other lesser pursuits. It trains us to sink, trains us to find that willingness to sort of surrender ourselves into a song. It trains us to pray. As we hear prayers said, it teaches us to pray. It trains us to participate in the Kingdom of God as we give our gifts. And we pray that the Lord would use something from us to build His Kingdom in eternal and profound ways. And it trains us to rejoice in season and out of season. I really believe it does, because we come to church whether we're feeling great about it or not. We don't just say, well, I'll go to church later when I feel like it. I mean, I hope you don't say that. We say that too much, but ideally, we come. We come when we're feeling

great and we come when we're feeling bad. We come when we're encouraged. We come when we're discouraged. We come when we're happy. And we come when we're sad.

And the amazing thing is that we feel that union with the Lord, but also this command rejoice—it isn't singular. It isn't just Marvin rejoice, or Kurt rejoice. It's plural. It says you church, body of Christ, rejoice. And so, we come into worship to rejoice. I don't feel it very much, but the guy next to me is going to feel it a little bit more and I can lean on him. I can lean on her. Maybe I'm so discouraged, I don't know how to lift my head that day. The person next to me is able to lift their head in the presence of the Lord. Maybe I don't have a song to sing, but this young lady next to me, she's singing for the Lord. And I can feel that I can participate in that. You see, rejoice. It isn't just you, it's not just on you. It's a body of Christ to rejoice in the Lord and give thanks in all circumstances.

So we're coming to the end of the series. I want to lift up another quote from Ann Voskamp and her book, **One Thousand Gifts**. As she talks about this, learning how to rejoice, to choose joy in all circumstances, she says, "I may feel disappointment and the despair may flood high, but to give thanks is an action and rejoice is a verb and these are not mere pulsing emotions. While I may not always feel joy, God asks me to give thanks in all things, because He knows that the feeling of joy begins in the action of thanksgiving. True saints know that the place where all the joy comes from is far deeper than that of feelings; joy comes from the very presence of God... Though my marriage tree may not bud and though my crop of children may fail and my work produce little yield, though there is no money in the bank and no dream left in the heart, though others may choose different ways to live their one life, till my last heaving breath, I will fight to the death for this: 'I will take joy' (Habakkuk 3:18)." (*One Thousand Gifts*, 176) I will take joy. I will rejoice. I



will **Give Thanks — With Joy.**

She takes that. I will take joy from Habakkuk 3 that talks about when the seasons are in, when the seasons are out, when things are coming to fruit, when things are extorted dry, I will find joy. I will take joy in my Savior and Lord, and Jim, I don't know if you knew this but Habakkuk is dedicated to the director of music. Yes! See it's the only prophet that ends the book that way.

Jim: We need more of those.

Tim: We need more of those. Amen. But see, there's something in music in particular that trains us in a way that lifts our heads, lifts our hearts. Jim, we're so grateful for you. When I think about this passage, I see you brother, especially at verse 9, which I think I skipped over on the slide. Paul said, "Look at how God's at work in me. Whatever you've learned or received or heard from me or seen in me, put it into practice. And the God of Peace will be with you. Well, I look to you. You're an inspiration. God's been at work in you. And we follow you on that track as you pursue the Lord. And when it comes to August 21, we're going to give huge thanks with joy for 39 years of faithful ministry among us and among our church.

Jim: Thank you.

Tim: Grateful for you, brother.

Jim: Thank you.

Tim: The command to rejoice in all circumstances isn't easy. It's hard. How are we going to do it? We lean on each other, but only because there's One who's put strength in one another. We lean and we look to one person, one person alone, and that's Jesus Christ, our Lord Jesus Christ, our Lord. The church calls today Christ the King Sunday. It's where the church passes one liturgical year and starts Advent, starts the story all over again, the story of Jesus and of His saving grace. Hebrews says about Jesus, that even

when he was in His darkest time, He saw joy before Him (Hebrews 12). Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on who—Jesus—the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. For the joy set before Him, He endured the cross, scorning of shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Jesus Christ is our King. He is Christ the King. He lives and reigns in glory. He's the author and the Perfector. He began this and He will finish it. He initiates your faith and He will carry you through to completion, to perfection, to eternal life in Him. As we run the race, we're encouraged by those who run ahead of us, but we look only to one figure. We look to one figure. We look to Jesus Christ, our Lord, because in Him and in His victory, we can give thanks with joy. Lord, we thank you so much for Jim and Barb and their faithfulness and ministry, your grace in them. We thank you for the faith that you've given us, Jesus, to run the race. Give us energy today to push on ahead, to lift our heads with song, to rejoice in all circumstances, for you are the Lord. You are the Lord. We love you, Jesus. In your name, we pray. Amen.

