

# October 15, 2017 Sermon Notes

**Scripture:** Philippians 4:1-9

**All readings for this Sunday** [http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearA\\_RCL/Pentecost/AProp23\\_RCL.html](http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearA_RCL/Pentecost/AProp23_RCL.html)

This last church reading of Philippians for a while is one of my all-time favorites. **1 My brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.** Paul clearly wants to wrap up all the themes he has developed over his letter to the Philippians. He writes, “stand firm.” which is a reminder for them to be like him (3:17) and to be active citizens of heaven (and not just believers in a far off heaven-3:20).

**2-3 I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.** When he calls on his Philippian friends, he wants them to be of the ‘same mind.’ If you remember my October 1 sermon - being of the same mind is not blind obedience or everyone agreeing. A same mind commitment to Christ spills over into everything we do - individually and as a community. A one-mindedness brings greater joy and peace to everything. On a related note -you’ll notice his laundry list of people - Euodia, Syntyche, and Clement. These Philippian people “struggled beside” (συναθλέω – synathléō) Paul. This struggle is the same word as in chapter 1:27 - *striving together* as one for the faith of the gospel.

**8-9 Finally, beloved whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.**

This is joy, real sustained joy, and not just happy feelings. Joy is a deep theme of the whole letter. Chapter 1:4, 18, 25; Chapter 2:2, 17-18, 28-29; Chapter 4:1 are all about that deep joy. Just take a step back for a moment to think about the context of his joy.

- *Where is Paul?* Prison.
- *When does he eat?* Usually only when a concerned church member shows up to feed him.
- *How often does he find himself behind bars?* A lot.
- *Remember* - Paul did not think he was writing the Bible. He was writing to his friends.

Paul has his finger on the pulse of joy which is independent of the prison he finds himself in. I think joy is like going to the gym. Joy is a practice **and** a feeling. We only get to the feeling of joy through the practice of joy. A) Do you freak out over a long line at Safeway? Think of Jesus who gave Paul an enduring joy independent of circumstances. B) Do you think about Thanksgiving and the terrible conversation you know that you are going to have with uncle Clement? Think about Paul who relied not on his peace of mind, but on the excellent peace of Christ that passes all understanding. The more Paul tried this, the more it became his reality. God’s peace and joy are worthy of our attention and energy. Joy opens the door of your soul to Jesus.

## Where are you looking?

When we look for excellence, praiseworthiness, honor, and purity ---**we will find it**, no matter our life situation. When we look for darkness, corruption, dishonor, and apathy, **we will find that too**, no matter our life situation.

I pray that the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. The more we “think about” the excellence and praiseworthiness of God, the more we see it. The more we- (λογίζεσθε) logizestha -take account of - these excellent thing, the more real joy becomes. I am not encouraging pious or wishful thinking. I am inviting you to go to the gym of logizestha. I invite you to take an intentional inventory of God’s care and providence in your life. Let that exercise be for the sake of joy. It won’t help your thighs, but in this gym, you will become strong and limber in the Lord.

## Joy turns over the apple cart

Do you want to be countercultural or change the world? Practice thanksgiving in order to harvest joy. Practice prayer to harvest peace. This will really mess up other people when they experience you. They won’t know how to handle you!

I would love for you to go to youtube to watch this disrupting action in real life. <https://youtu.be/y67DnNRPszA>. This is a video of an up and coming Canadian political rockstar named Jagmeet Singh. He kept his peace and joy in the face of a heckler. He showed peace and love even as the heckler was waving and screaming less than a foot from his face. This is a peace that surpasses understanding. Can you do it? Yes, you just gotta go to God’s gym.

Peace and joy my friends, Todd