

During COVID-19—A Time for Joy?

Selections from Acts and Philippians 1:1-6

As we have been studying the book of Acts, we wouldn't expect this joy to be found in the life of the Apostle Paul who shortly after his conversion on the road to Damascus received this message,

“Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine, to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and sons of Israel, for I will show him how much he must suffer for my name's sake”
(Acts 9:15).

On the Apostle Paul's first missionary journey, he was persecuted in Antioch, mistreated in Iconium, and even stoned in Lystra. However, Luke records,

“The Jews instigated persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district yet the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 13:49-52).

How can we experience joy during these challenging times?

1. What is this joy the Bible speaks about?
2. How can we experience this joy?

The Philippian jailer who had witnessed Paul's joy and received the Gospel of Joy, also experienced joy.

²⁵ About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them . . . The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole family” (Acts 16:25 and 34).

Later, Paul wrote a letter to the church that had begun in Philippi.

I. Joy looks outward to serve

II. Joy looks upward in faith—Joy comes when we look up and see God's hand at work in our lives!

Joy is rooted in a relationship with the Almighty God who is all-powerful One who loves us and “works all things together for our good.” Joy sees life from the perspective of a relationship with this God.

III. Joy looks backward with gratitude—for the partnership in the Gospel

IV. Joy looks forward with hope