

An Introduction to Philippians

Philippians 1:1-2

Introduction:

The world desires happiness, They pursue it with passion, so much so that when they find out that they cant have it, it leads to despair, disillusionment, depression and even death. The majority of adds that we are exposed to from magazines, radio and TV are targeted towards making us as unhappy as possible, until we buy there product. But happiness is often very temporary and is often affected by the circumstances we find ourselves.

Happiness finds its roots in, luck or chance as indicated

happy (adj.) 

late 14c., "lucky, favored by fortune, prosperous;" of events, "turning out well," from **hap** (n.) "chance, fortune" + **-y** (2). Sense of "very glad" first recorded late 14c. Ousted Old English *eadig* (from *ead* "wealth, riches") and *gesælig*, which has become **silly**. Meaning "greatly pleased and content" is from 1520s. Old English *bliðe* "happy" survives as **blithe**. From Greek to Irish, a great majority of the European words for "happy" at first meant "lucky."

A quick search will find that the world has no idea about happiness

For instance

One website offered some advice on how to be happy

1. Be Opimistic
2. Follow your gut
3. Make enough money to meet basic needs
4. Treat your body like it deserves to be happy
5. Stay close to family and friends
6. Be compassionate
7. Have Deep meaningful conversations

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8. Find happiness in the Job you have know
9. Smile
10. Forgive
11. Make Friends

One site said

Act like you are in a shampoo commercial

Well this is hardly the advice I would give to someone in jail in Rome, during the early New Testament era, Often in chains, unable to move for hours, Not even able to move far enough to stay out of your own excrement, while refuse and filthy water from animals, people and drainage, constantly drip into the place you call home. Waiting and hoping that someone would come and help replace the filthy straw you are sitting on.

This was Paul, This was Paul and the conditions that he wrote the Prison Epistles, Philippians being one of them. So when we read that we should count it call Joy or I have learned in whatever state I am to be content, He was not sitting in an Air-conditioned room with all the amenities, He was in prison, and not an American Prison, with AC, 3 meals and cable TV. Nothing in this situation speaks of happiness
Nothing give conditions for fortune or well being
All would seem to lead to despair and depression

So in the worst of situations Paul could be filled with Joy
in the worst of situations he could be content
in the worst of situations he could not complain
in the worst of situations, he would see no need to question
Gods purpose.

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After all, wouldn't it have been better for Paul to be out on the streets preaching rather than stuck in a dungeon. What about the gospel, what about the need of the lost, what is going to happen to the churches who will stand for the Truth.

Look at
1:12-18

So often we believe because of the circumstances we find ourselves, we cannot be effective for God. We think, we cant do what we used to, or I am not as gifted as that guy or talented like that girl... or our job is not great or my finances stink, so we believe the lie that God cannot use us.

This is not the case with Paul,
and not us

He knew what ever place or situation he found himself, He was ordained of God to be there.

Proverbs 16:9

The mind of man plans his way,
But the Lord directs his steps.

Paul also new something the world didn't. He had something the world could not understand

JOY

What is it

True joy is a gift from God to those who believe the gospel being produced in them by the Holy Spirit as they believe and receive the Word, or receive and apply it, and it is mixed with trials...being mixed with trials.

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The verb "to rejoice" appears 74 times in the New Testament. The noun "joy" appears 59 times in the New Testament. It's part and parcel of Christian experience.

Psalm 4:7, 8 it says, "Thou hast put gladness in my heart for Thou alone, O Lord, dost make me dwell in safety."

Psalm 16:11 (NASB95)

11 You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

Galatians 5:22 (NASB95)

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Jeremiah 15:16 (NASB95)

16 Your words were found and I ate them, And Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart

1 John 1:4 (NASB95)

4 These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

1 Thessalonians 1:6 (NASB95)

6 You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit,

Romans 12:12 (NASB95)

12 rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer,

1 Peter 1:8 (NASB95)

8 and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

Philippians is a great book, not only for Joy but for other familiar truths

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Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. (KJV)

Philippians 2:5

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: (KJV)

Philippians 4:6

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. (KJV)

Philippians 4:8

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. (KJV)

Philippians 2:12

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. (KJV)

Philippians 1:6

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: (KJV)

Philippians 2:1

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion (NIV)

Philippians 4:19

And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. (NIV)

Philippians 2:6

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Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage. (NIV)

Philippians 4:4

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! (NIV)

I. The Servants

A. Paul

1. Damascus Road Conversion
2. Paul's Testimony
 - a) Philippians 3:3-9

B. Timothy

II. The Saints

A. Saints

1. from word for holy holy ones

B. Bishops

1. I Tim 3:1
2. Acts 20:17,28
3. I Peter 5:1-2

C. Deacons

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1. I Timothy 3:8

2. Acts 6:1-11

III. The Salutation

He gave it in [Romans 1:7](#), he gave it in [1 Corinthians 1:3](#), [2 Corinthians 1:2](#), [Colossians 1:3](#), [Ephesians 1:2](#), [2 Thessalonians 1:1](#), [Philemon 1:2](#) and [3](#). It's a familiar greeting.

A. Grace to you

1. Eph 2:8-9

B. Peace from God

1. Romans 5:1

C. From God and Jesus

1. The source of all joy and meaning and life eternal is thru Christ

2. John 14:6

Prisons in Paul's World

by Bob Fraser

Prisons existed long before the time of Paul. In the wedge-shaped script of ancient Assyria, there was a symbol for prison, a combination meaning "house of darkness." During the Golden Age of Socrates and Plato, some four to five hundred years before Christ, the prison in Athens was called "The People's Thing." Excavations have uncovered "The People's Thing," a building facing the civic center. Measuring one hundred thirty-two feet by fifty-five feet, this prison had eight square cells, including a wash room, open off a central corridor. An abandoned cistern still holds clay medicine pots of a

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suitable size for a fatal dose of hemlock—the end of Socrates and many other Athenian prisoners.

In much of the ancient world, judges did not sentence offenders to serve time in prison. Prisons were holding cells for the accused awaiting trial or for the condemned awaiting punishment. Mosaic law prescribed no penalty that included imprisonment. Joseph languished in an Egyptian prison while other prisoners were released for judgment. The Philistines blinded and imprisoned Samson so they could keep him as a showpiece of their mastery: Being kept alive in that condition was a greater and more humiliating punishment than death. Indecisive King Zedekiah threw Jeremiah into the dungeon during time of war, a reflection of the king's unwillingness either to execute or to free the prisoner. The psalmist prays for God's help for prisoners; and the parallel thought of the Hebrew poem shows that prisoners, often neglected while awaiting further official action, are those doomed to die (Psalm 79:11). In the days of the Old Testament, then, imprisonment was not typically a punishment. Prisons were populated mainly by those awaiting trial—however long that wait might be—and by those whose sentence had yet to be carried out.

Roman Prisons

In Rome, imprisonment was not on the list of legal penalties. However, the greater the distance from Rome, the more likely governors were to condemn people to be imprisoned or to be held in chains.

Many accused prisoners had to wait a long time to be tried. Governors were under no compulsion to provide speedy trials. If the accused was a "hot potato" like Paul, it could be to the governor's advantage to allow him to "cool his heels" for months or years without coming to trial. This waiting period could also cool off an explosive situation if the governor found himself in a delicate position. In other cases certain powerful groups could be appeased by the incarceration. Clearly, this occurred in Paul's case (see Acts 24:27). Paul had yet to be condemned, as Acts 25:5 indicates. Festus suggested moving Paul's trial to a court in Jerusalem, so Paul appealed to Caesar. Thus began Paul's journey to Rome.

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There were four kinds of prisons in the Roman world. The first three were for the condemned. A condemned person could be sentenced to slavery.

Excavations in the school of the gladiators in Pompeii, destroyed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, revealed two slaves chained to a wall. Stocks to hold slaves by the ankles were found as well. This school of the gladiators contained a slave's prison, a cell in which to keep someone condemned to a life of servitude. Sometimes it was called a kennel. According

Year Through The Bible The Gospels & Acts Leader's Reference

to Roman law, the imprisonment was incidental to the sentence handed down; but for the condemned person, the imprisonment was a significant part of the punishment.

Similar in purpose (and worse in reality) to the slave cell were the quarries and mines of the Roman Empire. Judges condemned men, women, and even children to work in them for the rest of their lives, sometimes in literal salt mines. These people often lived underground, never again seeing the light of day.

A man could also be sentenced to be a galley slave, that is, to imprisonment as an oarsman on a Roman galley ship. These slaves were each chained to an oar and were expected to sleep on the rowing bench. Life was hard and cheap, although the Romans took good enough care of the rowers to have a sufficient supply for the journey.

The final type of prison was that in which Paul was kept. Often, prisons of this kind were dug out of solid rock and were underground. Prisoners, their guards, and their provisions were lowered through an opening the size of a manhole. This manhole was the only means of entrance and exit. In the Roman colony of Alba, the prison was under the marketplace. Rain and debris from the market and from animals easily dropped into this "house of darkness." Neither animal waste nor that of the prisoners found its way out easily.

The Mamertine prison in Rome—according to tradition, the prison in which Paul was held—was also subterranean. It was located near the Forum and

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dated back to the seventh century before Christ, to the reign of the fourth king of Rome, Ancus Martius. Before that, it was the site of a stone quarry.

The prison itself was essentially two large rooms on different levels with iron shackles fixed to the walls. The lower chamber was the Tullianum, or the Tullian dungeon. The Roman historian Sallust, writing a century before Paul, said of this dungeon, "[It] is sunk about twelve feet under ground. Walls secure it on every side, and over it is a vaulted roof connected with stone arches; but its appearance is disgusting and horrible, by reason of the filth, darkness and stench."¹ Lighting was indeed poor, primarily coming from torches or oil lamps. The guards might have had fires to provide heat in the winter or to cook food.

These guards were usually soldiers. Being a prison guard was not an appealing job and was often given to the poorest soldiers. Some of the guards were cruel; and prisoners, particularly ones not Roman, were defenseless. Under Roman law, if a prisoner escaped, the guard was executed. This tended to make the guards cautious about their wards, to say the least.

Prisoners were manacled using different lengths of chain, probably reflecting the security risk, the nature of the accusation, and the attitude of the guards. A short chain could hold a prisoner continually upright, dependent upon others for everything. A longer chain might permit a prisoner to take a step or two from the wall and to sit or to lie down. Some prisoners were placed in stocks, their ankles held apart. These persons were forced to sit on the same filthy spot continually.

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A few prisoners might have friends or paid guards to provide them clothing, blankets, food, and water. These persons would also change the bedding straw and clean away the human waste. Other prisoners had no such provision.

Prison Visitation

Visiting a prisoner could be dangerous. A prison visitor was no longer one of the anonymous crowd. Someone might associate the visitor with the alleged

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crimes of the accused. The risk was even greater if the visitor was a slave. And if the prisoner was suspected of seditious acts or words—the leaders of the Roman Empire were anxious about this—a visiting slave might be required to witness to the conversations held with the accused. The interrogation would not involve simple questioning. The testimony of a slave was legally inadmissible unless it was given under torture. Thus, when early Christians obeyed their Lord and visited those who were in prison, they did more than perform an inconvenient or unpleasant act. Let down into the prison by rope, they left only at the pleasure of the guards.

In the Letter to Philemon, Paul speaks of the slave Onesimus, who had somehow made his way to the imprisoned apostle. Paul suggests that the ministry of Onesimus was valuable to him. Possibly, this man risked his life daily by bringing Paul food and by carrying out the unpleasant task of cleaning Paul's place in the prison. What a remarkable ministry this would be! And what a challenge to us today.

The apostle, too, had a remarkable prison ministry. In his "house of darkness," Paul found a meaningful and enduring opportunity for pursuing his calling. He wrote some of his most powerful letters while there (some of which you will be studying in the weeks to come). He also reached out to some who were in the service of the emperor (Philippians 4:22). It is unthinkable that Paul would not have witnessed of the risen Christ to his guards and fellow prisoners. And perhaps some of them found the same transformation that Onesimus had experienced, going from being useless to being "special utensils, dedicated and useful to the owner of the house, ready for every good work" (2 Timothy 2:21). In this way, a Roman prison could become a place of true freedom.