

JOYFUL CONFIDENCE



What happens when you pause and reflect on your life? How do you view yourself? How do you feel about yourself?

If you're like most of us, times of self-reflection might lead to:

- discouragement at our sins
- frustration that we're not meeting goals we have for ourselves
- disappointment in ourselves or in God, that our lives aren't meeting our expectations
- fear or anxiety that what we've accomplished might be taken away or might not be enough
- "Mom-guilt" (whether we're raising kids right now or not) that we're not good enough, not doing enough, that we're blowing it and Must Try Harder

What we don't usually feel when we reflect on our own lives is a bubbling up inside us of joyful confidence. What would it be like if that became our reality? What if we could experience a deep joy and look at our lives with glad confidence that's rooted in the truth of the Gospel?

The book of Philippians invites us into a deep joy that springs from the Gospel.

Scholars and saints through the centuries agree: The little letter Paul wrote to the Philippian church is about JOY.

Even though this book was written by Paul during a time when he was in prison -- in chains for his faith -- his deep gladness and joy shine through in every chapter.

And not only do we see Paul's joy in this little book, we ourselves are invited into that joy. For Paul's joy is rooted in the Gospel -- the very Gospel that we ourselves believe, the incredibly Good News that Jesus came, lived, died and rose for us, and that we can be saved through faith in Him. The book of Philippians is brimming with joy that is rooted in the Gospel.

When your life is about the good work God is doing in and through you, you can have joyful confidence.

Right at the beginning of Paul's letter, he tells the Philippian church, *"In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership with the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus"* (Phil. 1:4-6 NIV).

When Paul thinks about this church community that he planted, the people he loves so much, he feels joyful confidence. Why? Because he knows that God is doing a good work in them, and God will continue to do that good work until the day Jesus comes again.

Paul's confidence is not in their own ability to improve themselves. His confidence is not in his own abilities as a leader and church planter. His confidence is deeply rooted in the Gospel message that God saves us, that we are sanctified by the Spirit, that Jesus is making us more and more like Himself. Notice the focus on God's actions, rather than on our own?

Paul not only has joyful confidence when he prays for the Philippian church, he also shows this joyful confidence when he reflects on his own life.

In verses 20-21, Paul expresses great confidence that God will be glorified in his life no matter what. Remember, Paul was writing this from prison, and he knew his death was a very real possibility. Yet Paul knows that if he dies, it will be for God's glory. Paul also knows that if he lives and is blessed to be able to carry on in ministry, it will be for God's glory.

Paul's view of himself was deeply rooted in the Gospel. Paul's life was about the good work God was doing in and through him. When Paul reflected on his own life, far from feeling discouraged or defeated, as one would expect a man in prison to feel, far from feeling guilt-ridden or anxious, far from feeling fearful or frustrated, Paul felt confident. Paul felt joy. Paul felt happy that no matter what, God would be glorified. He felt joyful confidence about the lives of the Philippians; he felt joyful confidence about his own life.

This joyfully confident view of self is nurtured in Gospel community.

As Pastor Paul put it in his first sermon in the series on Philippians, joy comes from God, and joy comes from "squad" - from meaningful connections with other Christians.

Throughout this first chapter of Philippians, we can see ways that in a Gospel community, believers constantly reinforce for each other this joyful confidence at God's work in and through each other's lives.

- Paul expresses confidence in the work God is doing in the believers at Philippi, and prays for them, expressing his love and affection for them (vs. 3-11).
- The Philippian church partners with the work God is doing in and through Paul by supporting him financially (vs. 5).
- Other believers are inspired by Paul's boldness to be more courageous and confident themselves (vs. 14).
- Paul expresses confidence that God will allow him to be with the Philippian believers again: *"I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me"* (vs. 25-26).
- In the suffering the church is going through, they don't feel alone, because they know Paul has been going through similar struggles (vs. 29-30).

How wonderful to be in a community of believers who are rooted and grounded in Christ! Like Paul and the Philippian church, we women of Redeemer, as we know and love each other deeply, can constantly point each other back to what God is doing in and through us.

So if you reflect on your life and feel discouraged, if you are prone to "Mom-guilt," if you get disappointed, anxious, or frustrated with yourself, take heart! **The Gospel tells us that God has started a good work in us and He will bring it to completion.** Let this be your comfort and hope. Let this bring you joyful confidence.

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