

ROMANS SERIES ELEVEN
FINDING FOUNDATIONS FOR CONTENTMENT AND JOY
Dr. Roger Barrier
Romans 5:1-11; Phil. 4:10-13; I Peter 1:6-7

Turn to Romans 5 and Philipians.

This morning we are talking about rejoicing from Romans 5. Paul mentions several reasons to rejoice after four long chapters on why we are flawed and need a Savior.

Take a little test with me. List by a show of fingers how glad you'd be to find yourself in these circumstances. One finger-no big deal. 3 fingers-This is really cool-I'm excited, 5 fingers-"so great, I'm speechless."

- SLIDE: Got off with a warning ticket for doing 50 mph in a school zone.
- SLIDE: Aced your final exam and didn't study.
- SLIDE: You graduated magna cum laude after being a sixth year senior
- SLIDE: You reached your goal weight.
- SLIDE: You missed 11 free throws in the NBA finals to finally hit the basket.
- SLIDE: Your son came home from Iraq unscathed
- SLIDE: Your parents reconciled and didn't get divorced
- SLIDE: You got to live in the same city as your grandkids.
- SLIDE: Your Dad paid off your car.
- SLIDE: You won an IPOD from a Coke can tab.

We all love to rejoice when things go great!

The Book of Philipians is the Joy book of the Bible. And it is no wonder. When Paul wrote it, he was having a great time in life.

READ: Philipians 4:4: Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

- SLIDE: Paul wrote Philipians relaxing on the beach near Rome. Suntan oil—SPF 45 to keep from burning. Tall, cool, drink in his hand—probably glass of wine. Imagine, got his IPod earphones on listening to rap music as the waves roll in.

It doesn't get any better than this. Continued writing:

READ: Philipians 4:6-7: Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Put down his letter and picked up his surfboard and hung his toes over the edge for a few hours and added in Philipians 3:1:

READ Philipians 3:1: Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord!

Headed back to his bungalow to play Zelda on his Play Station. Then spent some time on his X Box. Went on line for a little virtual reality. Engaged in War of the Worlds for a few hours—killed a few guys on line.

Decided to write a thank you note:

READ Philippians 4:10: I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me.

Thanks for sending all the money so I could sit back and relax and really enjoy life!

- **SLIDE:** But, I was just kidding. Paul was not on the beach listening to his iPod. He was in prison—under the sentence of death—for proclaiming the gospel of Christ. His life will soon be sacrificed for his faith.

But, he still rejoices.

Enter into the primary sources.

READ Philippians 1:12-14: Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. 13 As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. 14 Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.

Think they have me in chains. I talk about Jesus to the guard and every twelve hours they bring me another one!

How many ever been in jail?

Any prisons in life have no walls.

- **SLIDE:** What is your prison? What are your chains?

How are you handling it?

Are you grumbling and murmuring and complaining? Or, are you handling it victoriously? Full of joy and rejoicing?

Paul awaiting death—tradition that he was beheaded.

READ Philippians 2:17-18: But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. 18 So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

How can he have this sort of attitude?

- **SLIDE:** [contented kitty] *READ Philippians 4:10-13: I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. 11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*

- **SLIDE:** Two things stand out.

I learned to be content: Doesn't come naturally.

I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength. Relationship with X is the power.

- **SLIDE:** “Small kitten following a leaky cow.”

- **SLIDE:** First introduced to this passage and concept: colitis, ten days in hospital bed. Out of work and school for six months: soon had surgery.

This was one of my prisons.

Wanted to know this secret: I want that for my life. I have been working on this since I was 20 years old.

I want you to have it for yours.

Reading ROMANS 5:1-11 and noticed a link I had never seen before.

●SLIDE: “Romans 5:1-11: Key word is “rejoice” or boast, or be glad about.

●SLIDE: [MAP]: Paul wrote Romans in 57 AD from Corinth, Greece to the church in Rome, Italy in order to lay out the theological underpinnings of Christianity.

He left Corinth and then returned to Jerusalem and then intended to come visit Rome.

Arrested in Jerusalem. Bound in chains to Rome. Been in prison for four years and wrote in 64 AD he composed the most joy filled letter in the Bible—to Philippi—more references to joy and rejoicing than in any other book in the NT. And it is only four chapters.

●SLIDE: Reading this passage and it dawned on me that in Romans 5:1-11 Paul laid down in the foundation for rejoicing and contentment that enabled him to experience contentment in every circumstance.

READ ROMANS 5:1-2: Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

Explain and expound the verse as I read it.

READ ROMANS 5:3-5: Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

Comment on the progression.

READ ROMANS 5:11: Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

●SLIDE: HOW FAR ALONG ARE YOU IN YOUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY? (How far along toward true contentment?)

Spiritual children rejoice in the hope of a glorified life (Romans 5:1-2).

Spiritual young men and women are able to rejoice in their sufferings (Romans 5:3-5).

Spiritual mothers and fathers rejoice in God (Romans 5:1-2).

●SLIDE: 1. REJOICING IN THE HOPE OF GLORY

●SLIDE: *Romans 5:1-2: Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.*

WRITE ON SLIDE: As a result of our justification

*Peace with God

*Access to the Father

*Leads to rejoicing in Hope of glory

This is what spiritual children experience.

●SLIDE: Peace With God

There is a war going on.

READ ROMANS 8:5-7: Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. 6 The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; 7 the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. 8 Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

How was the war brought to an end? Blood of Jesus Christ mixed with our faith.

We don't come to God as the victor to the vanquished. We come as conquered to conqueror.
But when we come, we find God is all smiles.

Lord Nelson: Reputation for receiving vanquished foes in gentlemanly manner. Frenchmen defeated.

Crossed deck to take Nelson's hand as equal. Nelson, "Your sword first and then your hand."
Lay down arms – War is over. Only then does God extend his hand.

●SLIDE: ACCESS: Because we have peace we have ready access.

Give all brides my cell phone number.

●SLIDE: Because of this We Are Moving Toward The Day When We Shall Be Glorified With Christ.

READ 2 Corinthians 3:18: And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

What would reflecting the Lord's glory look like?

Fruit of the Spirit? What else?

Fantasy society: Virtual Reality puts us into a passive mindset.

No filter; no obligation to respond.

Hear Bible stories—just another story—become spectators.

Flight Simulator: "Leave me alone, Julie, I am landing in Denver and it is snowing."

"Roger, it is not real."

"Hope" = lost meaning – means "certainty".

Our hope of glory is reality—not virtual reality.

Paul is saying that our hope has substance.

When do we experience the glorifying?

READ 1 John 3:2 – "Dear friends, now we are the children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him!"

Get glory in one of 2 ways.

1. We die

2. Christ returns at the rapture

Second Coming sermon title – "Gabriel is licking his lips."

This takes the sting out of death.

● SLIDE: REJOICING IN SUFFERINGS

- SLIDE: *Romans 5:3-5: Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.*

Peter read Paul's Roman letter.

Peter knew that Paul's letters were often hard to understand.

2 Peter 3:14-16: *...Paul ... writes the same way in all his letters,... His letters contain some things that are hard to understand...*

Peter was Mr. Practical

Paul lived by revelations and dreams: dizzying intellect

Peter never had that.

Paul was cream of the cream; argued in Athens

Paul brags about his sufferings. Peter said "wait a minute, I suffered too."

Peter wrote out in 1 Peter 1 a practical application of Paul's theological ideology.

READ 1 PETER 1:6-7: In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that your faith-of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire-may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

- SLIDE: [WRITE] The purpose of suffering is:

1) To Refine Our Faith In The Fires As We Are Molded To Look More Like Christ

Overhead of refining gold in the crucible

(2) To Bring God Glory

People can look at our response and see how God is pouring in the power.

Daughter suffering loss.

Dad boils three pans of water: Tossed in Carrots; Tossed in Eggs; Tossed in Coffee Beans

"What do you mean?"

Pulled out carrots: In the fire, some things get soft.

Pulled out eggs: In the fire some things get hard.

Drinks the water with the coffee beans: sweet aroma, tastes great.

"Some things improve the water around them."

(3) To Test Just How Genuine Is Our Faith

Way to test real and false faith is to observe what happens in the hour of crisis. A faith which doesn't bring victory when we need is not yet genuine

Genuine faith may get angry and full of grief—but genuine faith handles tragedies well.

How can we rejoice in them because the Christian has inside information!

“Because we know”! We know something that the world doesn’t know.
Lost people suffer for nothing. Christians suffer for Someone.

Suffering of believers and unbelievers may not be too much different. Both can get cancer... lose jobs... watch loved ones die... but in one case it is most all wasted. In the Christian’s case God is using it according to His needs.

Watch women in labor – expression of faith – have empathy – deeply hurt, much pain, yet great joy because she knows that childbirth produces children! The baby makes it all worthwhile. Suffering produces something which is worthwhile.

● SLIDE: REJOICING IN AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THROUGH CHRIST

Through Jesus Christ we can develop an ongoing intimacy with God Himself.
Only reconciliation with God allows us to reconcile all of our other relationships.

READ Ephesians 3:14-19: For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15 from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. 16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Precious’ pastor last Sunday: Last month 17-year-old son diagnosed with cancer undergoing intense chemotherapy. Parent there around the clock—child did not want to be alone.
Last week 14-year-old son came home from church camp with an infection in his arm. Grew progressively worse—flesh eating bacteria. Fought to save his arm.

Preaching Sunday from 1 Peter 1. No sense of resentment against God: peace and rejoicing.

Did not have to be there: Loved those Senior Adults.
Contented in Christ. Foundation of rejoicing. Knew how to handle suffering.
Testifying the glory of God for suffering people in their dying years.

Meditate on the three rejoicing and levels of sp growth.