

WHITE HOT

Context

It seems like every commentary on Philippians includes the word joy in describing this letter written by Paul. This is done because of its obvious emphasis on joy. Personally, I'm thankful for this emphasis. It's timely in my own life and I believe timely for all of us living in a world that has multiple ways of stealing our joy. Paul, who wrote this letter, can speak to this matter of joy because he faced some of life's greatest joy stealers and yet he was filled with joy.

This sermon series will discover what it was that gave and sustained the Paul's joy. What we learn will guide us in the right direction toward joy. Most important, it points us to an all out life of surrender to Christ.

Read all of chapter one before answering the following questions.

Questions for Study

1. If you're in a LIFEgroup, check to see if anyone's been on a cruise. Perhaps you've had this experience. If you or another person has been on a cruise, describe what it was like to your LIFEgroup. Has anyone heard of cruises that have gone wrong?
2. If someone in your LIFEgroup has had the experience of being part of a crew on a battleship, ask them to tell the rest of the group what it was like. If no one has been on a battleship, think through some of the differences in the experience of cruise ship passengers and a battleship crew.
3. What does it do to your expectations of what you'll experience if you think of the Christian life like being on a cruise ship? What about if you think of it like being on a battleship?
4. Tim Tebow, starting quarterback for the Denver Broncos, in response to doubts that have been expressed that he's got what it takes to do this over the long term, said: "I know that no matter what happens on the football field, that's not what defines my life."

In this first chapter of Philippians, what is it that Paul says defines his life?

Have you made the decision as to what defines your life? If yes, what is it?

5. How does Paul see God turning what could be a useless, worthless situation into pure gold? (He gives three things that God's doing during this times he's been in prison.)

How does this apply to your own life today?