**Joy In Fellowship**

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday September 1st, 2019

Text: Philippians 1:3-11

Intro

1. Fellowship, like a worn coin, may be losing its true impression.
2. The Greek root word *“koinos” (G2839)* in the N.T. can properly be defined as “sharing something with someone; an associate, partner, companion, partaker.”
   1. It denotes a partnership in work (a profession), such as Peter shared with James and John in the fishing business – Luke 5:10: “Partners” *(G2844 koinonos).*
   2. Expresses a common relationship or nature. Jesus, in order to destroy the power of Satan over mankind, shared with man “flesh and blood” that He might deliver man through His death and destroy the power of Satan over him – Heb. 2:14: “Share” *(G2841 koinoneo).*
   3. We become “partakers” (sharers) of the divine nature through the precious promises of God and the provisions of His grace – II Pet. 1:4: “Partakers” *(G2844 koinonos)*
   4. The Gentiles became “partakers” of the “rich root” (the full nature) of the olive tree when they were “grafted” in as branches and shared such fullness with the Jews – Rom. 11:17: “Partaker” *(G4791 sugkoinōnos [soong-koy-no-nos']: From G4862 (sun) and G2844 (koinonos); a co-participant: partaker).* ***Eph. 3:4-6:*** *This is the mystery of Christ!*
   5. We are enabled to enjoy “fellowship” with the Apostles and with God and Christ through the Gospel – I Jn. 1:3: “Fellowship” *(G2842 koinōnia: Partnership, lit. participation).*
   6. Through the blood of Christ and walking in His light, we have fellowship with God and with one another – I Jn. 1:6-7: “Fellowship” *(G2842 koinōnia). (I Cor. 10:16)*
3. Fellowship:
   1. The word for fellowship definitely means something far deeper than sharing a meal, coffee, pie, or a golf game, etc.!
   2. While we “share” or “partake” together in those activities, the fellowship with God, the apostles, and with each other is from the sharing and partnering in the gospel & in the blood of Jesus Christ – I Jn. 1:3-7.
   3. It is possible to be physically close to someone but miles apart spiritually!
   4. Also true of the other way around, close spiritually but miles apart physically!
   5. The source of true joy in fellowship is Jesus Christ!
4. The fellowship that produces joy – Philippians 1:3-11
   1. Paul is in Rome, miles away from the brethren at Philippi (over 4600 miles away!) (<http://m.distancebetween2.com/rome/philippi>)
   2. ***Edit: approx. 800 miles! (***[***https://www.distancebetweencities.net/rome\_italy\_and\_macedonia\_kavala-prefecture\_greece/***](https://www.distancebetweencities.net/rome_italy_and_macedonia_kavala-prefecture_greece/)***)***
      1. Epaphroditus brought Paul a gift from the Philippian brethren – 4:18
      2. He got sick and nearly died, but when he was better he takes Paul’s letter to the Philippians (along with Timothy) – 2:19-30
      3. Paul’s imprisonment for the cause of Christ is well known by the Praetorian Guard (Palace Guards) and everyone else – 1:12-14
      4. Paul sends greetings from saints in Caesar’s household – 4:22
   3. Though miles away, Paul says his fellowship through the gospel with the saints at Philippi brought him joy! – Phil. 1:3-11
5. True joy comes from fellowship in the gospel!
6. I Have You On My Mind
7. Phil. 1:3-5:
   1. “I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.”
   2. “Participation” is *G2842 koinōnia,* the same word used for fellowship in I Jn. 1:3-7 that describes our relationship with the apostles, God & Christ.
8. As Paul awaited trial in Rome he wasn’t thinking of himself but of the saints in Philippi!
   1. He tells them every recollection of them brings him joy!
   2. Their “participation in the gospel from the first day till now” brings our thoughts and theirs to Acts 16 when on his 2nd preaching journey he came to Philippi.
   3. It is fun to imagine that Lydia *(Acts 16:12-15, 40)* and the Jailer *(Acts 16:23-40)* might be in the assembly when this letter brought by Epaphroditus is read to all!
   4. Paul had told the Thessalonian brethren how he “suffered” and was “mistreated” in Philippi (I Thess. 2:2) – “shamefully treated” (ESV), “spitefully treated” (NKJ)
   5. Yet, here he says when he thinks of them (“in all my remembrance of you”) he has joyful thoughts!
9. Application: Am I the kind of Christian that brings joy to other Christians when they think of me?
10. I Have You In My Heart
11. Phil. 1:6-7:
    1. “For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.”
    2. “Partakers” = combo Greek word *(G4791 from 4862 & 2844)* that means “Co-participant, companion.”
12. Their fellowship with Paul in the gospel has them on his mind & in his heart!
    1. It is possible to think of people (have them on your mind) but not have them in your heart (Some may say of others, “I have you on my nerves!”)
    2. Their love for Paul is evidenced in their standing with him when he preached and when he was imprisoned – They supported him and continued to do so (Phil. 4:15-18).
    3. Paul considered his imprisoned circumstances an opportunity for preaching the gospel – Phil. 1:12-14: He said others were emboldened to preach the gospel without fear!
13. Application: Am I the kind of Christian others hold in their hearts and thank God for?

1. I Have You In My Prayers
2. Phil. 1:4, 9:
3. “…always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all…And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment…”
4. Paul said they were on his mind, in his heart, and in his payers – He prayed for them to…
   * + 1. Have abounding & discerning love (Phil 1:9): to abound in love, knowledge, and discernment is to grow in the gospel (Heb. 5:14: discernment is for the mature)
       2. Approve excellent things (Phil 1:10): To approve excellent things is to discern properly and choose what is good!
       3. “Be sincere and blameless” (Phil 1:10): God wants people who are genuine; whose religion is not a mere external show, people who are above reproach in a dark world (Phil. 2:15)
       4. “Filled with fruit” (Phil 1:11): Jesus said the branches on His vine must bear fruit (John 15)! Spiritually-minded lives will bear much fruit (Gal. 5:22-23)!
5. Application: Am I the kind of Christian others think about and pray for?

Conclusion

1. “I have you on my mind…in my heart…in my prayers”
   1. Do we think of others in the faith?
   2. Do we hold others in our hearts enough to think about them?
   3. Do we think about and love others enough to pray for them?
2. III Jn. 4: John said, “I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.”
3. The fellowship we have with God, Jesus, the apostles, and with each other is the kind of fellowship that produces joy! ***Have you obeyed the gospel?***
4. If not a Christian, you need to be! Repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins!
5. If a Christian in sin, don’t wait till it’s eternally too late! Repent and be renewed!