

Sermon Title: **"CHOOSING THE JOY OF THE LORD!"**

Sermon Text: **Philippians 1:3-6**

***Introduction:***

**GOOD MORNING TO ALL! THANK YOU FOR JOINING US IN OUR WORSHIP SERVICE TODAY! AGAIN, I WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME ALL YOU WHO ARE JOINING US FOR THE FIRST TIME TODAY IN OUR SUNDAY SERVICE CELEBRATION.**

**THIS WEEK I WAS LISTENING TO ONE OF MY FILIPINO PASTOR COLLEAGES & HE WAS SHARING HIS MEDITATION DURING THAT DAY AND HE POINTED OUT THE FACT THAT OUR DEFAULT AS HUMAN BEINGS WHEN EVERYTHING IS NOT GOING WELL OR WHEN THERE IS A PROBLEM OR ADVERSITY OR CRISIS LIKE WE ARE HAVING RIGHT NOW IS TOWARDS SADNESS & SULKING OR DEPRESSION. THAT'S WHY DURING THIS CRISIS TIME ONE OF THOSE IMPORTANT THINGS THAT EVEN US BELIEVERS SEEMS TO LOSE IS JOY! IT'S VERY HARD TO PRAISE THE LORD & THANK THE LORD, AND TO BE JOYFUL. AND THE LORD JUST PLACED IN MY HEART THIS URGE TO PREACH ON THIS SUBJECT TODAY BECAUSE I KNOW THAT BECAUSE OF WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING AROUND US DUE TO THIS CRISIS & THE UNCERTAINTIES THAT IT BRINGS, I'M SURE MANY OF US HERE IN FBC & THOSE WHO ARE JOINING US TODAY, ARE ANXIOUS & WORRIED, AND SOMEHOW WE TOO ARE LOSING OUR JOY!**

**THIS MORNING, LET ME PROPOSE TO ALL THAT IF WE ARE TO BEAT & THRIVE IN THIS CRISIS OR ANY CRISIS FOR THAT MATTER, WE ARE TO CHOOSE JOY, AND NOT JUST THE JOY THAT THIS WORLD GIVES, BUT THE JOY OF THE LORD! FOR AS THE WORD OF GOD SAYS, "FOR THE JOY OF THE LORD IS OUR STRENGTH!"**

**LET US PRAY!....**

**THIS MORNING, THE LORD LED ME TO THE GREAT APOSTLE PAUL WHO TRULY KNOWS & UNDERSTAND THIS JOY. IN SPITE OF ALL THE DIFFICULTIES, SUFFERINGS, HARDSHIPS, PERSECUTIONS, IMPRISONMENTS, ETC. THAT HE EXPERIENCED IN LIFE COZ OF HIS FAITH, HE OVERCAME THEM & WAS EVEN GREATLY USED BY THE**

LORD. HE CLEARLY DID NOT JUST TAUGHT US HOW TO CHOOSE JOY BUT HE LIVE IT. AND HIS LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS WAS THE PROOF OF THIS TRUTH. IT ACTUALLY IRONIC THAT MANY CONSIDERED THIS BOOK OF PAUL AS A BOOK OF JOY WHEN THE FACT IS THAT HE WROTE THIS BOOK INSIDE A PRISON CELL IN ROME. INSTEAD OF HIM BEING ENCOURAGED BY THOSE OUTSIDE HIS PRISON, HE IS THE ONE ENCOURAGING THEM! IN THE PAGES OF THIS BOOK, HE WILL TEACH US THAT JOY IS A POWERFUL WEAPON TO TO OVERCOME LIFE'S DIFFICULTIES & CRISIS. AND THAT THIS JOY CAN ONLY BE FOUND IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

SO, I INVITE YOU TO THE FIRST CHAPTER OF PHILIPPIANS & WE WILL BE LOOKING AT THE MAJOR SOURCES OF PAUL'S JOY! IN OTHERS WORDS, WHAT MAKES THE APOSTLE PAUL HAPPY/JOYFUL?

WHAT IS THIS JOY? IT IS NOT TEMPERAMENTAL JOY OR BECAUSE OF OUR GENETICS NOR IT IS FAKING JOY OR PRETEND JOY OR "PLASTIC" JOY. IT IS NOT A RESULT OR GENERATED FROM THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD BECAUSE THESE ARE TEMPORARY JOY. THIS KIND OF JOY NEVER LASTS. THIS JOY IS THE WORK & GENERATED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD. WE WILL KNOW MORE ABOUT THIS AS WE ALONG IN OUR MESSAGE. SO, WHAT MAKES PAUL...

A. WHAT MAKES THE APOSTLE PAUL JOY-FULL!

*"I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you, always praying with joy for all of you in my every prayer, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." (Phil. 1: 3-6, CSV)*

*"Every time I think of you, I thank my God. And whenever I mention you in my prayers, it makes me happy. This is because you have taken part with me in spreading the good news from the first day you heard about it. God is the one who began this good work in you, and I am certain that he won't stop before it is complete on the day that Christ Jesus returns." (Phil. 1:3-6, CEV)*

NOW, WE ARE NOT TALKING ABOUT HAPPINESS HERE WHICH IS DEPENDENT ON HAPPENINGS. MANY TODAY ARE NOT JOYFUL BECAUSE THEY COULD NOT GO TO PARTIES OR THEIR FRIENDS OR WORK OR HOBBIES OR WHATNOT. BECAUSE IS GENERATED BY EXTERNAL THINGS OR PEOPLE. BUT PAUL IS TALKING ABOUT HAPPINESS OR GLADNESS OR JOY HERE THAT IS GENERATED FROM OUR INNER BEING. IT COMES FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO RESIDES IN OUR CORE BEING.

### 1) *THE PHILLIPIANS' **PARTNERSHIP** IN THE GOSPEL WORK!*

OUR TEXT CLEARLY TELLS US THAT THE PARTNERSHIP OF THE PHILIPPIAN CHURCH IN THE GOSPEL BRINGS JOY IN PAUL' LIFE. HE WAS SO HAPPY OR JOYFULL FOR THE PHILIPPIANS' ACTIVE PARTICIPATION TO THE GOSPEL WORK PARTICULARLY THE MISSIONARY OR CHURCH PLANTING WORK OF PAUL AS WE CAN READ IN THE BOOK OF ACTS.

a. *They have been **faithfully supporting** his ministry from the very start!*

*"I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you, always praying with joy for all of you in my every prayer, **because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.**" (vv. 3-5)*

IT SAYS HERE THE PHILIPPIANS HAVE BEEN SUPPORTING PAUL SINCE THE TIME HE STARTED HIS MISSIONARY JOURNEY THAT STARTED IN MACEDONIA & THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH AT PHILIPPI (SEE ACTS 16:6-10).

b. *They have been **generously supporting** his ministry faithfully through thick & thin!*

*"We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that was given to the churches of Macedonia: **During a severe trial brought about by affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.**"*

*(2 Cor. 8:1-2)*

***“But I have received everything in full, and I have an abundance. I am fully supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you provided—a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. And my God will supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.” (Phil. 4: 18-20)***

**THIS IS ONE OF THE REASONS WHY PAUL WROTE THIS BOOK- TO THANK THEM FOR THEIR GENEROSITY TO THE LORD’S WORK THROUGH THICK & THIN!**

## **2) OUR HEAVENLY FATHER’S “GOOD WORK” IN THE PHILIPPIANS!**

**ANOTHER MAJOR SOURCE OF JOY TO PAUL IS THE FATHER’S “GOOD WORK” IN THE LIVES OF THE PHILIPPIAN CHURCH! TAKE NOTE THAT THIS “GOOD WORK” IS THE ACTUALLY THE SAVING WORK THAT OUR HOLY & LOVING TRINITY OR TRIUNE GOD PLANNED & CARRIED OUT IN TIME!**

**a. This “good work” is the sovereign & gracious work of our Heavenly Father!**

***“I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 1: 6a)***

***“God is the one who began this good work in you, and I am certain that he won’t stop before it is complete on the day that Christ Jesus returns.” (Phil. 1: 6, CEV)***

**REMEMBER THAT IT IS THE FATHER WHO INITIATED THIS WORK OF SALVATION. WE DID NOT START IT BUT HE DID. WHEN MAN SINNED AGAINST HIM, HE CHOSE A GROUP OF SINFUL MEN WHO WILL RECEIVE HIS GRACE BY FAITH!**

***“Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ. For he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in love before him. He predestined us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ for himself, according to the good pleasure of***

*his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he lavished on us in the Beloved One.” (Eph. 1: 3-6)*

**THEN, HE SENT HIS SON & GAVE HIM TO US TO BE OUR SAVIOR & REDEEMER!**

*“But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. For God loved the world in this way: **He gave his one and only Son.**” (Rom.5:8)*

*“We love him because **he first loved us.**” (1 John 4: 19)*

*b. This “good work” is the **sacrificial & substitutionary** work of the Lord Jesus Christ!*

**THIS IS ALSO THE SACRIFICIAL WORK OF GOD THE SON, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST!**

*“**Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, because it is written, Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.** The purpose was that the blessing of Abraham would come to the Gentiles by Christ Jesus, so that we could receive the promised Spirit through faith.” (Gal. 3: 13-14)*

*“**For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring you to God.** He was put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit...” (1 Peter 3: 18)*

*“He made the one who did not know sin to be **sin offering** for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”  
(2 Cor. 5: 21)*

*c. This “good work” is the **supernatural & miraculous** work of the Holy Spirit!*

**NOW, HOW DID JESUS GOD THE SON BECAME THE SON OF MAN OR A HUMAN BEING? THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT! AND HOW ARE WE BORN AGAIN? THROUGH THE SPIRIT!**

*The angel replied to her, “**The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.** And consider your relative Elizabeth—even she has conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called childless. **For nothing will be impossible with God.**” (Luke 1: 35-37)*

*Jesus answered, “Truly I tell you, unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I told you that you must be born again.” (John 3: 6-7)*

**THEREFORE, THIS “GOOD WORK” IS THE SOVEREIGN & GRACIOUS WORK OF THE FATHER, THE SACRIFICIAL & SUBSTITUTIONARY WORK OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, & THE SUPERNATURAL & MIRACULOUS WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT!**

**C. THE PHILIPPIANS’ SURE & GLORIOUS FUTURE!**

**LASTLY, WHAT GIVE JOY TO PAUL IS THE CERTAINTY & GLORY OF THE PHILIPPIANS SALVATION! TAKE NOTE OF WHAT PAUL SAYS IN VERSE 6 AGAIN...**

*a. The Lord will complete the “good work” He has started in us!*

*“I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 1: 6a)*

*“God is the one who began this good work in you, and I am certain that he won’t stop before it is complete on the day that Christ Jesus returns.” (Phil. 1: 6, CEV)*

**PAUL IS HAPPY BECAUSE HE IS SURE & CONFIDENT THAT THE LORD WILL ONE DAY COMPLETE HIS GOOD WORK IN OUR LIFE! AND AT THE SAME TIME ASSURES US THAT THE LORD JESUS WILL RETURN.**

*b. The Lord is still working & completing what He has started in us!*



BUT THERE'S ANOTHER BEAUTIFUL TRUTH IN THIS VERSE. PAUL TELLS US THAT THE LORD IS STILL WORKING & COMPLETING HIS WORK IN US. A PASTOR, I MUST ADMIT THAT ONE OF THE SOURCES OF FRUSTRATIONS & DISCOURAGEMENT IN MINISTRY IS GOD'S PEOPLE. BECAUSE NOT ALL OF THEM ARE MATURE & RESPONSIBLE & AVAILABLE & DEPENDABLE IN TERMS OF MINISTRY. AND THIS IS ONE OF THOSE TRUTHS IN THE SCRIPTURES THAT GIVES ME HOPE & JOY. THE LORD IS NOT YET DONE WITH YOUR BROTHERS & SISTERS! HE IS STILL SHAPING & MOLDING & MATURING MANY OF US.

RELATED TO THIS, NOT ALL THAT IS HAPPENING IN OUR LIFE IS FINAL UNTIL THIS DAY THAT THE LORD REFERRED HERE. THAT MEANS THAT THIS CRISIS THAT WE ARE FACING TODAY. THAT PROBLEM OR THAT SICKNESS OR THAT TRIAL IS NOT THE END OF YOUR LINE. IT ALSO TELLS US THAT NOTHING & NO ONE IN THIS LIFE CAN STOP GOD FROM FULFILLING HIS WILL/PLAN FOR OUR LIFE. IN FACT, NOTHING IN THIS LIFE CAN SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF THE FATHER IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.

***“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.” (Eph. 2: 10)***

***“What, then, are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He did not even spare his own Son but gave him up for us all. How will he not also with him grant us everything? Who can bring an accusation against God's elect? God is the one who justifies. Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is the one who died, but even more, has been raised; he also is at the right hand of God and intercedes for us.” (Rom. 8: 31-34)***

#### **D. APPLICATIONS:**

IN CLOSING, I WOULD LIKE TO USE THIS QUESTION TO SHARE THE APPLICATIONS OF THIS MESSAGE THAT I BELIEVE THE LORD WOULD WANT US TO KNOW & RECEIVE THIS MORNING. AND THE QUESTION IS –

## **“WHAT SHOULD MAKE US TRULY HAPPY/JOYFUL TODAY?”**

**(1) WE HAVE A SURE & GLORIOUS FUTURE TO LOOK FORWARD TO!**

*“I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 1: 3-6)*

**I THINK IF THERE IS ONE IMPORTANT VERSE IN THE SCRIPTURES THAT WE MUST MEMORIZE & KNOW BY HEART, THIS IS ONE OF THOSE VERSES ASIDE FROM JOHN 3:16 (“FOR GOD SO LOVED...”) & JER. 27: 11 (“I KNOW MY PLANS FOR YOU...”). ESPECIALLY, IN TIMES LIKE THIS CRISIS. THIS VERSE GIVES US PERSPECTIVE IN LIFE. THIS TRUTH GIVES MEANING & UNDERSTANDING TO THE PRESENT TRIALS OR DIFFICULTIES WE ARE EXPERIENCING AT THE PRESENT OR AT THE MOMENT. ANOTHER OF THESE PASSAGES IN THE BIBLE IS WHAT PAUL WROTE TO THE ROMAN BELIEVERS.**

***“Therefore we do not give up. Even though our outer person is being destroyed, our inner person is being renewed day by day. For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory. So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”*** (2 Cor. 4: 16-18)

**WE HAVE JOY & WE HAVE HOPE BECAUSE WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO OUR TRUE LIFE, THE NEXT LIFE! AND PAUL TELLS US THAT THIS PRESENT LIFE W/ ITS TRIALS, PAIN, SIN & DEATH, IS ONLY TEMPORARY & PASSING AWAY. BUT OUR NEXT LIFE IS COMING & IT IS INCREDIBLY AWESOME & AMAZING & GLORIOUS. THE APOSTLE JOHN GIVES US A GLIMPSE OR FORETASTE OF THIS NEXT LIFE.**

***“Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: ‘Look, God’s dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away.’”*** (Rev. 21: 3-4)



## **(2) WE HAVE A SOVEREIGN YET LOVING FATHER IN HEAVEN!**

**WE ARE TO BE JOYFUL BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT WE HAVE THE SOVEREIGN LORD OF THE UNIVERSE AS OUR FATHER! AND THAT NOTHING IN THIS LIFE IS HAPPENING WITHOUT HIS PERMISSION.**

*“Don’t fear those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul; rather, fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Aren’t two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father’s consent. But even the hairs of your head have all been counted. So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.” (Matt. 10: 28-31)*

**WE ARE TO BE TRULY HAPPY & JOYFUL BECAUSE WE HAVE A FATHER WHO PROMISED TO HEAR & ANSWER OUR PRAYERS!**

*“Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Who among you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him.” (Matt. 7: 9-11)*

**WE ARE TO BE HAPPY & JOYFUL BECAUSE HE NOT ONLY THAT HE PROMISED TO HEAR & ANSWER OUR PRAYERS. HE ALSO PROMISED THAT WHEN HIS ANSWER IS NO & DON’T CHANGE OUR DIFFICULT SITUATION OR CRISIS, HE PROMISED THAT NOTHING IN THIS LIFE CAN SEPARATE US FROM HIS LOVE!**

*“No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom. 8: 37-39)*

**(3) WE HAVE THE GREAT PRIVILEGE OF BEING PARTNERS IN THE GOSPEL WORK!**

PAUL CLARIFIES THIS FURTHER IN HIS LETTER TO THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH.

***“Everything is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and he has committed the message of reconciliation to us. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ’s behalf, “Be reconciled to God.”***  
(2 Cor. 5: 18-20)

**AND TAKE NOTE BROTHERS & SISTERS THAT DOING GOD’S WORK GIVES US JOY!**

**(1) SERVING IN THE LORD’S MINISTRY GIVES US JOY!** THE DISCIPLES SHOWED THIS IN THIS INCIDENT WHERE THE LORD TOLD THEM TO GO TO THE VILLAGES & PREACH THE KINGDOM HOUSE TO HOUSE.

***“The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.”*** He said to them, ***“I watched Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Look, I have given you the authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy; nothing at all will harm you.”*** (Luke 10: 17-18)

**(2) SEEING PEOPLE SAVED GIVES US JOY!**

***“When they had been sent on their way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and they brought great joy to all the brothers and sisters.”*** (Acts 15: 3)

**(3) SHARING THE GOSPEL & MAKING DISCIPLES GIVES US JOY!**

YES, SERVING IN THE MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH, PRAYING FOR THE CHURCH, GIVING FINANCES TO THE GOSPEL WORK OF THE CHURCH BRINGS JOY TO US! THESE ARE GOOD. BUT I THINK

THERE IS MINISTRY THAT WE ARE GREATLY MISSING TODAY – THE JOY OF SHARING & DISCIPLING PEOPLE TO KNOW JESUS AS THEIR SAVIOR.

THE APOSTLE PAUL CLEARLY EXPRESSED THIS TRUTH IN THIS VERY LETTER OF HIS.

*“So then, my dearly loved and longed for brothers and sisters, **my joy and crown**, in this manner stand firm in the Lord, dear friends.”*  
(Phil. 4: 1)

NO WONDER THAT THE LORD JESUS HIMSELF TOLD US THAT EVEN HEAVEN ITSELF IS REJOICING WHEN ONE SOUL IS SAVED.

*“I tell you, in the same way, **there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents** than over ninety-nine righteous people who don’t need repentance.”* (Luke 15: 7)

I THINK THAT THIS SOURCE OF JOY IS WHAT MOST OF US ARE MISSING TODAY. THIS IS BECAUSE OF THE FACT THAT NOT ALL OF US ARE FULLY COMMITTED TO THE GOSPEL WORK OF THE LORD. I THINK THIS IS WHAT MANY OF US ARE MISSING – THE JOY OF MAKING DISCIPLES; THAT IS, SHARING THE JESUS TO OTHERS & HELPING THEM DEVELOP AS FAITHFUL DISCIPLES OF JESUS!

REMEMBER THAT THE HAPPINESS THAT WE GET FROM THIS WORLD ARE TEMPORARY & WILL NOT LAST BUT THE JOY THAT WE GET IN SERVING JESUS & SHARING HIS GOSPEL & MAKING DISCIPLES WILL FOLLOW US IN THE NEXT LIFE! IN OTHER WORDS, WE ARE STORING ETERNAL RICHES IN CHRIST!

#### E. **IMPLICATIONS:**

NOW, IF THESE THINGS ARE TRUE – WE HAVE A SOVEREIGN YET LOVING FATHER IN HEAVEN, WE HAVE THIS GREAT PRIVILEGE AS BEING CO-LABORERS OF CHRIST, & WE HAVE A SURE & GLORIOUS FUTURE THAT AWAITS US, THEN WHAT IS THE IMPLICATIONS OF THESE TRUTHS IN OUR LIVES AS BELIEVERS OF

THE LORD TODAY ESPECIALLY IN TIMES LIKE THIS? LET ME SHARE TWO IMPLICATIONS OF THESE?

- (1) WE CAN BE THE **JOYFUL PEOPLE** THE LORD INTENDED US TO BE! WE CAN BE **SORROWFUL** AND YET **REJOICING!** IN THE MIDST OF THIS PANDEMIC!

*“As unknown, yet recognized; as dying, yet see—we live; as being disciplined, yet not killed; **as grieving, yet always rejoicing**; as poor, yet enriching many; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.” (2 Cor. 6: 9-10)*

BECAUSE OF THE JOY OF THE LORD, WE CAN & LET US RESOLVE TO BE THE **JOYFUL PEOPLE** THE LORD INTENDED US TO BE! THIS JOY EMPOWERS US TO SACRIFICE & ENDURE FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL. WE MAY BE IN A LOCKDOWN BUT WE ARE REJOICING BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT THIS WILL NOT LAST. LIKE THE PSALMIST WE KNOW THAT WEEPING MAY LAST FOR A NIGHT BUT JOY COMES IN THE MORNING!

- a. SO, LET US CONTINUE TO CULTIVATE A **THANKFUL/GRATEFUL HEART** & **JOYFUL HEART!**

- (2) WE CAN BE THE **JOY-GIVERS** THAT THE LORD INTENDED US TO BE IN THIS WORLD! LET US RESOLVE TO SHARE THE **JOY OF THE LORD** TO OTHERS PARTICULARLY DURING THIS TIME OF CRISIS!

*“Who then will harm you if you are devoted to what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness, you are blessed. Do not fear them or be intimidated, but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.” (1 Pet. 3: 13-15)*

- a. LET US **SHARE** THE GOSPEL/JESUS! HE ALONE IS THE ONE WHO GIVE TRUE HOPE & JOY! LET US PRAY TO THE LORD TO GIVE US OPPORTUNITY & BOLDNESS TO SHARE JESUS TO OTHERS! PRAY FOR THE LOST! INVITE PEOPLE TO OUR ONLINE MEETINGS/SERVICES.

b. LET US **SERVE** OTHERS! LET US LISTEN MORE TO PEOPLE. PRAY FOR THE SICK, THE TROUBLED. ENCOURAGE THEM. DO GOOD DEEDS TO THEM. PLAY WITH THEM. TEACH THEM. HELP THEM IN THEIR CHORES. VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME, SKILLS. DONATE FOOD.

**CHURCH, FRIENDS! LET US BE THE JOYFUL PEOPLE THE LORD INTENDED US TO BE & LET US GIVE THIS JOY OF THE LORD TO OTHERS ESPECIALLY DURING THIS TIME OF CRISIS! FOR AS THE NEHEMIAH DECLARES, "THE JOY OF THE LORD IS OUR STRENGTH!" (NEHEMIAH 8:10). PTL!**

**PRAYER:**

***"OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, WE THANK & PRAISE YOU FOR YOUR WORD THIS MORNING – ASSURING US OF OUR SURE, BLESSED, & GLORIOUS FUTURE & AT THE SAME TIME ASSURING US TODAY THAT YOU WILL NEVER LEAVE NOR FORSAKE US AND THAT NOTHING & NOONE CAN SEPARATE US FROM YOUR LOVE BECAUSE OF OUR FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.***

***FATHER GOD, THANK YOU ALSO FOR GIVING US THE GREAT PRIVILEGE TO BE YOUR PARTNERS & CO-WORKERS HERE ON EARTH AS YOU CARRY OUT YOUR DIVINE PLAN & PURPOSE FOR THIS SIN-SICK & BROKEN WORLD. THANK YOU THAT WE HAVE THE GOSPEL WHICH IS THE ONLY TRUE HOPE OF THIS WORLD & THAT WHICH CAN TRULY GIVE US LASTING JOY. OPEN OUR EYES TO THE TRUTH THAT THE REASON WE ARE NOT EXPERIENCING MUCH JOY IN THIS LIFE IS BECAUSE WE ARE NEGLECTING THIS AREA OF OUR LIFE -SHARING THE GOSPEL OR JESUS TO OTHERS & HELPING THEM TO GROW IN THEIR WALK WITH HIM. EMPOWER & TEACH US LORD TO OBEY YOUR WILL. CONTINUE TO OPEN OUR EYES TO SEE THE REALITY THAT THE THINGS THAT WE ARE PURSUING IN THIS WORLD OFFERS ONLY TEMPORARY JOY & NOT LASTING JOY THAT YOUR GOSPEL WORK GIVES. WE REPENT LORD FOR NOT FULFILLING OUR JOB AS YOUR AMBASSADORS BUSY IN YOUR BUSINESS BUT INSTEAD WE ARE MOSTLY BUSY SEEKING OUR OWN HAPPINESS IN THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD.***

**FATHER GOD, MOST OF ALL, WE THANK YOU & WE ARE TRULY BLESSED & HAPPY/JOYFUL TODAY BECAUSE WE HAVE YOU AS OUR GRACIOUS, LOVING, MERCIFUL YET SOVEREIGN FATHER. THE ONE WHO IS READY TO HEAR OUR PRAYERS! THE ONE WHO PROMISE THAT HE WILL BE WITH US EVEN THROUGH THE HIGH WATERS & FIERY FURNACE OF TRIALS & CRISIS!**

**FATHER GOD, WE PRAISE & WORSHIP YOU! TODAY, WE CHOOSE TO BE IN YOUR VERY PRESENCE THRU WORSHIP BECAUSE AS YOU SAY, IN YOUR PRESENCE IS FULLNESS OF JOY & THAT YOUR JOY IS OUR STRENGTH!**

**FATHER GOD, CONTINUE TO REMIND US OF THESE TRUTHS & MAKE & MOLD US TO BE THE JOYFUL PEOPLE YOU DESIGNED US TO BE & TO BE THE JOY-GIVERS THAT YOU INTENDED US TO BE. WE GIVE YOU ALL THE GLORY & WORSHIP & PRAISE! FOR TO YOU ALONE ARE WORTHY OF ALL THESE THINGS. IN JESUS' NAME WE PRAY ALL THESE THINGS. AMEN! AMEN! AMEN!**