

Abounding Joy
Phil. 1:8-11

Theme: What Do Believers Want the Most for
Those They Love the Most?

I. To Abound in Love (v. 9)

What generates love? I Jn. 4:19 - "We love because he
first loved us."

How is His love revealed?

A. Revealed in Human Expression (v. 3-6)

B. Revealed in Christ's Provision (v. 7-8)

Paul confesses: I need Jesus like you do (v. 7)

Paul professes: I love you like Jesus does (v. 8)

II. To Deepen Understanding (v. 9-10)

What are three dimensions of deepened understanding?

A. Knowledge (v. 9b)

B. Discernment (v. 9c)

C. Approval (v. 10)

- of what is excellent (v. 10a)

- of what is intended (v. 10b)

III. To Have a Fruitful Life (v. 11)

A. Filled w/ Fruit (v. 11a)

B. Fueled by Jesus (v. 11b)

C. Flowing w/ God's Glory (v. 11c)

Conclusion: How Our Fruit Becomes God's Glory.

Phil. 1:7-11

Intro

Script. Intro - "How dare you call me that?" Is usually a question we ask after insult, but it's an appropriate question after the kind of praise Paul has just given. He calls everyone in the church at Philippi "saints." As we will soon see, he is not blind to their weaknesses and sin. So, how dare he call them all saints and thank God that they bring him joy! Why does Paul so dare to give such a label? He explains; vs. 7-11.

Sermon Intro: What do you want the most for those that you love the most. I have some insight into how my wife would answer that question from a question she has asked each of our children when they have begun to consider whether it is God's will that they progress toward marriage with someone. Always there is excitement about the prospect and nervousness about a mistake. Sometimes there has been a deep longing to counter loneliness that can cloud judgement or even begin to change values and priorities. So always Kathy's and my first question is "Does that person love the Lord" - the most important person in this life and in eternity is the Lord Jesus. No matter background, profession, looks, money or personality all are secondary to whether the prospect loves Jesus because it's not possible to have the oneness of heart God intends for marriage, if someone does not share the heart for Jesus that you have. But we've discovered that the question about whether the other person loves Jesus doesn't answer all the questions.

Sometimes loneliness in that person's heart makes them say they love Jesus, because they know that's what you want to hear

Sometimes they do love Jesus, but there are aspects of personality, maturity or compatibility that still create questions about whether this union is a good thing -

And because Kathy loves her children so dearly, she asks a question that goes even deeper and is more revealing and more guiding than whether the other person loves Jesus. The question reveals what Kathy most wants for those she loves the most. She asks,

"Does your relationship with this person make your relationship with Jesus better?"

That question cuts through a lot of the self-delusion, willing blindness, rationalization and priority confusion that cause us to say, "Well when I am with this person, I am more anxious, abused, tempted, tormented or God-ignoring, but he or she is a Christian, so I am going to consider this response to loneliness. What is best & right for you long-term is what draws you closer to Christ, who loves you better & more than all.

If you love Jesus, but put him second to anything, you claim what is second best. For an apostle speaking to those he most loves, he wants most of all for them to know how to love Christ above all. That is what we want the most for those we most love.

1
What does Paul want for the believers (his spiritual children) at Philippi? What does he want most for those he loves most, that's revealed in his prayer for them in vs. 9...

I. To Abound in Love (v. 9)

The word "abound" means to be in excess, and the word Paul uses means to be in super-excess. The way the grain elevators could hold all the crops two years ago - the excess pressed down ^{filled} overflowing ^{spilling over} and stored under plastic. Paul wants those at Philippi to overflow that way - but he puts it in a present tense to say, "I want ^{love} to keep on abounding, more & more" say some of your translations. Paul wants that's he loves the most to keep growing closer to Jesus. What will cause that?

We love because he first loved us (1 Jn. 4:19)
How do we know His Love?

1. Revealed in Human Expression ^{gives thanks for}
- The way Paul feels: He remembers them all v. 3 (The letter to the church)
 - He prays for them all v. 4
 - He commends them all v. 5 (for generosity)
 - He has expectations for them all v. 6 (God will use them till Jesus)

The words Paul says: He tells them all

v. 7a "Right for me to feel this way"

v. 7b "I hold you in my heart"

If TV available Paul now flashing the "heart sign", like athletes at Olympics or Actors at award ceremonies, and that's a good word for parents, pastors, teachers, friends: We share Christ's love by telling others. In fact, it's hard for others to know and respond to Christ's love if we don't express it. But Paul is about to go much deeper.

2. Revealed in Christ's Provision

- I need Jesus like you do (v. 7c)

- You are partakers w/ me of Grace (7c)
It covers us both - me the persecutor & prisoner

- You are partakers w/ me of Gospel (7d)
You didn't crawl out from under the covers when my life ^{was uncomfortable} ^{is real!} ^{was tough - showing what I am defending}

- I love you like Jesus does (v. 8) As the deer
"Yearn" for you = pant as Jsm. 42:1 pants for water..

In OT we pant for God

In NT God! pants for us → revealed in Christ

Paul's expression of love is meant to reveal Christ's depth of love so that the Philippians too would abound. This is not mere sentiment it is the foundation of the Christian life. What is the greatest commandment? (Matt 22:37) Why so important? Because of power of love to motivate sets priority for our expression. Its considering obligation to Katy w/ cereal bowl

2

If we know his love, and are abounding in love for him (or anyone) we will want to know Him better. That's the natural yearning of our hearts. If we love someone more & more, we want the relationship to deepen - to know them more & more. Not only to abound in love, but to deepen in understanding, as Paul prays (v. 9b)

II. To Deepen in Understanding

Three dimensions of deepening understanding are described:

A. Knowledge (v. 9b)

Paul prays that love would abound with knowledge. Love for God is not abstract or unguided. If we love someone or something we want to know who they are and what they expect. If we love God, we want to know who he is and what he expects. "I want to know you ^{more} than I do..."
Scripture reading, prayer, worship and fellowship ^{gaining love}
Imagine it someone said, I now love God & want to ^{deepen} love & please him more. How do I? We would be cruel to say, "It's not my to tell you."

B. Discernment (v. 9c)

Knowledge = acquiring information; discernment = using information to distinguish what is not loving.
Paul wants us to have knowledge not just to swell our heads but to guide our lives. So we are not undiscerning about teaching, practices, habits, language, attitudes or relationships that are not helpful for deepening our relationship w/ God. Sadness of meeting those w/o knowledge, but also w/ knowledge but w/o discernment.
The purpose of the discernment...

C. Approval (v. 10)

Paul wants those he loves to be able to Approve ("to assess by testing, as metals") what is "excellent" Have you ever bought a book, CD, or mattress "on approval" that means you will test it out for "excellence"

1. What is excellent? - "What is best" - not just for your actions or God's expectations, but for your relationship with Him.

2. What is the ^(intended) end goal? To make your engagement fantastic! (v. 10)

The Knowledge & discernment, are to make you able to approve what's excellent - so you'll be prepared for your wedding day! All this knowledge & discernment & approval are so that love will abound "for the day of Christ." Jesus is coming back, he will claim his bride and the wedding feast of the Lamb is the culminating celebration of all creation. Right now we are in the engagement period, awaiting that day. And what we would want the most for those we love the most is a satisfying engagement - deepening in love - and not derailed by injury or blame that would hurt that relationship.

III. To Have a Fruitful Life (v.11)

Why do we want those we love to have a fantastic engagement?
 Because we want them to have a "good, rewarding and fruitful life"
 What marks the fruitful life of a believer prior to the "day of Christ?"

A. Filled w/ the Fruit of Righteousness (v.11a) ← Rtnss is our position ← Rtnss is our practice

Sometimes people think the name of our church is a license to be lax in the Christian walk. That's just a misunderstanding of grace; God's pardon, kindness and goodness make the heart long to please him and in that pleasure we find our own delight - pleasing One we love is our own pleasure. So Paul prays for a bumper crop of righteousness - lives filled w/ that fruit - for a truly good life.

Kindness of God leads to repentance / Elsa walk

B. Fueled by Jesus Christ (v.11b)

- Power: "I can do all things through Christ..." (Phil. 4:13)
 The fruit of rtnss is the fruit of the HS. If being "pure & blameless" were only up to us, we'd be sunk. But "Greater is he in you..." We are not left alone - are no longer slaves (Rom. 6:6+14)
- Motivation: "The love of God controls us..." (2 Cor. 5:14). We act upon our power because of the love we have for Christ, because he first loved us.

C. Flowing into God's Glory (Fruit → Song) (v.11c)

Our fruit of rtnss is a life that is a song of praise.

- If in us is:
- ✓ love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, self-control
 - ✓ purity + blamelessness
 - ✓ love for the unlovely
 - ✓ forgiveness for the faulty
 - ✓ unity among those different

Then Jesus' statement is true of us:

"Men will see your good works and glorify your Father..." (Matt. 5:16)

△ To think that the life I cursed or others abused can be a song of praise to God!

That's not only what we want the most for others, but for ourselves, all Christ loves.

If only it were true - It is!

I want to read to you an email from one of our elders, written for the glory and praise of God because of a life now filled w/ the fruit of the spirit and fueled by the grace of Christ - -