

PHILIPPIANS

Rejoice In
The Lord!

Paul's Joy

Lesson Twenty-Six

Philippians

Rejoice In The Lord!

Lesson Goal: To demonstrate to students the joy of a good teacher.

Scriptures: Philippians 2:16b-18

For Memory: “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.” Philippians 2:17

Paul’s Joy

We have called this series of lessons from the letter to the church at Philippi, “Rejoice In The Lord.” We did that because Paul speaks so often of joy in this letter. In our lesson today, he tells the people that he is joyful because of their Christian service.

Have you ever tried to teach someone to do something. Maybe you taught them to ride a bike, make a cake, play a game, or sing a song. When that person did it well, weren’t you pleased? Weren’t you a little proud of yourself for being such a good teacher?

That’s where Paul finds himself in these verses. He told them, as we discussed in our last lesson, that they should hold out the Word of life. In our Scripture today, he says that when they do that, he will be very pleased and be proud of his work when he meets Jesus face to face. He described his teaching as running or laboring. Paul often uses athletic pictures to make a point. Here he is saying that his teaching was intense, like the long and strenuous training of a runner getting himself ready for the race. He really doesn’t want all that effort to be for nothing.*

Then Paul says a really interesting thing. He tells the Philippians that he will be very happy just to be poured out on their sacrifice and service. Now, to understand that better you need to know about a religious practice with which the Philippians were familiar. In popular sacrifices, made in the pagan temples of the day, an animal of some kind was killed and set on fire as an offering to the gods. Then, the priest would pour a cup of wine over the burning sacrifice. That liquid would quickly be turned into steam and disappear. This is similar to an Old Testament sacrifice.

Paul says that the Christian work of the Philippians, their good deeds and their faithful witness for Christ, was their sacrifice to God. It was a sacrifice with which Paul was pleased and one with which God was pleased. When the real God, not the gods to which pagans offered their burned offerings, saw the good things done by the Philippians, He honored them as a true sacrifice. In another of Paul’s letters, *Romans 12:1*, he says, “I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.”

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God expects us to be an offering. He looks forward to all Christians giving all that they are to Him so that He can give us wonderful opportunities to do His work. And, it is obvious that the service of our Christian life comes as we have faith in God.

Paul's statement about being poured out means that He would find real joy in having only a small part in the work that they were doing. Like the steam that rises from the wine poured on the sacrifice, Paul would be something to make their offering just a little better. He probably refers to his death. He expected to be executed at any time. He could see his death as an offering to God along with their sacrifice.

So, why are we calling this lesson Paul's Joy? Because Paul says, in verses 17 and 18, that as the Philippians offer themselves to work for God, he is happy and has great joy for them. He also encourages them to be happy and have great joy with him. Paul did not fear death. As a matter of fact, he looked forward to it. Just a few verses back, Philippians 1:21, he said, "For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." If he must die for what he believed, he wanted the church at Philippi to know that he would die rejoicing, happy and pleased that they were serving God just as he had encouraged them to do.

*Underlined statements in this Teacher's Guide appear in the Student Worksheet with blanks to be filled in by the student during the lesson. Words in the Student Worksheet may not appear exactly as printed in the Teacher's Guide.



Teaching Tips:

1. For more on Paul's athletic imagery and references to his running the race, see I Corinthians 9:24-27. For a similar Scripture, consult II Timothy 4:6-8. Regarding running the race in vain, see Galatians 2:2.
2. The drink offering was also part of the Old Testament sacrificial system, Numbers 15:1-10. Paul tells the Philippians in 4:1 that they are his joy and crown. Paul believed that the work of the Christian would not be in vain: I Corinthians 15:58
3. Songs that emphasize God's grace, sacrifice and service, joy in Christian living, and the joy of leading people to know Jesus as Savior are appropriate.
4. Pray with your students: Thank God for His Word and for Paul's assurance to the church at Philippi that we can please God. Thank Him that we are able to give ourselves to Him and to others as we serve Him. Thank Him for the joy that we have in each other and in Jesus as we serve Him together.

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Student Worksheet

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=Paul is saying that his teaching was _____, like the long and strenuous _____ of a runner getting himself ready for the _____. He really doesn’t want all that effort to be for _____.

=Paul says that the Christian work of the Philippians, their _____ and their faithful _____ for Christ, was their sacrifice to God. It was a _____ with which Paul was _____ and one with which _____ was pleased.

=Romans 12:1, “I urge you, brothers, in view of _____ mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of _____.

=God expects us to be an _____. He looks forward to all Christians giving all that they are to Him so that _____ can give us wonderful opportunities to do His _____.

=If Paul must die for what he _____, he wanted the church at Philippi to know that he would die rejoicing, _____ and _____ that they were serving God just as he had _____ them to do.

How to begin a Personal Relationship with God:

First, believe that there is a God.

Second, believe that Jesus, God’s Son, was sent to earth to die so that you can have a relationship with God.

Third, ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus’ name. Jesus’ death on the cross paid the price of every sin you commit.

Fourth, ask Jesus to be your Savior and the Lord of your life.

Fifth, believe that He has answered your prayer, and be determined to live for him all the rest of your life.