

## **REJOICING IN THE LORD - PART 3**

### **Joy Unspeakable and Full of Glory!**

**Dr. Derek Morris**

Preaching passage: Philippians 2:1-11  
Subject: How Christians should live  
Complement: like Jesus.  
Exegetical idea: Christians should live like Jesus  
Homiletical idea: **When you open your heart to the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, you will love God with all your heart, love those around you more than life itself, and be will be filled with inexpressible and glorious joy!**

Purpose: To remind my hearers that when they allow God's love flow through them back to God and to those around them, they will experience inexpressible and glorious joy!

#### Introduction

One of the benefits of moving house is that you can get rid of things that you've been storing for years and years and years and don't need any more! You know the things I'm talking about...in your closets, under your bed, in your attic, in your garage, in the trunk of your car!

One of the benefits of moving is that you can get rid of some of those things that you don't need anymore. Another benefit of moving house is that you find family treasures that you haven't seen for years. I found some treasures this past week! These two precious boxes. They may not look that precious to you. But they are priceless to me and to my wife Bodil! Can anyone guess what these boxes contain? Piles of love letters. No! You can't read them! These are mine, and those are Bodil's!

Bodil and I first met when we were both students at Newbold College, in England. I had grown up in England and, at the time we met, I was a junior theology major at Newbold College, just west of London, England. Bodil was starting her first year of college and, as a bold and daring high school graduate, had decided to come to England from the United States. You're

probably expecting me to tell you that when I heard her melodious alto voice, saw her long flowing hair and looked into her sparkling eyes that I was instantly and hopelessly smitten. That may actually be true, but I'm not sure that I would ever admit that in public. What I am willing to admit is this: as days passed into weeks, and weeks into months, Bodil and I became best friends. We saved places for each other at Chapel and in the Dining Hall. We took walks together. And we began to write notes to each other. Lots of notes.

We spent some time reading some of those love notes this past week. Here's one that Bodil sent me on our first Valentine's day. "....." I'm happy to report that she has never stopped eating peanut butter! Here's another one that it wasn't easy for a rather reserved young lady to send to a rather loud and boisterous Englishman. "....." I found one of my love notes to her. It's a Ziggy card. (Read card)

As we read these love notes, our hearts were filled with the joy! We rejoiced as we remembered God's wonderful leading in our lives and we still rejoice in things God continues to do in our lives day by day. Our hearts are still overflowing with love. As you can imagine, these love notes are very precious to us because they reveal the essence of our thoughts and feelings towards each other.

God has also sent a Love Note to us. That love note also reveals the essence of His thoughts and feelings toward us. But unlike these love notes, (point to the boxes), God's love note to us was not written on a Hallmark card or on parchment with pen and ink, or even on stone with His own finger. God's love letter to us was sent in a Person. Who is God's love note to us? That's right! Jesus! The Bible tells us that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. Jesus, the Son of God came to reveal the essence of the Father's thoughts and

feelings toward us. And the message was as simple as it is precious: **God loves you. God loves you. God loves you.**

We have come to the place in our study of the letter to the Philippians where the apostle Paul speaks of God's love so perfectly and absolutely revealed in His love letter to us, the Lord Jesus Christ. The portion of Philippians that we are going to study today is one of the most profound passages of Scripture in the entire Bible. Many scholars believe that it was actually an early Christian hymn because it is written in carefully chosen phrases which have a clear rhythm.

I'd like us to begin our study of the Philippian letter this morning by reading this early Christian hymn together. If you have your Philippians scroll, this early Christian hymn about God's love letter to us begins on the fifth line of the second paragraph. In our Bibles, it's found in Phil 2:6-11. Talking about Jesus, the apostle Paul has this to say.... Let's read together from our scroll.

Who, being in very nature God,  
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,  
but made Himself nothing,  
taking the very nature of a servant,  
being made in human likeness,  
And being found in appearance as a man,  
he humbled himself  
and became obedient to death—  
even death on a cross!  
Therefore God exalted him to the highest place  
and gave him the name that is above every name  
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

What an amazing picture of the love of God in action! Tell me something. Why was Jesus willing to empty Himself, to make Himself nothing? Why was He willing to stoop so low

for wretched sinners like you and me? Can you answer that question for me? The answer is simple: Because He loves us. And He came to reveal the Father's love. The Father loves you! That is the message written to bold print in God's love letter to us. **God loves you! God loves you! God loves you!**

And the apostle Paul appeals to the Philippians believers and also to us to embrace that love and to allow that love to transform our lives. Notice his admonition to the Philippians at the beginning of the second paragraph of his letter. It begins with the words "if you have any encouragement..." Let's read this section of the letter together.

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ,  
if any comfort in **his** love, if any fellowship with the Spirit,  
if any tenderness and compassion,  
then make my joy complete by being like-minded,  
**having the same love,**  
being one in spirit and purpose.  
Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit  
but in humility consider others better than yourselves.  
Each of you should look not only to your own interests,  
but also to the interests of others.  
Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.

And what was the attitude of Christ Jesus? Very simply this: His life was so filled with the love of God that He loved the Father with all of His heart and He loved God's children more than life itself. Let me say that again. Jesus was so filled with the love of God that He loved the Father with all of His heart and He loved God's children more than life itself.

And the apostle Paul's admonition is clear. Let your attitude, let your approach to life, be the same as that of Christ Jesus. Let the love of God so fill your heart that you will love Him with all your heart and love those around you more than life itself. And that's a miracle of God's grace. You can't work up that kind of love. You can only open your heart to receive it as a gift

from God. Paul told the believers in Rome that God's love is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom He has given to us. And when your life is filled with the love of God, you will have the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus. **When your heart is filled with the love of God, you will love God with all of your heart and you will love those around you more than life itself.**

And when you receive God's amazing love note through Jesus Christ, you will not only love God with all of your heart, which is the first great commandment, you will not only love those around you more than life itself, which is the second great commandment, but you will be filled with glorious and inexpressible joy!

The apostle Peter speaks of this joy in his first epistle. He writes: "Though you have not seen him, (speaking of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, God's love letter to us), though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls." 1 Pet 1:8-9 The KJV describes this joy as "joy unspeakable and full of glory!"

Jesus experienced that glorious and inexpressible joy as He loved God with all of His heart and loved us more than life itself. We read in Hebrews 12:1-2, "....." And that joy was not just a future joy. It was a present joy. Luke records in Luke 10:21 that Jesus was full of joy by the Holy Spirit!

And you can know that joy today. That glorious and inexpressible joy when you receive God's amazing love note to us, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. When you receive Him, you will not only respond by loving God with all of your heart, and loving those around you more than life itself, you will be filled with a glorious and inexpressible joy! The old gospel song is

true. I'm not sure than I can remember all of the words. But it goes something like this:

If you want joy, real joy, wonderful joy  
let Jesus come into your heart.  
If you want joy, real joy, wonderful joy,  
let Jesus come into your heart.  
Your sins He'll wash away  
Your night He'll turn today  
Your life He'll make it over anew  
If you want joy, real joy, wonderful joy,  
let Jesus come into your heart.

And Paul says, when that is your experience, when you receive the love of God poured out through Jesus Christ, when you love God with all of your heart and love one another more than life itself, "you will make my joy complete." Literally, you will fill up my joy.

As your new senior pastor here at Forest Lake Church, I've seen a lot of love revealed in the past few weeks. And much of that love has been directed towards me and my family. Six weeks ago, we moved here to Florida from southern California. Since we've arrived, we've been invited to Sabbath lunch each week by various church elders. That ends this Sabbath, by the way, so we are open to lunch invitations from mid-November until Jesus comes! We've had the CCC, the Charitable Chainsaw Crew, come over and help clean up our yard after Charlie and Frances visited our neighborhood. We have received notes and cards of encouragement and support. And we have also witnessed many other acts of love and kindness in the congregation. For example, Pastor Don came to staff meeting on Tuesday in dirty work clothes. He had just come off someone's roof, helping to make some needed repairs. He doesn't have to do that. But that's what happens when your heart is filled with the love of God. You love God with all of your heart and you love those around you more than your own life. And when I see the love of God manifested in you, it brings joy to my heart as your pastor, just like the Philippian believers

brought joy to Paul's heart. And I know that you will also experience joy. Real joy. Wonderful joy. Glorious inexpressible joy as you allow God to fill you with His amazing love.

I want to give you something this morning to remind you how much God loves you. It's a simple card that you can put in your wallet, put in your purse, in your Bible, put on your bulletin board. It says, Dear.....(and you can write your name), I love you. God.” God loves you no matter what you've done or where you've been. God loves you no matter where you came from. God loves you whether your rich or poor. God loves you whether you're pretty or ugly! God loves you and He has sent you a love letter in the person of His Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Won't you open your heart to His love to perfectly and completely revealed in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord? When you do, His love will so fill your heart that you will love Him with all of your heart, you will love those around you more than life itself, and you will experience a glorious and inexpressible joy!

You will still face challenges in life. You will still face difficulties. But like it says in the song that our children sing, “This joy that I have the world didn't give it to me. This joy that I have the world didn't give it to me. The world didn't give it and the world can't take it away. Am I speaking the truth this morning?

Is there anyone who needs to experience that glorious and inexpressible joy? It won't come with more money or more friends or more stuff. That glorious and inexpressible joy comes when we receive God's love note to us, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Is there anyone here today who needs to trust Jesus completely as Savior and Lord and be filled with glorious and inexpressible joy? I want to invite to raise your hand right where you are. Praise God. God sees your hand brother. God sees your hand sister.

We're going to close our service this morning by singing an old gospel song based on 1 Peter 1:8-9. As we sing this song, if you raised your hand to trust Jesus completely as your Savior and Lord and be filled with inexpressible and glorious joy, or even if you didn't raise your hand, but that's your heart desire right now, I want to invite you to come forward as we sing this song so that we can pray with you and rejoice together!

Evan, lead us as we sing. And as we sing, if you've made an important decision to trust Jesus completely today as your Savior and Lord and given Him permission to fill you with inexpressible and glorious joy, I invite you to join me here at the front of the church.

**It is joy unspeakable and full of glory, full of glory, full of glory.**

**It is joy unspeakable and full of glory and the half has never yet been told!**