

Purple Reign

When Our Blues Meet His Blood

November 30, 2025



Today we're talking about dying to our selfish self and living with undying love and joy and peace!

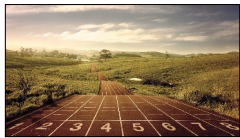
So: *How was your Thanksgiving?* Not the holiday, Noah's directive from Paul last Sunday, to:



Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. [So] Do not be anxious about anything, but in every [frustrating] situation, by prayer and ... thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God ... will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. – Philippians 4:4-7 NIV



Know why hostilities and holidays and anxieties go together so well? Cuz that's how God wants it. *Siblings and spouses are sacred sandpaper*, as are Grandma Grudgey, Grandpa Drinky, Auntie Anti-Semite, and Uncle Paul ... itics, and everyone who causes friction and rubs you the wrong way. So, the choice between light and dark goes way beyond the turkey meat! Cuz *when these turkeys don't make you happy, let 'em make you holy!* Because those who sit before you have been set before you to challenge you to endure and enjoy.



[Therefore] let us run with endurance the [joyful] race [to the throne of God] that is set before us, [by] fixing our eyes on Jesus ... who for the joy set before Him endured the cross ... and has sat down at ... the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, [consider Him] so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. – Hebrews 12:1-3 NAS



[Consider how] They put a purple robe on Him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on Him. And they began to call out to Him, "Hail, king of the Jews!" [And] Again and again they struck Him on the head with a staff and spit on Him. – Mark 15:17-19 NIV

[Consider Him, because] He was pierced for our transgressions ... [And] the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed. – Isaiah 53:5 NIV

So, *what do you bring to the table: a piece of your mind or a peace of your heart?* Cuz if Jesus could endure the hostility of the cross – *we should try to endure the hostility of cross words.*

"For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother ... And a person's enemies will be those of his own household." – Matthew 10:35-36 ESV

For by one sacrifice He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

So, if they're not making you happy, they better be making you holy! So, try to "Rejoice in the Lord always" and "do not be anxious about anything". When Uncle Paul wrote this to the Philippians, he was chained to a Roman guard under house arrest after being incarcerated. (Acts 28:16)



It was *ancient Rome's* version of an *ankle monitor*. This is our *first joyful story*. Cuz *that's* the *barracks* of the *Palace Guard* in charge of Paul. And here's a *selfie* "taken" just *eight years* before Paul wrote to the *Philippians* that:



What has happened to me [being chained to a guard] has really served to advance the Gospel. [Because] As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard ... that I am in *chains* for Christ. ... And because of *this* I rejoice. Yes, and I will *continue to rejoice* – Philippians 1:12-18 NIV

Because, ***who's chained to who?*** Depends on who's *changing* who. So, *who's* chained to you? ***Paul turned his misery into ministry***. How about you? Don't just *complain* about the *ol' ball-and-chain*, *minister!* And ***grow in holiness!*** And ***die to selfishness!*** And ***live with joyfulness!*** And rejoice!



The *second story* is about a *messenger* who was *sent* from *Philippi* to *comfort* and *assist* Paul in *Rome*. But the *guy* got so *sick* that he *almost literally died to self*, and *Paul* had to *care for him*. That's not the *funny part*. The *hilarious part* is that *before Paul wraps up* his letter with "*again: Rejoice*" and "*do not be anxious about anything*," he writes:

With regard to *Epaphroditus* [that's either his name or what he had] ... I consider it necessary to send him [back] to you. For he has been ... *distressed* [you know, anxious] because *you heard* that he was *ill*. He was *indeed ill*, *close to death* ... [I send him] [back] so that, on *seeing* him, you may rejoice again, and I may have less anxiety. – Philippians 2:25-28 NAB

Turns out, ***after you pray with thanksgiving, you still gotta send some folks home!*** Any of those at your Thanksgiving? If *not*, it *might've* been *you!* And I like to think they all had a *good laugh* at *this*:

For the *joy* of the *Lord* is your *strength*. – Nehemiah 8:10 NIV

[So] *Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling* – Philippians 2:12 NIV

[And] *I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith* – Philippians 1:25 NIV

And after *Paul* worked out *this situation* by putting *Epaphroditus* on a *bus*, he *adds*:

Welcome him then *in the Lord* with all joy and hold *such people* in *esteem*, because for the *sake* of the *Work of Christ* he came *close to death* – Philippians 2:25-30 NAB

Because ***the saved still get sick and die and have anxiety!*** Even if they're *good* with *God!*

For it has been *granted* to you [Philippians and all believers] on *behalf* of *Christ* not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for Him – Philippians 1:27-29 NIV



For the *simple reason* that ***suffering doesn't discredit God's power, it opens a door to display it***. Which most often has ***the deepest impact***, and leaves ***the most indelible impression***. Which is certainly the case in our *third joyful story* which *most likely* involves *this* ancient *Philippian prison*, and a *jailer* who personifies *salvation* with *fear* and *trembling*.

Because *one* of the *Philippians* to whom Paul – while *under arrest* in *Rome* – is *writing*, is his *former jailer* who – *ten years before* – *died to self*, just after almost *killing himself*, just after God *opened all the doors* to *display His power*, just after *Paul and Silas* were *severely beaten* with *rods*.

He put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. [But] About midnight Paul and Silas [backs bleeding from a severe beating with rods] were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. [Because nothing gets attention and admiration like singing in the pain] Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that ... *all the prison doors flew open*, [which is funny, because Paul had just asked the *Colossians* to pray “that God may open a door for our message ... for which I am in chains.” (Col 4:3)] and everybody’s chains came loose. ... And when [the jailer] saw the prison doors open, [he was so filled with FEAR] he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted, “Don’t harm yourself! We are all here!” [Cuz Paul had convinced the convicts that God had opened those doors to set the jailer free! You see, we often pray for escape from the places God puts us to save those around us] The jailer called for lights, rushed in and [saw the light! And] fell TREMBLING ... and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be SAVED?” [Because “If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” (Jn 8:36)] ... Then they spoke the Word of the Lord to him and ... [he] washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. [And washed away their sins. Then] The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; [and after being filled with fear] he was filled with joy ... [and] After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia’s house – Acts 16:24-40 NIV



Which brings us to our *fourth joyful story*. Because when Paul *first* went to *Philippi*, he and *Luke* went to *pray* by *this river*. Where, *Luke* writes:

[We] began to speak to the women who had gathered there. [And] One of those listening was a [wealthy business] woman named *Lydia*, a dealer in purple cloth ... [And] The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message. [And] When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. – Acts 16:12-15 NIV

Which became the *first* and *foremost* Christian church in *Philippi* – and the *destination* of Paul’s letter to the *Philippians*. This piece of purple cloth is *1,000 years older* than *Lydia*! And the part of *Lydia’s* story that I just love, is that **Paul sends his letter about dying to self to a gal who dyed for a living!** And not just any ol’ dye, but *royal purple* – the same as the robe they draped on Jesus on His way to the cross, to die for our sins, on His way to His heavenly throne! And Paul writes:

I thank my God every time I remember you. [Paul writes] In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the Gospel from the first day [by the river, when God opened Lydia’s heart, and she opened her home] until now, [chained to a guard, and putting Epaphroditus on a bus] being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion [if you’ll let Him] – Philippians 1:3-6 NIV

[So] Whatever happens, [like Paul’s chains or Epaphroditus’ poor health] conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ. ... For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for Him – Philippians 1:27-29 NIV

Because **suffering doesn't discredit our faith, it grants us a chance to strengthen it.** Like a *muscle*. **But our strength requires the joy of seeing beyond it,** like Jesus *enduring the cross for the joy of our salvation*. And so, *perhaps with the trembling Philippian jailer in mind*, Paul *urges us to*:

Continue to work out your salvation [like a *muscle*] with fear and trembling, [a reference to Psalm 2:11, to "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling"] for it is God who works in you to [retrain your] will and to [prompt you to] act – Philippians 2:12-16 NIV

[Or] ... to help you want to do and be able to do what pleases Him. – Philippians 2:12-16 NCV

Last Sunday, I loved how Noah said **we don't need more willpower, we need want-power.** Cuz if you don't really *want* something, what can *willpower* do? Cuz **willpower is an action we take against our own will.** Which is why *self-control* is a *fruit* of the *Spirit* (Gal 5:23) rather than a *work* of the *selfish self*. So, **you gotta really want to die to self.** And for that you need a *stronger force* than *want-power*. You need *why-power*! So, **why do you want to die to self and live for Christ?**

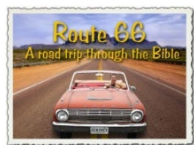
You gotta *work that out for yourself* with the *Lord*. But the *wise rejoice* in their *whys*. Because **why-power fuels want-power.** And **with enough want-power you won't need willpower** to act in a way that *pleases God* and *gives you the strength to run your race with joy*.

For to me, to *live* is *Christ* and to *die* is *gain*. – Philippians 1:21 NIV

And I no longer *live*, but *Christ* lives in me. – Galatians 2:20 NIV

[So] I will *greatly rejoice* in the *Lord*, my *soul* shall be *joyful* in my *God*; for He has *clothed me* with ... *salvation*, [and] *covered me* with the *robe of righteousness* – Isaiah 61:10 NKJ

[Because] They have *washed their robes* ... in the *blood* of the *Lamb*. – Revelation 7:14 NIV



So now let's *practice our progress of joy* in our *faith* with a sing-along with *Paul*, that comes from *one of my all-time favorite Route 66 videos*. I wrote the *lyrics* to the *tune of Lydia the Tattooed Lady* (by *Groucho Marx*) if *that* helps. And we're gonna have a *ball* – a *bouncing ball*. So, *try to sing along with joy*!

It's okay to be anxious, just don't stay anxious. You should want to:

Cast *all your anxiety* on Him [Why?] because He *cares* for you. – 1 Peter 5:7 NIV

In your *relationships* ... have the *same mindset* as Christ Jesus: who, being in *very nature God* ... made himself *nothing* by *taking the very nature* of a *servant* – Philippians 2:5-7 NIV

I have *learned the secret* of being *content* in *any and every* [irritating] situation [and it's simply this] I can do *everything* through Him who *gives me strength*. – Philippians 4:12-13 NIV

For the *joy of the Lord* is your *strength*. – Nehemiah 8:10 NIV

[So] *Rejoice* in the *Lord always*; and *again* I say, "*Rejoice!*" – Philippians 4:4 KJ21

And die to live. And live to give. And try to forgive the sandpaper people.