

## **What is Christmas Joy? Philippians 3:1-8**

### **What does it mean to rejoice in the Lord? (v.1)**

It means to feel pleasure and delight in the Lord Jesus.

One of our biggest questions is where we will find the pleasure and delight that our hearts crave.

The answer is in knowing, worshiping, and glorifying Jesus Christ.

### **Why does Paul start talking about circumcision? (vv.2-3)**

Paul starts talking about circumcision in verse 2.

It seems that some Jewish evangelists were persuading them to seek their joy and salvation in the status of being circumcised.

And Paul knows that if they focus on rejoicing in the Lord, they will not seek their joy and salvation in the status of being circumcised. Which is why, after Paul talks about rejoicing in the Lord, he has to bring up the topic of circumcision.

### **Why would that be so dangerous? (v.3)**

It's because saved people seek their joy and salvation in Christ alone, not in Jewish distinctives like circumcision, and not in anything else.

So what's at stake here is whether they are saved or not.

### **How does Paul persuade them to keep seeking their joy and salvation in the Lord? (vv.3-8)**

By explaining that he has far more Jewish distinctives than these Jewish evangelists do, and by testifying that the joy of knowing Christ is far better.

### **What does this mean for us?**

Christmas is about good news of great joy which can be for all people.

This great joy is found in Jesus Christ.

So take time every day where you put everything else aside, and nurture your joy in Christ through prayer, God's word, and worship.

When you do, God will give you times when your heart is completely filled with joy in Christ, and you want nothing else.



## **HOME GROUP DISCUSSION OF SUNDAY'S TEACHING**

*(Sometimes in our home groups we talk about Sunday's teaching, so we can work together on responding to God's Word — asking questions, sharing insights, talking together.)*

In the past, what have you thought it meant to rejoice in the Lord? Do you agree that it means feeling pleasure and delight in the Lord Jesus? Why or why not?

What did you think of the illustration from the life of Hudson Taylor? Have you ever experienced anything like that?

Does it make sense that the reason Paul starts to talk about circumcision is because his readers were being tempted to seek their joy in being circumcised and not in Christ? Why or why not?

If the mark of salvation is that we worship by the Spirit of God, glory in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh [= seek our joy and salvation in nothing other than Christ], are you assured that you have been saved? Why or why not?

Do you understand the difference between seeking your joy in something, and experiencing joy in something? Or is that just semantics? What are some things you seek your joy in besides Christ?

Do you agree that it is spiritually dangerous to seek your joy in something other than Christ? Why or why not?

How does it help to hear Paul say that all his Jewish distinctives were loss compared with the surpassing worth of knowing Christ?

Do you agree that in comparison with Christ all the world's joys are loss? Really?

How have you been doing in getting daily time where your focus is on nurturing your joy in Christ? Pray for each other that this Christmas season will be a time of seeking, and experiencing, the joy of knowing Christ.

