

# Philippians 3:1

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/phil/phil-3/philippians-31/>

*With self-awareness, Paul repeats a logical application of his main point to the Philippians to choose the same mindset Jesus chose: rejoice in the Lord. If we have the mindset of Christ, we will believe that whatever God places in our lives is for our best interest. To choose to rejoice is to choose to view all circumstances as an opportunity to gain the great benefit of obedience to Christ.*

After making a passionate plea in Chapter 2 to adopt the mindset, or perspective, that Jesus adopted when He obeyed His Father and came from heaven to earth, trusting in God's benevolent intent toward Him, now Paul starts to bring the letter to a close. It is likely that Paul dictated this letter. It appears he intended to conclude his thoughts, saying *Finally*, then thought of a lot more to say. He will say *Finally* again in Chapter 4 (Philippians 4:8).

The thought Paul has for this premature closing is: *my brethren, rejoice in the Lord*. In Philippians 2:14, he had said, "Do all things without grumbling or disputing." To *rejoice in the Lord* displays a similar attitude. And to *rejoice in the Lord* is to accept all circumstances as "just what is best for me," trusting God's benevolent intent toward us in all things. The rejoicing is not in circumstances. It is not being happy because "something good happened." The rejoicing is in *the Lord*. Paul is telling them to rejoice because of their relationship and opportunity to serve Christ, and be fulfilled in their design by serving Him.

This command to *rejoice in the Lord* requires the mindset ("phroneo") Paul advocated in the previous chapter (Philippians 2:5-10). When we choose the mindset of Christ, we can choose to be joyful in all circumstances, because we will view them as given by God—opportunities to come to know God by faith.

When we choose the mindset of Christ, we can then choose to look at any circumstance as an opportunity to trust and serve, which means it is an opportunity to gain the greatest riches available in this life—the riches of God's reward for those who live in obedience to Him.

Paul made clear that Jesus' trust in His Father's benevolent intent toward Him in asking Him to endure such great difficulty was completely validated, as God "highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name" (Philippians 2:9). It is inferred that the same promise applies to us. This is explicitly stated in 1 Peter and James:

"Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you."  
(James 4:10)

"Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you."  
(1 Peter 5:6)

To be “humble” is to see reality as it is. To *rejoice in the Lord* is making a choice to embrace the reality that God’s ways are higher than our ways, and that He knows what is best for us. God’s intent toward us is always benevolent, regardless of our circumstances. This allows us to *rejoice in the Lord* even when we can’t imagine how our circumstances could possibly be redeemed. Jesus was betrayed, falsely convicted, and murdered, and God used those most dismal of circumstances as an opportunity to redeem the world from sin. In the same way, we can rejoice, because we know if we endure, Jesus will bless us beyond measure.

We can *rejoice in the Lord*, in spite of persecution, in spite of hardship, in spite of difficulty, knowing God uses all things to work for the good (Romans 8:28). This is advocated by Paul as a necessary perspective to choose in order to adopt the attitude, mindset, or perspective which he advocated believers adopt in Philippians 2:5-10.

Paul seems to validate this application when he states next that *To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you*. The command to *rejoice in the Lord* is to say the *same things* he said in Chapter 2. A practical way to test whether we are adopting the attitude Paul tells us to adopt in Chapter 2 is whether we *rejoice in the Lord* during difficult circumstances.

Paul is in jail. He has been falsely accused. He will soon stand before Emperor Nero, and might die unjustly. He rejoices in the Lord, because He has chosen to adopt the same attitude Jesus adopted. Jesus came to earth to suffer and die in order to obey His Father. Paul is suffering for the gospel, in order to obey his Master, Jesus. That makes him glad.

To *rejoice in the Lord* is a *safeguard*. When we start thinking that “I know best” we open ourselves to bad influences. So long as we are grateful for whatever comes into our lives, trusting that God holds us in His hands, we are safe from wasting our lives on useless pursuits, endeavors that are without lasting benefit.

Paul is stating that rejoicing is a *safeguard* as he is imprisoned. It seems clear that he has his spiritual safety in mind here; his physical safety is clearly in peril. Consistent with the attitude he advocates in this letter, Paul mainly seems concerned with gaining the same reward for living faithfully that Jesus gained. Living with gratitude in all circumstances provides a *safeguard* against losing that mindset.

### **Biblical Text**

**Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things *again* is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you.**