

Week of Sept 9-15

PETE AND REPEAT

Scripture Reading: Read Philippians chapter 4

You've probably heard the old joke about two brothers whose names were Pete and Repeat.

“Pete and Repeat were in a boat. Pete fell overboard. Who was left?”

The answer, of course, is “Repeat,” whereupon the joke teller repeats the joke. It's a corny joke that usually elicits a groan from the audience. Repetition doesn't have to be funny or even boring, however. Sometimes, it's necessary. In Philippians, Paul certainly thought so.

Philippians 3:1 - Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord!

Philippians 4:4 - Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

Three times in two verses, Paul commands the believers in Philippi to rejoice. Now, when God commands us to do something once, we should obey it as a regular practice. When He commands us twice to do something, we should give extra special attention to it. When the Lord three times gives us the same command through His servant Paul in just two verses, you would have to be crazy to ignore it.

This theme of joy, however, goes beyond just these two verses. In fact, it permeates the book of Philippians. Seventeen times in the book's 104 verses Paul makes reference to joy, rejoicing or being glad. That averages out to about once every six verses. You won't find such a high concentration of joy in all of the New Testament. In fact, with the possible exception of the Psalms, you won't find such an explosion of joy in the entire Bible.

What makes Paul's commands even more remarkable is the fact that he writes them while under house arrest in Rome, awaiting word from the Emperor as to whether he will live or die. In spite of his circumstances, Paul was filled with joy and he expects us to follow suit since, in Paul's mind, there should be no such thing as a joyless Christian. It's our birthright as a child of God (John 15:11; 17:13). It's a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) and it's God's desire that we see it cultivated in our lives. It's why Paul repeated himself three times in two verses. And, that's no joke.

Action Step: Skim through Philippians again and see if you can discover the seventeen joy, rejoice and glad references in the book. Compare Paul's joyful attitude to your own experience. How often do you allow joy to be robbed by your circumstances, by unbelief, by anxiety or by discouragement? Make a conscious choice to rejoice daily this week.

Prayer Focus: That God would empower you to be a rejoicing believer and cultivate the fruit of joy in your life through the Holy Spirit.

Take-a-way: *Make the choice to rejoice!*