

PAUL'S FUTURE JOY

Philippians 1:18b-20

INTRODUCTION

The First Noel:

The First Noel the angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds
in fields as they lay;
In fields as they lay, keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
Born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the east beyond them far,
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night.

Matthew 2:1-2, the visit of the Magi:

“Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, 2 “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.””

“**His star in the east**” - the point of the star was not the star in and of itself, but this specific star was pointing to Christ so that those who would follow it would worship Him.

In our text this morning, we see three shining stars which will point us to Christ. They will serve as a source for the joy that we have, both the present joy and the future joy.

READ Phil 1:12-18a

Paul describes his circumstances in other letters at the end.

→ Recall that this is unique in Philippians, to have this described at the beginning of the letter. It is also unique in both the length and the detail of what he shared compared to his other letters.

Paul's **Present Joy** 1:12-18a

Paul's **Future Joy** 1:18b-20

Future Joy

“^{18b}yes, and I will rejoice” – literally “but also, I will rejoice”

The true Christian is characterized by **joy**.

There are times, however, where we are especially stricken with grief and our joy is muted. Paul himself despaired even of life (2 Cor 1:8) on one occasion.

The great lesson this passage will teach us is the source of true joy.

Paul, you see, takes great joy in the present advance of the Gospel. And he takes great joy in the future victory of the Gospel.

READ Phil 1:18b-20

Proposition: 3 Shining Stars of Paul's Future Joy:

I. Guaranteed Emancipation

II. Eager Expectation

III. Bold Exaltation

So That: We will lift our eyes off of the present and look to the future and like the Proverbs 31 woman, smile at the future.

First **Shining Star** of Paul's Future Joy...

I. Guaranteed Emancipation 1:19b

Point – We could also say this is assured deliverance

Proof – “¹⁹**For I know that this shall turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,**”

“**For**” – *gar* – could be translated as “since”

- he is giving the purpose for the statement he just made
- the reason for “Yes. And I will rejoice.”

“**know**” – all verbs in this section are future except this one

- this “know” is in the perfect tense - this means it is something that is completed but with continued ramifications

“**this**” – v. 12 → “**my circumstances**”

- journeys to Rome and his imprisonment → **2 Cor 11:23-27**

“**deliverance**” – σωτηρία – salvation, preservation, safety, rescue from danger

→ May be the best, most comprehensive, and the most clarifying word to explain God’s gracious powerful work in our lives.

Heb 11:7a – “By faith Noah, being warned *by God* about things not yet seen, in reverence, prepared an ark for the salvation of his household,”

Now, when Paul speaks of his “**deliverance**,” he is not referring to being pardoned by Emperor Nero.

Calvin – “*Paul is not speaking of the safety of his body.*”

Paul has no “**earnest expectation and hope**” for his physical freedom. Rather, this “**deliverance**” is one he will experience regardless of what happens to him in prison – whether he leaves it dead or alive. It is signed, sealed, and waiting to be delivered.

Paul is writing about something far more important than his present circumstances (v. 12). He is speaking of his ultimate vindication before the King of Kings.

Future salvation

→ **Rom 5:9** – “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.”

2 Tim 4:18 – “The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.”

Paul’s heart is beating in unison with the heart of **Job**:

Job 13:15-16 – “Though He slay me, I will hope in Him. Nevertheless I will argue my ways before Him. ¹⁶This also will be my salvation, for a godless man may not come before His presence.”

In our Scripture reading this morning, we read **Psalm 91** – 3 times we read that God is the Deliverer who delivers/rescues His people.

Illustration– Paul thinks in terms of eternity – **Phil 3:10-14**

- His complete and final salvation.
- This is a beautiful expansion of what this doctrine and thinking produces in one who is following after God.

Application– When we do this, every lasting pleasure of earth is also thrown in. But if we focus merely at this world’s pleasures, then neither earth nor heaven will be ours.

2 Helps to this Final Deliverance:

A. Human

B. Divine

One more illustration that God is sovereign and there is human responsibility.

A. First Help → Human Help

Point – Paul earlier told his beloved Philippians how he prays for them and what he prays for them.

→ He now tells them he is aware they also pray for him.

Proof – “**through your prayers**”

Interesting! → In the original Greek language, “**your**” is plural and “**prayers**” is singular. So the literal translation is “your prayer.”

- The idea is that there is a collective heart beating in unison with one faith, one Savior, one desire, one “**prayer.**”

Illustration – Ignatius, an early church father, on his way to martyrdom wrote to the church in Philadelphia – “*Your prayer will perfect me.*”

Application – Listen to the beautiful and powerful words of the hymn:

Prayer Is Appointed to Convey – Joseph Hart, 1762.

*Prayer is appointed to convey
The blessings God designs to give:
Long as they live should Christians pray;
They learn to pray when first they live.*

*If pain afflict, or wrongs oppress;
If cares distract, or fears dismay;
If guilt deject, if sin distress;
In every case, still watch and pray.*

*‘Tis prayer supports the soul that’s weak;
Though thought be broken, language lame,
Pray, if thou canst or canst not speak;
But pray with faith in Jesus’ name.*

B. Second Help → Divine Help

Point – In the ancient world, an emperor was guarded by many barriers of protection. It was difficult, if not impossible, to gain access to him. In our modern day, none of us would turn up at the White House and tell the secret service we would like an audience with the President.

→ Royal authority is needed to access Royalty.

Proof – “**and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,**”

“**provision**” - this word was used outside the New Testament:

- in medicine for a supporting ligament
- in the theater for the provision the leader of the chorus made for its members

Also, as good students of the Word, the question we ask:

- 1) Is this the provision that comes from the Spirit?
- 2) Or is this the provision that is the Spirit?

→ It is both. The Giver is never separated from His gift.

“**the Spirit of Jesus Christ**” – exact phrase only here in the Bible

- Spirit sent from Jesus Christ
- text points towards the trinitarian aspect of God

Eph 2:18 – “through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.”

Illustration – A man named **Thomas Edward Lawrence** became a national hero in England after he helped the Arabs defeat Turkish forces during World War I. While in the Middle East, Lawrence formed close friendships with many Arab leaders. He became known as “**Lawrence of Arabia**.”

After the war, he accompanied some of his Arab friends to Paris for the Versailles Peace Conference. He showed them the sights of the city: the Arch of Triumph, the Louvre, Napoleon’s tomb, but none of these things impressed them.

What really interested Lawrence’s Arabian friends was the faucet in the bathtub of the hotel room. They kept turning it on and off. They found it amazing that you could turn a handle and get all the water you wanted.

Later, when they were ready to leave Paris and return to the East, Lawrence found them in the bathroom with wrenches trying to disconnect the faucet. “It is very dry in Arabia. We need faucets. If we have them, we will have all the water we want.”

Lawrence explained the effectiveness of the faucets did not lie in themselves, but in the immense reservoirs of water to which they were attached. He explained that behind the faucets lay the rain and snowfalls of the Alps.

Application – In the same way, the lives of many Christians seem as dry as the Arabian desert at times. They have their faucets, but there is no connection to the Living Water. We need to have that vital, thriving, serving, dependent reliance on the Holy Spirit, the living waters that God provides. If not, then that is where the dryness comes.

→ **2 Cor 3:17** – “Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”

Second **Shining Star** of Paul’s Future Joy...

II. Eager Expectation 1:20a

Point – Paul is not so heavenly-minded he is no earthly good. Rather, it is because he is so heavenly-minded, that he is surpassingly earthly good.

Proof – “^{20a} **according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything,**”

“**earnest expectation**” – literally is like stretching his head forward – ignoring other concerns and straining forward with outstretched head (neck) in anticipation and excitement.

→ **Rom 8:19** – “For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.”

- the word translated as anxious longing is the same word that is translated as earnest expectation

“**and hope**” – not wishful thinking.

- definite/certain promise

→ **Rom 8:20** – “For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope.”

William Carey – *“I have God, and his Word is sure ... and though the superstition of the heathen were a million times worse than they are, if I were deserted by all, and persecuted by all, yet my hope, fixed on that sure Word, would rise superior to all obstructions.... I shall come out of all trials as gold purified by fire.”*

“that I shall not be put to shame in anything” – we could also understand it that he will not have disappointment in anything
→ The person who is not ashamed is the person who is trusting in God and who, therefore, is never disappointed. God cannot and does not lie.

Rom 5:5 – “hope does not disappoint”

Isa 28:16 – “Thus says the Lord God, ‘Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, A costly cornerstone *for* the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes *in it* will not be disturbed.”

Isa 49:23 – “Kings will be your guardians, and their princesses your nurses. They will bow down to you with their faces to the earth, and lick the dust of your feet; and *you* will know that I am the LORD; Those who hopefully wait for Me will not be put to shame.”

Illustration– The Stuarts were the first kings of the United Kingdom. King James I of England who began the period was also King James VI of Scotland, thus combining the two thrones for the first time. The Stuart dynasty reigned in England and Scotland from 1603-1714.

The Stuart kings believed in the Divine Right of the Monarch. Not only did they believe that God wished them to be the infallible rulers of their kingdom - they also believed that they were the spiritual heads of the Church of Scotland.

This belief was not accepted by a group of people in Scotland called the Covenanters. No man, not even a king, could be spiritual head of their church. Only Jesus Christ could be spiritual head of a Christian church. The Covenanters signed a National Covenant in

1638 to confirm their opposition to the interference by the Stuart kings in the affairs of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

Richard Cameron was born in 1647 and went to university at St. Andrews before becoming a teacher. In 1678 he was licensed to preach and large crowds came to hear him, but he soon got in trouble for preaching against ministers who had accepted the indulgences. He became aware there were ministers who stopped preaching in the fields as they saw it as too dangerous for both them and the people. Cameron however saw it as his duty to preach the gospel no matter what might happen and preached to ever growing crowds. Despite his life being in constant danger, Cameron kept on preaching.

On July 22, 1680, faithful Richard Cameron was martyred by government dragoons in Airmoss. The dragoons cut off Cameron's head and hands for public display. But before they displayed them publicly, they took them to his father, Allan Cameron, who was in prison in Edinburgh also for preaching the Gospel, and asked him if they knew them.

Allan Cameron's famous reply –

“I know them, I know them. They are my son's, my dear son's. It is the Lord. Good is the will of the Lord, who cannot wrong me nor mine, but has made goodness and mercy to follow us all our days”

Application – Our problem, you see, is not that we are so heavenly-minded, we are is no earthly good. Our problem is we tend to be so earthly-minded, we are no heavenly good.

Third **Shining Star** of Paul's Future Joy...

III. Bold Exaltation **1:20b**

Point – Paul's “Exalted Poster” → “Exalted! Dead or Alive.”
(Christ not Paul)

Proof – ^{“20b} **but that with all boldness, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.”**

“but that with all boldness” – a fearless attitude that is open, free, clear, and with conviction publicly (John 7:13); courage and confidence in the presence of high-ranking persons (Acts 4:13)

You cannot be a cowardly Christian. Either the cowardice is going to kill the Christian or the Christian is going to kill the cowardice.

Illustration - When Margie and I were expecting our firstborn, Zachary, we heard (erroneously) that our adoption was not going to happen. Margie went into her office at the church, shut the door, and with tears streaming down her beautiful face, she turned on the song based the Magnificat, taken from Luke 1:46 in Scripture and began singing with tears streaming down her most beautiful face.

“exalted” – source of the word **“Magnificat”**

→ **Luke 1:46** – “And Mary said, ‘My soul magnifies the Lord,’”

Acts 19:17 – “And this became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, who lived in Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all and the name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified.”

For Paul, Christ will be exalted/magnified in Paul’s body, regardless of the outcome – **“whether by life or by death”** → **Win-Win!**

Between the hard sharpened axe of the executioner and the soft flesh of the neck of Paul are the whims of the emperor, Nero.

Paul is saying to the beloved Philippian congregation– “If I am executed, I want you to know that my head tumbled into the basket from the shoulders of a rejoicing man.”

Illustration – Before **Jim Elliot** went to the Auca Indians: *“I don’t know what the future holds. But I know who holds the future.”*

CONCLUSION