



new life fellowship

Sermon Title: Choosing Joy: Grace and Peace

Speaker: Richard Villodas, Lead Pastor

Scripture: Philippians 1:1-2

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 1:1-2 (NIV)

Sermon Outline:

In the book of Philippians, Paul is writing a letter of joy to the people of Philippi. Paul went from killing joyful Christians to becoming one and because of this, is now in prison where he is writing this letter. Paul began every letter with grace and peace. Paul and Timothy identify as servants of Jesus. Paul knows the human tendency is not to view God as one of grace and peace. Paul says to be in relationship with God, grace and peace are coming your way. Paul is letting the people of God know these are the first two words you should be thinking about.

Joy should not be reduced to an emotion or a good feeling nor should it be driven by our circumstances. Joy doesn't always mean you feel blessed or walk around as if all is well. Our joy flows from the life of God – a free expression of the love of God. God gives peace and grace to you in every situation, a presence of stillness even in chaos. Peace is the presence of God despite the conflict going on around us. We are to be in relationship with that peace.

A study done at Baylor University found that Americans have four different visions of God: the Authoritarian God, the Benevolent God, the Critical God, and the Distant God.

At times we may feel like we don't deserve grace and peace because of shame or guilt, while at other times our pride may make us believe we don't need it. Both views can lead spiritual starvation and legalism.

The Gospel message says grace and peace flow freely, we must position ourselves to receive it. Receiving His grace and peace is what allows us to experience joy. The grace of God will come to you – no matter where you are, no matter who you are. The question is are ready to receive His grace?

Sermon Summary:

This Sunday, Lead Pastor Richard Villodas, begins a new sermon series through the book of Philippians. Today Pastor Rich explores the connection between three words: joy, grace and peace.

Sermon Questions:

1. How does this scripture connect for you the topic that was discussed today? What words resonate with you? Why?
2. In your family of origin, how did you view your parents/guardian/caretaker? Do you see any similarities/projection between how you felt about them and your vision of who God is?
3. Biblical joy should not be based on circumstance but flow from relationship with God. How would you gauge your joyfulness and what does that say about your vision of God?
4. What does it look like for you to identify as a servant of Jesus during this season? If you postured each encounter with grace and peace how would that change you internally and those you deal with externally? What struggles or joy would you and others experience with this practice?
5. Do you ever view God in these boxes? Authoritarian--judges and is closely engaged. Benevolent--engaged and nice and nonjudgmental. Critical--judgmental but disengaged. Distant--neither judgmental nor engaged and doesn't care. How does that vision prevent you from fully accepting His grace and peace?