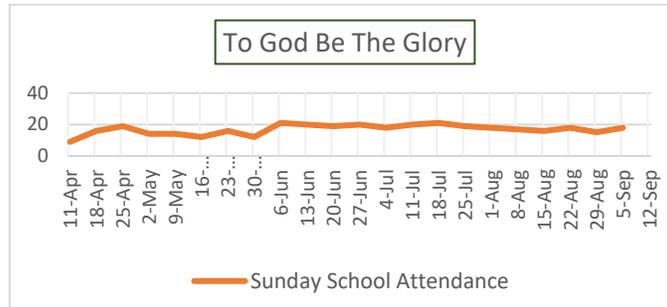


Last week's Sunday School attendance = 18



Introduction

This week we continue our study in the New Testament book of Philippians with the lesson titled “Joy in Adversity.” At first glance this title seems like a contradiction. How can we find joy in the midst of adversity? Remember that Paul wrote this letter from prison, yet he saw even his time there as an opportunity to share the gospel with those that were guarding him. While many would find being imprisoned a reason to become bitter or give up, Paul continued faithfully serving God to the best of his ability and providing encouragement to others.

Adversity

In our recently completed studies of Job and Ecclesiastes we’ve discussed how inevitably we will encounter times of adversity, affliction, hardship, and misfortune. We may not be in prison as Paul, but we still have plenty of opportunities to become discouraged. Our current time under this Covid pandemic is but an example. How we act during such times reflects our faith, and especially as we are observed by non-Christians, we must deliberately and carefully make sure our actions are a positive witness.

The Example of Paul and His Fellow Laborers

⁴But in all things approving (striving to show) ourselves as the ministers (servants) of God, in much patience (endurance), in afflictions, in necessities (hardships), in distresses, ⁵In stripes (beatings), in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours (hard work), in watchings (sleeplessness), in fastings (hunger); ⁶By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, ⁷By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, ⁸By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; ⁹As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened (punished), and not killed; ¹⁰As sorrowful, **yet always rejoicing**; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

2 Corinthians 6:4-10

The Example of Jesus

³He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. ⁴Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and

afflicted. ⁵But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. ⁶All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. ⁷He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. ⁸He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. ⁹And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. ¹⁰Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed (offspring), he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. ¹¹He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. ¹²Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Isaiah 53:3-12

Conclusion

As Christians, we can have joy even in the midst of hardships and adversity. This joy is not found in outward circumstances but comes from knowing Jesus and depending on His strength rather than our own. As the Psalmist declared, “weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning” (Psalm 30:5).

^{1b}let us lay aside every weight (hindrance), and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience (endurance) the race that is set before us, ²Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who **for the joy that was set before him endured the cross**, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³For consider him that endured such contradiction (hostile opposition) of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds (lose heart). **Hebrews 12:1b-3**

¹⁴Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, **Isaiah 65:14a**

⁶And ye became followers (imitators) of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction (suffering), with joy of the Holy Ghost: ⁷So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. ⁸For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad;

1 Thessalonians 1:6-8a

May we ever look for opportunities to demonstrate and share our faith even in difficult situations. Whether our situation improves or not; may our example, our witness, and our faith, grow stronger and prosper to the glory of our Lord.

Please join us in-person for 10:00 am Sunday School this week as we study God’s word together from Philippians 1:12–26.