**2021 12 12 “do not worry about anything but live in joy”.**

Zephaniah 3:14-20. Isaiah 12:2-6. Philippians 4:4-7. Luke 3:7-18.

I need to be real to our human experience – and present two apparent opposite experience present in believers in Jesus our Lord.[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. Peace of mind – trust – joy – “be still and know that I AM God.”
2. When I want to do good evil is resent with me and the bad that I do not want to do I do and the good that I want to do I do not – Oh miserable man that I am.[[2]](#footnote-2)

We are confronted by two contradictory outer edges of the lives of us humans, both real to each of us individually - to various degrees, and both written by the same man;

The word of joy in Philippians are real to us in Jesus and

The words of agony are real to us in our old dead but active old nature. The more we draw closer to our Lord and live in Gods Spirit the more sensitive and horrified we are to our temptations.

Looking first at Philippians 4:1-8: we are to;

1. Encourage each other – dearly beloved brethren , I enjoy being with you, you are a joy to me. a lovely attitude in a fellowship of believers.
2. Identify any discord in the church – entreat the people, entreat not critic or gossip about others. Remember ourselves and them – that we labour together in the Lords company and that each of our names are recorded in the Gods Book of Life. When we realise that we will be together for eternity !! how important do our rejections and annoyance matter right now !!!
3. Now that rejoice word. **?thoughts from the congregation?**
4. To me ‘rejoice’ and ‘thankfulness’ are parts of the same – thank you God my Father – for your love that came to me and caused me to love you back – a poor shadow of love certainly but it can grow as I see you Presence in all of life. We see Gods love in that gentle statement ‘a bruised reed he will not break and a smoking flack he will not snuff out.”[[3]](#footnote-3)
5. “weeping may endure for a night but joy comes in the morning”[[4]](#footnote-4) do not see this a time factual but there is and will be weeping in our lives and the desperate or quiet certainty in Gods Presence with us will show Himself to us as walk moment by moment in God. Thankfulness is worship and experiences
6. C.S. Lewis wrote : “you can search for joy and never find it but one day you will walk around a corner and it meets you – but do not hold it too tight or it will fade away”. I have experienced this. ………………..
7. Part of, or the outcome of living in rejoicing in the Lord is our attitude to life – “let your moderation be known to all – knowing that the Lords Presence walks with us (and weeps with us and know every temptation that it is possible to feel – Jesus experienced them all – “He was tempted in every sin that it is possible to be tempted in but without sin!”[[5]](#footnote-5) *can we possibly imagine how Jesus the pure son of God felt, when tested with the grossest of sins against another person or to himself – or more challenging – tested with the sins that are pleasure to the body or praise that is a testing of the soul and our attitude to others. Jesus lived all of this.*
8. In our living in Gods Presence, in our walking in life what is our patience and ‘carefulness’ like -can we make a list of our needs and the needs of others and be at peace in ourselves as we go about fulfilling those needs – thanking God BEFORE they come into reality or do we rush and stress and like me sometimes obsess about something or other that I see! V6.
9. V8 a critical key to living in the genuine of this is training our eyes, ears, mouth, thoughts, entertainment, company etc. “whatever is true, whatever is honest, whatever is just and right to all, whatever is pure in itself – emotions – actions thoughts words – think on these things. Whatever is lovely, whatever is of good report, if there is anything worth praising, let these things fill our being.

**To quote C.S. Lewis, “You don’t have a soul. You are a soul. You have a body.” When Jesus said that we were made in God’s image, he wasn’t referring to the meatsuit we are all test driving at the moment. He was referring to our soul.” Or what I call ‘our being’.**

This letter and these words were written to believers in Jesus, to people who had more than acknowledge, put their hand up, to their sins but had repented of causing God grief with their lives – “grieve not the Holy Spirit of God”[[6]](#footnote-6) these people were forgiven, baptised, had received the Holy Spirit and were living good lives in a rich town. Yet look back to 3:2 “beware of dogs, beware of evil workers!” and 4:2 “I beseech Euodias and I beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.

This brings me to the dilemma that must in all honesty be faced.

Paul the man who wrote the above also wrote the following. His physical condition at the time was that he was in jail for telling of Jesus:

**15** What I don't understand about myself is that I decide one way, **in my innermost self** but then I act in another, from my flesh **apart from God -** doing things I absolutely despise.

**In Greek understanding the battle is between the reasoning powers of the mind and the unreasonable impulses of the body.**

**16** So if I can't be trusted to figure out what is best for myself and then do it, it becomes obvious that God's command is necessary.

**17** But I need something more! For if I know the law but still can't keep it, and if the power of sin within me keeps sabotaging my best intentions, I obviously need help! Therefor it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells/lives in me. **Sin has become an *alter ego – an independent source of action in conflict with my true self***

**In the Jewish religion temptation was acknowledged and the way to defeat it was with words – the law as in the bible and the hundreds of subsidiary laws. When we fail then a blood offering had to be made to cleanse the sin. Temptation was acknowledged always a part of the daily experience. When Paul talks about the flesh or the body he is not simply talking about flesh and blood as we do – “when he uses *flesh* in this way, he really means human nature in all its weakness, its impotence and helplessness. Human nature in its vulnerability to sin and temptation. That part of us humans which gives sin its chance and its foothold. He means human nature, apart from Christ and apart from God. Everything that attaches, attracts us to the world instead of God. To live by the standards and moral and values of society.”[[7]](#footnote-7)**

**When Paul gives a list of the sins of the flesh, he does not only include sexual sins but includes “idolatry – putting other things before God – breaking the first of the 10 commandments – hatred, wrath, strife, heresies, envy, murderer.”[[8]](#footnote-8)**

**In that context we read on:**

**Verse 18** I realize that I don't have what it takes. I can will it, but I can't do it.

**19** I decide to do good, but I don't really do it; I decide not to do bad, but then I do it anyway.

**20** **My decisions, such as they are, don't result in actions**. Something has gone wrong deep within me and gets the better of me every time.

**21** It happens so regularly that it's predictable. The moment I decide to do good, sin is there to trip me up.

**22** I truly delight in God's commands, **now we enter into the spirit – Gods promise I will take way your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh” and ‘you must be born again’ not of the flesh but of the Spirit.**

**23** but it's pretty obvious that not all of me joins in that delight. Parts of me covertly rebel, and just when I least expect it, they take charge.

**24** I've tried everything and nothing helps. I'm at the end of my rope. **O wretched man that I am who can save me from this body of death**! Is there no one who can do anything for me? Isn't that the real question?

**25** The answer, **thank God, is that Jesus Christ can and does**. He acted to set things right in this life of contradictions where I want to serve God with all my heart and mind, but am pulled by the influence of sin to do something totally different.

Into this world came Jesus. He came as a human – a man; he came completely and truly human nature. He lived a man, he faced the desires of the flesh as the Jewish people used the word, he defeated sin; he condemned sin, in him sin was conquered for he brought to God a life of perfect obedience, a perfect completeness of the law. Because of that he was able to take our sins / our ‘selfness’ into himself and make us clean in God’s heart.

Jesus “became sin for you and me, and mad us the righteousness of God in Himself.”[[9]](#footnote-9)

We became the person in Philippians – a person walking in the power and conciseness of God verses the desires of or unreasoning flesh – we are also a Romans 7/ person; the flesh will constantly try to take control but it is defeated in Jesus’ life death and resurrection.

The outcome of the battle \_ there is NO CONDEMNATION, NO Guilt for those who are in Christ Jesus for the law of the Spirit has set us free from the law of sin and death of the body.

We choose – the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus in whom we walk, not according to the flesh, or continue on our own self yielding to the control of the impulses of the flesh.

God has made some unbreakable promises –“I will never allow you to face a temptation that is too great for you to resist but will with allowing the temptation provide you with a way to escape that you will be able to resist it.”[[10]](#footnote-10)

Thus, we grow in faith/trust and joy.

For example, Jesus said “pray for our enemies, forgive, do good to those who regard you with contempt and treat you thus.[[11]](#footnote-11)

We are called to be free – to be the person God created us to be and He has given us His Spirit to live in us and to be the guarantee of our salvation and our names in Gods family tree, the ‘Book of Life’.

“I heard a loud shout from the throne saying, ‘Look, the home of God is now among us, and He will live with us and we will be His people; yes, God Himself will be among us. He will wipe away all tears from our eyes, and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain. All of that has gone forever.”[[12]](#footnote-12)

The choice is ours 24/7. Freedom in Jesus and the Spirits Presence or the law of ourselves .

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1. Philippians 4:4-7 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Romans 7 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Isaiah 42:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Psalm 30:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Hebrews 4:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Ephesians 4:30 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. William Barkley. The Daily Bible Study – Romans. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Galatians 5:19-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. 2 Corinthians 5:21. 1 Corinthians 1:30 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. 1 Corinthians 10;13 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Luke 6:27. Romans 12:20. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Revelations 21:3,4. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)