



**ENTER** God's presence

**Psalm 47:1-7**

Clap your hands, all you nations;  
shout to God with cries of joy.  
For the Lord Most High is awesome,  
the great King over all the earth.  
He subdued nations under us,  
peoples under our feet.  
He chose our inheritance for us,  
the pride of Jacob, whom he loved.  
God has ascended amid shouts of joy,  
the Lord amid the sounding of trumpets.  
Sing praises to God, sing praises;  
sing praises to our King, sing praises.  
For God is the King of all the earth;  
sing to him a psalm of praise.

- **Pray:** Lord God, there are so many reasons to give you thanks and praise. Not least of which is the way that you have revealed yourself and your love for us in your word. Renew us with your Spirit and bring your word alive to us again as we gather together to learn more of you and your love for us. Amen



**SHARE** life together

1. What are your highs and lows for this past week?
2. How do you understand joy, and what makes you joyful?
3. What are you most thankful for this week?

Week beginning:  
Sunday 1st October 2023

Worship series:  
**Pandemic of Joy**  
#1 Thankful Joy



**VERSE** for the week

I thank God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

**Key Verse: Philippians 1:3-5**

*Full Text: Philippians 1*



**REMEMBER** this week

**Thankful joy finds blessing in every circumstance and rejoices in proclaiming Jesus.**



## **LISTEN** attentively

Read **Philippians 1** in your own Bible or online at Bible Gateway [HERE](#)

4. **Retell the passage in your own words.**
5. **What verse/concept/teaching in this reading caught your attention and what was challenging/confronting/comforting about it for you?**
6. **In this reading are some of the Apostle Paul's most famous words, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain". What do you think Paul meant by this and how might that kind of thinking be connected to his joy?**



## **GROW** deeper

What is pretty clear in this passage is that Paul's joy is not diminished by the fact that he is currently in prison. Joy, unlike happiness, should not be effected by our circumstances.

7. **Look carefully through the text again, what are the kinds of things that Paul rejoices about?**
8. **Where do you see connections in this passage between joy and thanksgiving? How do you think thankfulness (or lack of it) affects our experience of joy?**
9. **What role do you think thankfulness and joy have to play in "conducting ourselves in a manner worthy of our calling"?**



## **LIVE** purposefully

### **MAKE IT REAL:**

Paul ends this chapter of his letter to the Philippian Christians, by encouraging them to conduct themselves in a manner worthy of their calling – whatever happens. We all know that life rarely goes the way we would like or expect it to. When this happens we tend to focus on the situation and circumstances that are less ideal than the ones we hoped for. Doing this will quickly sap our joy and thankfulness. Paul instead seem to focus on the outcomes. He sees God at work in his own captivity in his captors coming to faith in Christ and going on to proclaim Jesus themselves. He hears of the faithful witness to Jesus of the Christians in Philippi, he rejoices, even at wrongly motivated preaching – provided that they are teaching and proclaiming Christ.

10. **What are some of the circumstances you may be facing that are obstructing your joy and thankfulness and your ability to see what God is doing with you at the moment?**
11. **Have you ever experienced the joy of helping lead someone else to faith in Jesus. It can be both an incredibly frustrating but equally joyful experience. How will you take seriously the call to 'partner together in the gospel' and experience the joy of doing that in your life?**
12. **What are three things that you can be thankful of that won't change with your circumstances?**

This week, I want to invite your LifeGroup to conduct an experiment. Let's try practicing thankfulness. Spend some time each day simply thinking of three things to give thanks to God for. You might consider keeping a record of how your mood and level of joy changes throughout the week/fortnight as you practice this kind of thankfulness and share your findings with your group next time you meet. Here's somewhere you can record your observations

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Thankful #1							
Thankful #2							
Thankful #3							
Observations							

Plan your weekly devotions or download the Church Central app for the daily LifeWay Devotions



**PRAY** intentionally

- Give praise and thanks to God for the love He showed by laying down His life for us.
- for the Church around the world that we would live as one united body of Christ
- For the all the communities that make up LifeWay, those in physical communities and those who gather online. May we be a powerful testimony to the gospel of Jesus in our communities.
- For our nation Australia and its various communities as we approach the referendum on the 'Indigenous voice'. Whatever the result, we pray for reconciliation and healing between the First Nations people of Australia and all those who now call Australia home.
- Pray for our community leaders, that they might lead with honesty and integrity and that we might also serve and support them as they seek to develop the communities in which we live.
- Pray for churches and communities that are experiencing unhealthy culture and dishonesty and mistrust among their members. May the way, truth and life of Jesus transform them into places where the Love of Christ can be encountered.
- Pray for all the communities around the world and here in Australia that have been affected by natural disasters in recent weeks. May the people in those communities be a support to each other as they seek to rebuild lives and property.
- for those who are sick and in need especially Lucy Escobar Silva, Eva Tyser, , Ruth Mataitis, Wally Partridge, Shirley Vasella, John and Aina Fletcher, Jan Briese, Jenny Schneider, Inge Moore, Boris Lees, Tina Fohrman, Bruce Cleaves, and Margaret Dwyer.



**BLESS** one another

You might like to address one person in your group and make the sign of the cross on their forehead or on the palm of their hand as you say...

**[Name], May the Joy of Jesus dwell in you richly. Amen.**