



Heartbeats along the way: The Rejoicing Heart

Psalm 105:3. Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.

Psalm 32:11. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

This month Pastors Jim and Mira are speaking from Paul's Letter to the Philippians, a beautiful Christian testament of encouragement, inspiration, and instruction. Paul was imprisoned in Rome by Nero, one of the wickedest Emperor-gods that the Western known-world endured. But at the time he wrote this letter, Paul was enjoying considerable success in preaching the Gospel – even to members of the Imperial Guard and the Emperor's own household servants, just as an angel told him in Acts 27:24, before he sailed under guard for Rome.

How could Paul write so cheerfully? Because God told him this is where his job was. And Paul rejoiced because he could be useful in this situation, surrounded by enemies of the Gospel. He told the Philippians: "Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. ... And because of this I rejoice." Paul's ministry was always pressing forward toward Christ, who awaited him at the end.

And as with Paul, so God has given us a job – to press on toward our prize by continuing what we've begun and filling the Spring Garden Campus with a vibrant, attracting ministry that shares Christ, beginning in Carlisle and reaching to the whole world. Let's live out the story of Paul and the Philippians today so that our ministry may always be alive with rejoicing. And may we always pray rejoicing for one another!

"Dearest Jesus, Friend and Lord, thank You sincerely for the joy that abounds in serving You. Though we don't suffer chains and beatings, or death as early Christians faced and many do today, we pray that joy may fill their hearts, as well as ours. Inspire us to always pray as Your servant Paul did by rejoicing always. Amen"