

Introduction:

Text: [Philippians 3:1](#)

“Whatever happens, dear brothers and sister may the Lord give you joy...” (Sounds foreboding)

[Philippians 4:4](#) - *“Always be full of joy in the Lord. Is ay it again – rejoice!”*

Read “Changing Enemies Into Friends” from [Our Daily Bread](#)

During a war that was pulling the nation apart at its seams - Lincoln maintained his moorings – he used the teachings of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount
Lincoln stood tall (no pun intended) when most were being pulled down into a vacuum of hate.

But - How?

Something inside him ran deeper than the storm that threatened to destroy everything he loved.
That something was **Joy**

Let’s be clear about this thing called Joy!

Its Often confused with happiness ... but they are not the same thing!

Joy is hard to describe

If you’ve ever really been in love, not infatuation but the deep down, break your heart if it doesn’t work out kind of love
Then you know what pure joy looks like. The sappy look on your face is a dead give away

How many here know what I’m talking about? How many experienced a broken heart? No fun

But let’s be clear there is a difference between happiness and joy (side by side comparison)

	<u>Happiness</u>	<u>Joy</u>
Example	Win lottery	Giving birth to a child
Time Frame	Momentary	Long lasting
Emotion	Pleases a person	Warms ones heart
Causes	Luck, fortune	Caused by an overall contentment, soul satisfying incident
Meaning	Happiness is an emotion	Seems like an emotion but deeper A knowledge of well being - a feeling of hope even when things look bad

→ Happiness is primarily self seeking – self centered
While Joy comes from purpose or from doing for others

Here's the crazy thing - Joy is connected to challenging, troubling situations!
It seems like a contradiction - How can a person experience JOY when things are going badly?

[Philippians 4:2](#) Rejoice in the Lord always in everything –

How can a Christian pull that off?

Is it wishful thinking? Paul the apostle wrote this letter from a Roman prison cell

When things go really bad and the sledding gets tough and things don't seem to make any sense.
The Questions begin to haunt you.

I call this **enemy jamming** - the twisting and spinning of situations the lies and distortion

Example: This attack occurs when you're

- Physically ill or in pain
- Having family problems
- being threatened
- Experiencing financial woes – you can't make ends meet at the end of every month
- Under continued and extreme emotional duress making you wonder if you're going crazy
- Wrestling with sexual temptations
- Outright lies are threatening to destroy your good name

You begin to feel separated from God – Assailant thoughts begin to poke at you -

You question where God is?

Why this is happening - Why isn't God helping me?

The thought is thrown at you - If God really cares about you why did he let all of this happen?

And finally the direct hit – God doesn't care about you! **That's enemy jamming!**

This past week Fast Food restaurant Chick-fil-A's has been all over the news and internet

The political Left is calling for a nationwide boycott of the chain – Several A type actors have vowed to never eat there again.

Boston's mayor has said he'll do all he can to keep Chick-fil-A franchises from opening in his city.

The Jim Henson Company which was working on a promotional campaign with Chick-fil A, ended the partnership last week, with CEO Lisa Henson ordering Chick-fil-A's payment to be donated to a gay –activist organization instead.

There was even a same-sex “kiss-in” planned by opponents at franchise stores

What prompted all of this? The company COO Dan Cathy stated in an interview that he supports the Biblical example of marriage between a man and woman.

With his Company and future under attack – heavy attack

Can this Christian businessman still rejoice in the Lord even in a situation like this?

I refer to a teenager in the Old Testament named Joseph

See [Genesis 37: 26 -28](#)

Joseph was so hated by his older brothers – jealousy drove them to the point murder but instead they threw him a rock quarry while they plotted their next move – by chance a caravan of traders just happened by and they sold him as a slave to be taken to Egypt. How convenient no blood on their hands and profit to boot

Joseph had seen his future in a dream from God ... but instead was sold, by his own brothers - **Where was God in that mess? Where was His promise?**

Joseph ends up the slave in the House of Potiphar the Captain of the Palace Guard

[Genesis 39: 2-5](#)

“The LORD was with Joseph ...” NLT

Everything he touched prospered – it wasn’t Joseph’s ability – but God’s hand on him!

Potiphar’s wife gets the hots for Joseph – but when he rejects her advances, for all the right reasons, she ruins him by claims of attempted rape.

Why would God allow such a thing?

Joseph goes to jail does not pass go does not collect two hundred dollars

[Genesis 39:19-22](#) *“But the LORD was with Joseph there too ...”* NLT

While in jail Joseph interprets dreams for two former dignitaries of the Pharaoh’s that had fallen slightly out of favor with the Egyptian King (God gave Joseph the correct meaning for future events) But still Joseph sits in prison for many months – because the man he helped out forgot about him. **How could God allow this?**

Then suddenly Joseph is pulled out of the prison cell and standing before a distraught Pharaoh whose dreams are keeping him awake at night

Joseph interprets the dreams – telling of 7 years of bumper crop followed by 7 years famine

[Genesis 41: 33- 40](#) *“... Who could do it better than Joseph? For he is a man who is obviously filled with the spirit of God.”* NLT

End result – Not only is Egypt saved – it becomes the store house of grain to save the rest of the world - including Joseph’s own brothers who had sold him as a slave.

Joseph’s words to his brothers when he sees them again

“Don’t be angry with yourselves – for though you meant it for evil God planned it for good.”

Where was God in all of Joseph’s troubles? Right there beside him every step of the way.

Joy isn’t a surface thing - it dwells down deep inside of us - it carries us, bolsters our faith when we don’t think we have any left.

When its all said and done it is not your strength or ability that wins the day – in trouble or enemy jamming – it is the Lord who strengthens you

Listen to these words of Isaiah

Isaiah 43: 2,3 *“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord your God ...”*

When I went through the darkest days of my life it was this promise that stirred the deepness of Joy bringing me back from the brink.

It's Not by Might or by Power but by my Spirit says the Lord.

Let's pray