

SERMON ON THE MOUNT MENNONITE CHURCH
AUGUST 15, 2021
JOY RIDE

GATHERING

WELCOME

LIGHTING OF THE PEACE LAMP

CALL TO WORSHIP

HWB 820

INVOCATION

VT 866

PASSING THE PEACE

After passing the peace with each other here you are invited to take a moment to pass Christ's peace to others by texting someone or by saying a prayer for someone during this time.

HYMN

Jesus, be the center

STS 31/VT 584

THE WORD OF GOD

SCRIPTURE

Philippians 1:1-26

INTRODUCTION TO JOY RIDE
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

a conversation about Philippians
questions printed on back of bulletin

HYMN

Praise the One who breaks the darkness

STS 1

PRAYER

OFFERING PRAYER

VT 1017

SHARING OUR JOYS, CONCERNS, AND PRAYER REQUESTS
CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

VT 997

SENDING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING HYMN

You shall go out with joy

HWB427/VT847

BENEDICTION (Based on Philippians 1:9-11)

LEADER: As our time of gathered worship ends, may your love overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

ALL: Go in peace.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Can you recall your very first solo drive after getting your license, going on your first bike ride by themselves, or taking the bus or another form of transportation alone for the first time? Do you remember (a) where you went, (i.e. work, school, boy/girl friend house, sporting event, on a date, to see a friend or a relative or shopping) and (b) how happy did you feel? (using a loose scale of 1–10).
- Connect Paul's experience to modern expressions of policing. Consider referring to Paul's captors as police instead of soldiers. Note that Paul's suspected crimes (likely 6 sedition and treason) carried then, as they would now, the potential of execution (vv. 13, 20-26).
- Invite people into the psychological experience Paul might have had: chained night and day, likely to a Roman jailer during the day and to the floor during the night.
- How is it possible that Paul speaks primarily of joy during this intensely demoralizing experience? Is Paul merely putting on a happy face for the benefit of others, or is this joy authentic and genuine?
- Is joy a divine gift, something that originates outside of our psychology and comes to "ride" in the middle of our difficulties?
- Paul's joy is sparked by the common care he experiences (a sense of solidarity and community with Christians in Philippi).
 - o The subject and object of verse 3 are ambiguous: Paul could be saying that he is remembering the church in Philippi, or that the church is remembering him. The mutual remembrance brings joy.
 - o Joy is meant to be shared, and this sharing of joy amplifies joy.
- Paul and the Philippians also share a common cause (their commitment to the rule and reign of Christ, over and against the reign of Caesar).
 - o Because Paul's imprisonment is organically connected to his life's work and mission—the announcing of the gospel—the difficulty itself can become cause for joy.
- How do our congregations practice common care and share our common cause to increase our joy?