

The Life we Live (Cont'd)
Philippians 2:12-18

Intro:

After many weeks in Philippians, we are to a highly quoted section of the book. And as we will see, this passage, when taken out of context has presented problems, but when looked at under the context of Philippians 1 & 2, is a very wonderful passage. If you remember, Paul is challenging the Church to live authentically before the Lord. To “live a life that brings worth and honor to Jesus.” This is a true reality for him throughout his writings.

So last week, we talked about how we can Embrace other Christians within Community – being united in love, hope, values, etc. Then, Paul showed us that Jesus Christ is our absolute example for living – in servitude, in humility, and in obedience. Finally, Paul laid out the reality that Jesus is the absolute authority for all time! History past, now in the present, and forever – every knee shall bow at the name of Jesus.

Today, we’re looking at a passage that again challenges our maturity as believers, and encourages our actively growing and maturing in Christ, but also challenges our heart, challenges the core of who we are! It’s been true of me that the longer I’ve been involved with Jesus, and the more comfortable I’ve been in the Church, the more I find myself griping, complaining, or not always being the best “witness” for the Gospel I profess to believe in. Finally, we’ll see Paul’s admonition to live joyfully, to be glad, to rejoice. He sets it up for “in hard times,” but it agrees with his theme that “whatever happens, live a life that is worthy of the Gospel.”

TEXT: Philippians 2:12-18

I. Maturity in your Conduct

a. Christ is our example!

i. “as you have obeyed,” “Therefore – because Christ obeyed” (v.8)

ii. There is a connection Paul is making: he described Jesus’ obedience, then says, “Therefore, as YOU HAVE ALWAYS (also) obeyed...”

b. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling

i. Problematic –

1. Presents a works based approach

a. This presents the idea of a “self-help” salvation.

b. There is a fine balance between receiving the sovereign work of Christ and being committed to obedience to him.

c. This takes us back to the Galatian heresy: “We receive salvation by faith through grace, and we maintain our salvation through law and our

will.” This is problematic and not the intent of Paul in this text.

- d. People who look at this verse as a way to works-based salvation strive to be good enough, and that is problematic, since none of us are good enough, except Jesus!
2. Fear & Trembling are problematic in modern language
 - a. These words are very negative, and do not lend to a faith system that is by grace.
 - b. “Fear & Trembling” invoke just that, fear & trembling!
 - c. While we need to have a reverence for God and his magnificence, he’s a loving father, a friend, and a comforter. His bringing us into relationship with himself is not that we live cowering in fear, but that we have “awe” and reverence for who he is and his greatness!
- ii. This is the outgrowth of the work of God in our lives
 1. This is where “Maturity in our Conduct” comes in real time! We understand that our conduct doesn’t save us, and the verse doesn’t teach that. Instead, it teaches that because you are already saved (justified before God because of the sovereign work of Christ on the cross), because God has already entered your life in the person of the Holy Spirit, because you, therefore, have his power at work within you – because of these things, **YOU ARE NOW TO STRIVE TO EXPRESS THIS SALVATION IN YOUR OWN CONDUCT!** -Boice, p.142
 2. This again strongly affirms the thesis of Paul’s letter to the Philippians – that you live a life **WORTHY** of the Gospel, in every area!
 3. **ILLUS: Military Life vs. posers**

II. Maturity in your Attitudes (v.14-16)

- a. Inclusivity of the word “all” things – again, it’s about our whole lives!
 - i. Harkens back to thesis – “whatever happens” (1:27)
- b. Without grumbling or questioning
- c. Blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish
 - i. This is about our witness – What kind of hope do we truly have to offer when it’s littered with our grumbling and complaining?
 - ii. “God is so good, but my pastor is an idiot!” “Jesus loves you, but my Church is so unfriendly!” “I love serving Jesus, but I can’t stand all the needy people!” “God has been so good to me, but that person just can’t get their act together!”

- iii. **Our attitudes greatly shape our witness! Think in terms of Customer Service, or sales (I'm not cheapening evangelism or faith to a sales call – relax)**
 - 1. **When a salesman believes in his product, offers friendliness, few to no complaints, it positively affects you!**
 - 2. **When a salesman looks at you like a burden, or they see you coming and are skeptical of why you are there, it causes resistance in you!**
 - a. **Bank of MO, initially met with “What do you want” type of attitude.**

III. Maturity in your Heart (v.17-18)

- a. **Paul sets up the reality that even bad things happen, and probably will for him**
- b. **The Kingdom of God gives him joy in his heart.**
- c. **This is the standard that gives us joy too –**
 - i. **The theodicy is not a reason not to rejoice in knowing and serving Jesus. “Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people” is not a reason to grumble. Remember that God is the central figure in that question, not the good person, or the bad that happens to them!**
 - ii. **Jesus was the best person to ever live, and God allowed bad things to happen to him! But the Kingdom at play gave joy unspeakable to the disciples and gave strength to Jesus!**