

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Responding to Christ's Humility

Let us pray...

Let's go over our text this morning,

[Phi 2:12-18 NKJV] 12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for [His] good pleasure. 14 Do all things without complaining and disputing, 15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, 16 holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain. 17 Yes, and if I am being poured out [as a drink offering] on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. 18 For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me.

Paul has been writing to the church in Philippi regarding their conduct, we noticed this toward the end of chapter one.

Paul has exhorted all believers (including us) to live together in unity.

[Phi 1:27 NKJV] 27 Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, Living together in unity is how we live “worthy” of the gospel of Christ.

He gave us some reasons why we ought to live together in unity.

[Phi 2:1-2 NKJV] 1 Therefore if [there is] any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, 2 fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, [being] of one accord, of one mind.

Because there is encouragement in Jesus, comfort in His love, fellowship in the Spirit, and because we have compassion and mercy, we ought to live together in unity.

Paul also demonstrated the means in which we find unity – and that is through humility.

[Phi 2:3-4 NKJV] 3 [Let] nothing [be done] through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Unity comes when we don't fight with each other or seek empty glory.

Unity comes when we learn to look at others as better than ourselves.

Unity comes when we become more concerned about the needs of others than the needs of ourselves.

And in verses 5-8 Paul provides us with the ultimate example of humility to follow: **and that is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and the humility He demonstrated in becoming a man, in His ministry and even in His death.**

Jesus Christ is our example. He gave up His rights, became a lowly servant, and even died on a cross, all for us.

So knowing the humility that our Lord demonstrated to us, the question becomes – “What should our response be??”

What should our response be?

That is what our text is going to cover this morning-

Paul makes the point at the beginning of verse 12 that our first response should always be one of constant obedience.

“Philippi – you obeyed in the past, now - continue to walk in the same obedience.”

Don't let your guard down just because you obeyed in the past.

This is a message for all of us.

I can remember many years in my Christian walk where I wasn't walking in obedience, there was a period in my life where I wanted my will to be done instead of His will.

I was walking through the motions – going to church on Sunday mornings, but I wasn't reading the word of God daily and my prayer life was also lacking – as I would pray only when I was in need.

And then one day God said – “That's it!”

God showed me that there was no spiritual growth and demonstrated that there was no new fruit in my life.

You see, God desires constant obedience, not only Sunday morning obedience or obedience when people are watching.

Remember, God is always watching. We can't hide anything from Him – including our intentions because He knows our hearts.

Our next response should be one of working out our salvation (12)

This is a very important verse because many have taken this verse out of context and used to as a foundation that works are needed to attain salvation.

Many churches teach that in order to be saved you have to do certain works.

- You must speak in tongues to be saved
- You must be water baptized to be saved
- You must have church membership to be saved

The Mormon Church believes that salvation is attained by a combination of works and grace, Jehovah's witnesses believe the same thing.

My first job was working in the kitchen of a retirement home, I was a new believer and one of the cooks there was a JW.

One day, as I was having a conversation with another coworker about church, Ruth – that was her name, she came to me and asked me the following question, she said, "Do you guys have timecards at your church?"

I had no idea of what she was talking about – it turns out that at her Kingdom Hall, they required the church goers to turn in their time cards or time sheets and these time sheets would have detailed all the work that you did that week.

Every time she stood on a corner passing out the Watchtower magazines or every time they went door to door and knocked on people's doors, that time was recorded on their time sheet.

The problem with this church is that the scriptures are very clear that works are not a requirement for salvation.

[Eph 2:8-9 NKJV] 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; [it is] the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

The thief on the cross had no works, all he did was acknowledge Jesus Christ

–“remember me when You come into Your kingdom.” but Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.” **No works!**

And we must always remember ...

As our Lord and Savior hung on the cross, His last words were - "It is finished"

He did all the work.

Paul is very careful in the words that are written here.

Notice that he doesn't say, "Work for your salvation or Work on your salvation"

He says work out your salvation, and that simply means to go to the gym and exercise it and strengthen it.

Remember, Paul is speaking to believers here – to the church of Philippi.

He is not speaking to nonbelievers.

They are already saved.

Our gym is our walk in Christ, do we walk according to His will or our own will.

Do we resist temptation?

Do we overcome trials or do we simply succumb to trials?

One of the things that I believe that it is very important for us to understand is that when we become a believer, our trials, our temptations are still going to be there.

But in the same way that an athlete goes into the gym and conditions his body to persevere, we have to do the same thing with our salvation.

Turn with me to the book of Hebrews 12,

[Heb 12:1-2 NKJV] 1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares [us], and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of [our] faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Here, the author of Hebrews, compares our Christian walk to running a race and tells us to get rid of the things that hinder us from the ultimate goal.

A runner has to condition themselves to run the race.

I can't run a marathon if I have to carry a backpack full of bricks.

But, some of us run the race under these conditions.

Sin, bitterness, doubt, envy, jealousy are just a few things that hinder us from running the race.

This is what Paul means by working out your salvation.

To accomplish the will that God has set for you and me.

To be obedient to His will and make ourselves available to be utilized by Him – to bring Him glory. To abide in Him.

Paul then adds that we are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

This is not a fear and trembling that drives us to hide from God because we are afraid of His punishment.

That is condemnation and please make a note that condemnation never comes from God.

We are convicted by the Holy Spirit – and conviction should draw us closer to God through repentance.

However, condemnation is a tool that is used by Satan and his demons to push us farther away from God by whispering in our ear that we are not good enough.

Condemnation is that voice that reminds you of your past sins – even though Jesus Christ cleansed and forgave you from those sins.

This fear and trembling mentioned here is one that drives us to draw closer to God because we know that we are weak and helpless without Him.

It is also the fear and trembling that keeps us from grieving God through our disobedience.

Paul then reminds us why we need to work out our salvation.

13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for [His] good pleasure.

We must never forget that it is God who continues to work in us. No matter what we are feeling this morning, no matter what we might be struggling with this morning.

It is God who is planning amazing things – great things for me and you, preparing us for things and He is in the process of positioning us to be in the right place at the right time so that we will be better prepared for His plans for us.

Working out your salvation does not mean living a life of perfection. That is not the point Paul is making.

We must remember that God is bringing about our obedience.

God is enabling us to will and to work for his good pleasure.

We have a responsibility to continue to work and bring about our salvation because God is at work through that work.

The wonderful thing church is that we are not expected to do this on our own.

God is not asking the impossible from us.

Paul makes sure we understand that God is working through us and in us when we are working out our salvation.

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness.

And I believe that Paul offers the best simple summary statement of this concept when he wrote to the Corinthians. 1 Cor 15:10

[1Co 15:10 NKJV] 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God [which was] with me.

The only reason we are having Sunday morning services here this morning – is by the grace of God.

This is why we give Him the glory in all things.

We are working hard because God is working in us.

We must remember that we are instruments to accomplish God's purposes.

Our obedience of faith will grow and improve as we allow God to work in our lives and change our hearts toward Him, which happens by growing in our knowledge of Him.

Our personal relationship with Him through prayer and reading His word.

Paul then continues with another response...

[Phi 2:14 NKJV] 14 Do all things without complaining and disputing,

Two weeks ago, I brought up bible verses that we put on our coffee mugs, here is another bible verse that I have never seen on a coffee mug.

You know why, because we all have the tendency to complain and dispute.

We complain about traffic, we complain about our government, we complain about how slow the checkout line is at the grocery store, we complain about our children.

In scriptures, there is no better example that the children of Israel after God delivered them out of Egypt.

Turn with me to Numbers chapter 14 –

After 400 years in Egypt, God raises Moses to deliver the Children of Israel out bondage.

God brings all the plagues upon Egypt and Pharaoh finally allows the Children of Israel to leave Egypt.

They get to the Red Sea and they see the Egyptian army with the chariots approaching and they start to complain.

God delivers them by parting the Red Sea and drowning the Egyptian Army and then the Children of Israel complain because they had no water.

Then they complained about food.

Then they finally get close enough to the Promised Land that they send in spies and 10 of the 12 spies return with a bad report and because of the bad report - the people complain against God once again.

Every time they complained, they actually regretted leaving Egypt – forgetting the bondage that they endured while they were there.

So here in Numbers 14, God had finally had enough...

[Num 14:26-35 NKJV] 26 And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 27 "How long [shall I bear with] this evil congregation who complain against Me? I have heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against Me. 28 "Say to them, 'As I live,' says the LORD, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: 29 'The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. 30 'Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. 31 'But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. 32 'But [as for] you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. 33 'And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness. 34 'According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, [namely] forty years, and you shall know My rejection. 35 'I the LORD have spoken this. I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are

gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.' "

One of the problems with complaining is that by complaining, we shift the focus back on self.

Think about what we complain about? It all has to do with me, me, and me right.

Yet, Paul had already told us back in verse three to do nothing with selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

Another problem with complaining is that it questions God's motives.

Think about it, if we truly believe that God is sovereign over every aspect of our lives, and if we truly believe what **Romans 8:28** says - **And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.**

Why would we then complain???

If we are not careful with our complaints – they turn to grudges and then this leads to bitterness that resides in our hearts.

[1Th 5:18 NKJV] 18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Paul then adds that we should do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become **blameless and harmless**, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you **shine as lights** in the world,

Paul didn't want the church in Philippi to complain and dispute because he wanted to make sure that the church would not be sidetracked from their ultimate goal which is to reveal to the world Jesus Christ.

What kind of testimony do we provide the world if all we do is complain and dispute?

We are to be set apart – we are to be different than the world.

We are called to be the light in this perverse and crooked generation.

Turn with me to Matt 5:14-16

[Mat 5:14-16 NKJV] 14 "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 "Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all [who are] in the house. 16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Not only did our Lord and Savior say these words, but He lived it. And He wants to continue to shine forth through us.

Here's a question to think about...

What does the moon do?

It messes with our high tides and our low tides

It generates no light.

Apart from the sun, the moon is nothing more than a gray cratered rock.

But properly positioned, the moon shines brightly.

Especially on a clear night.

God created this rock that orbits our earth for the sole purpose of reflecting the light of the sun upon the earth.

What would happen if we also accepted our place as the Son's reflectors?

What if we made it our goal to shine with all the brightness of Christ?

Imagine the impact of the church on the world.

By doing this – it will produce joy.

[Phi 2:17-18 NKJV] 17 Yes, and if I am being poured out [as a drink offering] on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. 18 For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me.

In these last two verses, Paul reveals to the church the grim possibility of his pending death.

Paul was ready to make the ultimate sacrifice as he was prepared to give his life for the Lord on behalf of the churches he served.

Not only was he going to rejoice but, he wanted the church to rejoice with him.

I have one more verse to show you this morning, go to the book of Psalms.

[Psa 37:3-6 NKJV] 3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. 4 Delight yourself also in the LORD, And

He shall give you the desires of your heart. 5 Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring [it] to pass. 6 He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, And your justice as the noonday.

Here in the Psalm, David speaks the same words that Paul wrote to the church in Philippi.

Be Christlike – do not allow distractions to deter you and God will give you the strength to fulfill that special thing He has planned for you.

If we depend on our own fallen nature, we'll never work out God's inner work in our lives.

Rather, we must lean on Christ to work in us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

If we do, He'll help us maintain a Christlike walk, not in constant panic, not one full of complaining and disputing - but with inexplicable joy.

This should be our response.

Amen.

Let's pray...

Dear Jesus,

Please forgive me of all of my sins.

I know that my sin has separated me from You and I am deserving of death.

I believe that you died for my sins and rose again.

I turn from my sins and I am asking that You come into my life.

Show me how to live my life that is right and pleasing to You.

I accept You as my Lord and Savior.

In Jesus name I pray.

