

Light Up The World
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Philippians 2:12-30

- Last week we said one of the most effective ways to win people to Christ is living a consistent life worthy of Christ.
- Living with humility (putting others ahead of yourself), and striving to have the mind of Christ as our example.
- This week at the start of verse 12 of chapter 2, Paul says THEREFORE...if you have the mind of Christ here is how I want you to be shining examples of Christian living

Let's pick up in verses 12 and 13...

12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

- Verse 12: Paul didn't say work FOR your salvation. What DID he say? He said work OUT.
- When we use the term WORKOUT what do we refer to? Exercise.
- Paul was the original WORKOUT guru...a SPIRITUAL workout guru.
- A spiritual Jack LaLanne.
- He was challenging us:
- Don't be a spiritual couch potato...exercise your salvation...put it into practice...stretch those salvation muscles!
- Question: What are some ways we can have a SPIRITUAL WORKOUT every day?
 - Study God's Word
 - Spend time with Him in prayer and meditating on His word
 - Tell others about Him
- We can just look back at what Paul taught us in the last two lessons in Chapter 1 and the first 11 verses of Chapter 2:
 - Conduct yourselves in a manner WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL
 - Be UNITED and LIKEMINDED with other believers
 - Strive for the "mind of Christ" (last week's lesson) and CONSIDER OTHERS BEFORE YOURSELF...Christian HUMILITY
- All of that fits nicely into TWO COLUMNS. Our WORKOUT is a TWO STEP METHOD: TRUST and OBEY

C H Spurgeon said:

What is to be worked out must first be worked in. An unconverted man can work nothing out, for there is nothing in. You have faith; work it out then; act like a believer; trust God in daily life. Be you Christlike, inasmuch as the Spirit of Christ dwells in you.

I'd put it this way:

Believers can only live up to our potential if we put our salvation into practice daily...otherwise we're just spiritual couch potatoes.

- Let me be clear...this is not salvation by WORKS!
- We should do these things BECAUSE we ALREADY have salvation by God's grace
- This is SANCTIFICATION...growing more like Christ in OBEDIENCE and out of LOVE for Him.

- Verse 12...the last part...Paul tells us HOW our WORKOUT should happen.
- Question: Throughout scripture how did people respond when they were suddenly very aware of the presence of God? With fear and trembling.
- With those words "fear and trembling" Paul reminds them: "We can't do this workout on our own."
- Question: In verse 13, WHO does the work? It is God who works in you.
- That verb "works" literally means "energizes" or "provides enablement."
- Sometimes we can only succeed in fitness if we have a coach or personal trainer.
- We have someone better than a coach or a personal trainer...we have an ENERGIZER.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says...

"Both divine enablement and human responsibility are involved in getting Gods work done. Believers are partners with God, laboring together with Him."

- That spiritual workout only happens through the power of God in us.
- Another interpretation of fear and trembling...importance and priority
- Here's an example. If you were diagnosed with heart disease and your doctor told you either you EXERCISE or you're gonna die...how would you approach your WORKOUTS? Maybe with "fear and trembling" because it's CRITICAL that you do them.

Do we approach our SPIRITUAL FITNESS with the same importance a heart patient has for PHYSICAL FITNESS?

- Look at the last part of verse 14. What does it tell us? God is not only the source of the power He is also to be the FOCUS of the work in our lives: "...to act in order to fulfill his good purpose."
- Everything He does THROUGH us is in "order to fulfill His good purpose."
- Question: When we haven't exercised in a while and we start up what is our typical attitude about working out? That great student of human nature Paul anticipated this. Look at verse 14.

Shine Brightly
Philippians 2:14-18

14 Do everything without grumbling or arguing,

- Question: How much fun is it to be around a constant complainer?
- Let's take a poll. How many would say we live in a "complaining" society? If so, what are some examples of what you see in day to day life that would cause you to think that? (Discussion)
- Let's play a little game. Think of famous historic figures who accomplished great things. Can you hear them complaining and whining as they did their duty?
 - Washington at Valley Forge? It's cold, we have no food, we have no shoes.
 - How about the boys on the beach at Normandy? Do you think they whined?
 - First responders at the World Trade Center? I don't recall any stories of them stopping to moan and groan before running into those buildings.
- But Allen, complaining isn't all bad. People have to vent! Agreed.
- But, what is the difference between venting and complaining?
- It's one thing to lay things out before God and express our frustration and our need...David did that over and over in the Psalms. That's venting to the One who can do something about it! What Paul writes about is different.
- In the context of this passage...working out our salvation...who is the complaining against?

John MacArthur writes:

The Greek word for grumbling is a term that actually sounds like what it means...much like muttering...in a low tone of voice. It is an emotional rejection of God's providence, will, and circumstances for one's life. Disputing...means 'questionings' or 'criticisms' directed negatively toward God.

Erwin Lutzer said:

Complaining about our lot in life might seem quite innocent in itself, but God takes it personally.

Spurgeon said:

As long as a man is alive and out of hell, he has no cause to complain.

John MacArthur continues:

Every circumstance of life is to be accepted willingly and joyfully, without murmuring, complaint, or disappointment, much less resentment. There is no exception. There should never be either emotional grumbling or intellectual disputing. It is always sinful for believers to complain about anything the Lord calls them to do or about any circumstance which He sovereignly allows. Whether the task is difficult or easy, whether the situation involves a blessing or a trial, negative attitudes are forbidden.

- Question: If indeed we live in a complaining society, how will a NON COMPLAINER STAND OUT?
- Someone read verses 15 and 16

15 so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.”[a] Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky 16 as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain.

The Message paraphrase renders it:

Go out into the world uncorrupted, a breath of fresh air in this squalid and polluted society. Provide people with a glimpse of good living and of the living God. Carry the light-giving Message into the night ...

- If we TRUST and OBEY as the old hymn says, we will SHINE like lights in a "crooked generation"
- Paul said if they did that it would cause them and him to REJOICE.

17 But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. 18 So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

- We not only SHINE by NOT COMPLAINING...Christians should SHINE with CONCERN for the welfare of others

Show Concern
Philippians 2:19-24

19 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. 20 I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. 21 For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22 But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. 23 I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. 24 And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.

- Paul planned to send two men to this church.
- The first was Timothy
- Verse 20 Paul said of Timothy: "I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. He has proved himself.
- Timothy is a wonderful example of how a Christian should SHINE by showing concern
- Warren Wiersbe tells us that Timothy had "a servant's mind" genuinely interested in the welfare of others; and a "servant's training" mentored by Paul himself;
- Verse 20 in some translations says I have no one else as LIKEMINDED as Timothy
- It strikes me that in many ways Paul and Timothy were total opposites
- Paul was rough and tumble...Timothy was raised by his mother and grandmother and was more of a gentle soul. Yet, OPPOSITES ATTRACT

F.B. meter described Timothy this way

He had been delicately reared; his constitution was weak, so much so that the Apostle even advised him to take a little wine for his often infirmities; and perhaps he was too sensitive to stand against strong opposition and dislike. But, with all this, he was a man of rare sweetness of disposition and grace of character. He had great faith in the Lord Jesus, and was staunch and loyal to his friend.

- Timothy SHINED with CONCERN for the welfare of others
- As Christians, we should count Timothy as another example...a pattern for SHOWING CONCERN for others.
- Paul planned to send another man...Epaphroditus

Serve Regardless
Philippians 2:25-30

25 But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. 26 For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. 27 Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. 28 Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. 29 So then, welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor people like him, 30 because he almost died for the work of Christ. He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me.

- Epaphroditus had come to Paul FROM the Philippian church with a financial gift but more importantly to comfort him during his imprisonment.
- Paul thought a lot of Epaphroditus: "my brother" "co-worker" "fellow soldier"
- And while he was with Paul in Rome he became very ill...almost died.
- But God spared him...and now he is concerned because the Philippian church is concerned...and he's homesick.
- So Paul is sending him back ahead of schedule.
- But here is the point: This man came to minister to Paul even though there was great risk
- He's another great example to us...he followed his calling of service even when faced with illness and possibly even death...and God rewarded that.
- Paul has used four great examples in these first two chapters of Philippians:
 - Christ - Our ultimate example...who HUMBLER HIMSELF for our salvation
 - Paul - Himself...who would go anywhere including prison to reach people
 - Timothy - A man of great concern and encouragement to others
 - Epaphroditus - Willing to GO even when it was risky to do so
- Four SHINING EXAMPLES of how Christians should live!

So, What's the Takeaway?

- It's a series of questions that are really CHALLENGES:

- This week will you and I SHINE as Christians by DAILY putting ourselves through a SPIRITUAL WORKOUT to exhibit our SALVATION in how we live our lives?
- Will we SHINE as Christians when we TRUST and OBEY God WITHOUT GRUMBLING and COMPLAINING...a lifestyle that will stand out as DIFFERENT from the CROOKED GENERATION around us?
- Will we SHINE as Christians by being GENUINELY CONCERNED for the welfare of others?
- And, will we SHINE as Christians serving Christ and His people regardless of RISK?