

New Hope Missionary Baptist Church – Southfield, Michigan
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#hope in the field

Bible Study Series: Philippians
Unified Hope: Loving Christ as we Love One Another

“Shining as Stars” Philippians 2:12-18

Reflection Questions:

- A. What Christian leader has personally invested in your growth as a follower of Christ? In what way?

- B. What have you done personally to help new believers "shine like stars" for God's kingdom?

- ☐ Arguments
- ☐ Attitude
- ☐ Believers
- ☐ Complaining
- ☐ Drink Offering
- ☐ Example
- ☐ Faithful
- ☐ God
- ☐ Holy Spirit
- ☐ Hymn

- ☐ Innocent
- ☐ Jesus Christ
- ☐ Joy
- ☐ Light
- ☐ Lives
- ☐ Obedience
- ☐ People
- ☐ Rejoice
- ☐ Work

- ☐ Reverence
- ☐ Sacrifice
- ☐ Salvation
- ☐ Serving
- ☐ Shining
- ☐ Sin
- ☐ Stars
- ☐ Unity
- ☐ Partnership

Introduction

Believers ought to follow Christ's example not only to bring unity and peace to the church, but also so that no one in the outside world would be able to find any fault with them. Philippi was a pagan city; Paul wanted these believers to be unified, morally pure, and filled with good works so that they could bring the light of Christ into their dark world. Is your light shining for Christ?

Important Emphasis

Credited for Consistency

The apostle Paul credits the church at Philippi for their consistency. There is three distinct ways in which Paul does this. He speaks of his _____, their _____, and the usage of all their _____ collectively. "A broken clock is at least right two times a day"

Authority- Paul's authority is displayed among those who are in Christ. This authority transcends the presence of Paul. The solidarity among the saints never changes. The conviction of the Christian remains fondly consistent because of a consciousness of their allegiance to the presence **of, in, with** and **through** Christ.

Accountability – It is obvious that Paul desires for them to be held spiritually accountable. This should be done in holy fear and trembling. **Hebrews 13:17**
We must be honest with people. Our lack of acknowledging peoples growing edges that necessitate trimming cripples them it does not elevate them.

Ability- God is at work in you. This Passage is saturated with work. The Philippians are to work out their salvation. There are three different words used for work in the Greek language here meaning: perspiration, callouses, sore back, and or bone weariness. They are Partners in ministry, Partners in Imprisonment, Partners in Christ. **James 2:14-26**

Caution about the Crippling effect of Complaining.

Paul gives a warning here about the uselessness of Complaining and murmuring. This spirit is dangerous to our destiny. **Numbers 11:1-6.** Then Philippians 2Verse 14 says **Do all things without the mindset of complaining** because it is inextricably connected to our mouthing complaints.

Paul gives the Philippians a warning concerning those who have erred in the past concerning grumbling and complaining. **Exodus 15:24 and Exodus 16:2.**

Lesson Outline

- I. Reverent Obedience to God
- II. Righteous Children of God
- III. Rejoicing in Service to God

Exploring the Text

I. Reverent Obedience to God (2:12-13)

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. (NKJV)*

The Philippian church was dear to Paul's heart. He didn't want his absence from them to be a detriment to their _____. So, he requested that they always be careful to follow his instructions [or always obey (KJV/NKJV/NASB)], even while he was away. They must put into action God's saving work by _____ God with deep _____ and _____. Paul was calling the entire church to work together to rid themselves of _____ and _____.

Obedience defined:

Following commands or instructions. In a spiritual sense, it refers to adhering to the will and _____ of God.

[Volpe, Isaac. THE JESUS CHRIST DICTIONARY. A Study of His Most Frequent Words and Ideas: A journey into the heart of the teachings of the world's most revered spiritual leader. (p. 43). UNITEXTO Digital Publishing. Kindle Edition.]

Perfect Obedience defined

In the New Testament Christ embodies [the] quality of _____ to God (**John 6:37–38**). His obedience, the antithesis [opposite, contrast] of Adam's disobedience, provided for mankind's atonement (**Rom. 5:18–21**). It began at the incarnation (**Heb. 10:5–10**) and continued throughout his life on earth, including ultimately his death on the cross (Phil. 2:6–11). His obedience thus became an example for those who would become his disciples (**Matt. 16:24**).

[Myers, Allen C. 1987. In *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary*, 775. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.]

Although believers are saved once for all when they accept Jesus Christ as Lord, it is in the grind of everyday life that _____ is put into action. Paul wanted the Philippians to put their salvation into practice for the health of the church. As they did so, they would not do it on their own. Through his Holy Spirit, God would be working in them for the tasks he wanted them to do (1 Corinthians 12:4-7). He would give the Philippians the desire to obey him and the _____ to do what pleases him to bring _____ to the church. God works in believers; believers do God's work. _____ are partners with God.

Understanding the Text (2:12-13)

1. What did Paul urge the Philippian Christians to do in his absence, and how? (2:12)

2. What were the Philippian believers to work out? (2:12)

3. How would God help the Philippians obey Him? (2:12-13)

II. Righteous Children of God (2:14-16)

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.

Paul had advice for how they could go about acting out their faith—they should stay away from _____ and _____. Paul returned to the basic problem described in **2:1-4**, the _____ that leads to _____.

Complaining translates from a word that describes a bad attitude which expresses itself in constant grumbling. The word for arguing has a legal connotation and may refer to the Philippian Christians going to civil courts to settle their differences, an action Paul condemned elsewhere (**1 Corinthians 6:1-11**).

Complaining and arguing are completely opposite to Christ's _____ (**2:5-8**), which believers are to _____ [imitate, follow]. They also give people a bad impression of the church, and no one should be able to speak a word of blame against the believers. If all that people know about a church is that its members constantly argue, complain, and gossip, they get a bad impression of Christ and the gospel. Unbelievers then feel justified in criticizing the Christians. Probably more churches have split from causes related to arguing and complaining than from heresy.

Instead, believers' lives ought to be clean, meaning beyond _____, incurring no justifiable criticism. This does not mean sinless perfection; instead, the church was to be beyond the criticism of the unbelieving world. Their lives also ought to be innocent. There ought to be nothing within the church that would weaken its strength or contaminate the _____. The church's members then could be _____ in a dark world full of crooked and perverse people (John 1:12-13; Galatians 3:26; 1 John 3).

While believers are rescued out of the present evil age (**Galatians 1:4**) and are no longer of the world, they are not taken out of the world. They are "in" the world and have been given a commission to go "into" the world with the Good News (**John 17:15-18**). The church of Philippi needed to fulfill its mission in the world, and it could best do so by being clean and innocent children of God right in the middle of the depraved culture. The contrast with their culture would be so stark that the believers would _____. They bring the _____ into the darkness of depravity, as _____ light up the darkness of the night.

The Philippian church should hold tightly to the _____ of _____ by spreading the truth of the gospel beyond the doors of the church. To do this, they must be grounded in the truth, refusing to compromise. When Paul saw the church remaining clean and innocent and holding tightly to the truth as they reached out to a _____ world, he would be proud that his work among them was not useless [or in vain].

Understanding the Text (2:14-16)

4. What instructions did Paul give in relation to everyday Christian living? (2:14-16)

5. Why were the Philippians not shining "like stars" in their world? (2:14-16)

6. Why did the Philippian assembly need to show a united front to unbelievers? (2:14-16)

7. What would enable Paul to boast about the Philippians? (2:14-16)

8. Whose honor was Paul concerned about? (2:16)

III. Rejoicing in Service to God (2:17-18)

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's reference to being poured out like a _____ was an allegory [story or symbol] for martyrdom. The drink offering was an important part of the Jewish sacrificial system. It involved wine being poured out on an altar as a sacrifice to God (see **Genesis 35:14; Exodus 29:40-41; Numbers 28:24**).

Paul regarded his life as a suitable offering to complete the Philippians' _____ of _____, and he willingly offered it for the sake of Christ's gospel and for the many who had believed in Christ because of his preaching (**Ephesians 6:7; 1 Peter 4:10**).

Yet even through these somber words a ray of light was shining. If Paul were indeed to die, he would _____ and desire that they would _____ his _____. Paul was content, knowing that he had helped the Philippians live for Christ. Paul was able to have joy, even though he faced possible execution. When you are totally committed to serving Christ, sacrificing to build the faith of others brings a joyous reward. Paul considered it a privilege to die for the faith, and he wanted the Philippians to take the same attitude in the case of his death.

Understanding the Text (2:17-18)

9. How did Paul view his own life? (2:17)

10. How did Paul view the faith of the Philippian believers? (2:17)

11. What did Paul want his friends at Philippi to experience? (2:18)

Life Application

- In what way can you help repair a breach of peace with someone in your life?

- In what way can you shine like a star in your home, on your job, in the community, or at your church?

[Resources: Adult LessonMaker Questions and Life Application New Testament Commentary]