

Shining as Lights in the World

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Go ahead and turn with me to Philippians chapter 2. Philippians chapter 2 and we'll be in verse 5. This morning looking back at verses 5-11 that I preached from last Sunday. Paul lifted up our eyes to gaze upon the breathtaking humility of Christ. We saw that in verses 5-11 that Christ being equal with God made himself of no reputation and became obedient unto death even the death of the cross. The previous verses focused on the Lord Jesus Christ, how he humbled himself, how he lowered himself and then Christ or God exalting him. We saw that and so the impact and the impetus that I believe you were captivated by him. You were captivated by him as I was. So much so that everything else faded away. I hope that's what happened that everything our problems our concerns faded in the background as it were and Christ was exalted and magnified and glorified.

Now however Paul redirects here in the text that we're going to read from this morning, he redirects our focus now to our practical lives, our realities of our lives. And he's going to do that in the very essence of the Lord Jesus Christ through the lens of understanding him first and then putting upon him as himself and living within and through us. You see, that's what we're going to see. And we're going to see that detailed out by having this again the mindset of Christ that it is through that understanding that Paul encourages us as he does with his partners in the gospel, namely to the church at Philippi, to adopt this same mindset, the same attitude that you see in Christ. In essence, this mentality means the total obedience to God that is the route to maximum fulfillment namely pleasing God and that even when circumstances and by the way circumstance is not a good way to gauge life right amen that we're going to see that by having this total obedience to God it suggests that the easier path which is going up and down by circumstances that we don't look through that kind of lens. But the lens that Christ had was it is not an easy path is it? It's not an easy path but it's a better life. It's the best life that God has for us isn't it? And we're going to see that in this passage.

And further Paul connects just at his introduction connects us to the following application to his previous instructions. He's going to detail it out. This is what you heard of Christ. Now it's instructions for you here in this passage to adopt the mindset of Christ which is focusing on his radical obedience. His radical obedience with the transition you'll see. Wherefore my beloved? He uses this word beloved meaning the love by God called to love others in return. And Paul emphasizes that this profound love, this word beloved he

has is for the Philippians. You see his love for others was through this connection with the Philippians. And it is not a title earned by merit. That word beloved is not a title by merit but rather by grace. And we will see this in the passage.

And as the recipients of his loving care, namely the Philippians, they are to put into practice the very teachings, the very mindset that received from Christ. So think about it. Jesus obedience to the father led him to abandon an unimaginable comfortable situation. Right? He was in heaven seated at the right hand of God the Father. Perfect harmony, perfect environment, and he voluntarily by his love came down here to earth. And not just, okay, he's going to live a rich life. We saw no, he lowered himself so much so that he emptied himself. That was that's the word that is used in the text. He emptied himself of all of his riches for us, right? For us. And so we're going to see this that compared to this the unimaginable beautiful place in heaven, he lowered himself and entered into this horrific life here on earth. And he demonstrated that obedience to the father is always best. That the obedience of the father is always best and the best path. And we are similarly called to embrace this kind of belief because the Philippians believers participated in the gospel both by their obedient example and by the way their financial support. Paul refers to them as my beloved. And he now commands them out of this. He commands them to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling emphasizing their continual obedience. You'll see in the text when we go into he says as ye have always obeyed. So they are already obeyed. What is he talking about then? If they have always obeyed. Well, he's going to focus on not as in my presence only. That was when he was present. He will say but now much more in my absence. Interesting. So their past actions has already established a pattern of obedience but now much more obedience from where they were at.

And so they had previously demonstrated obedience to Jesus commands while Paul was with them. Now Paul urges them to maintain an even increase in that obedience especially in his absence. And this will be the result if they embraced Jesus' selfless perspective as described in verses 5-10 making it their own example to follow. So at this time, if you will please stand out of the respect of God's word, we'll now go into reading it, beginning in verse 12.

Wherefore, 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. For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither I labored in vain. Yea. And if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all. For the same cause

also ye joy and rejoice with me. May God bless the reading of his word. You may be seated.

We're going to look at verse 12 with the phrase, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. The Apostle Paul's instruction is directed exclusively to believers in Jesus Christ. Here the beloved who have always obeyed and the saints in Christ Jesus which were at Philippi. We saw that in verse one. It is vital to remember this very foundation. Namely, if you are not a believer in Jesus Christ and mistakenly believe that Paul's word offers a path to salvation through your own efforts, you must heed Christ's words. This is what he said in John 6:29. This is in the aftermath of Jesus feeding the 5,000. The people sought to know this question. What shall we do that we might work the works of God? You see in this passage, Jesus transitions the focus from this pursuit of physical food to the essential need for faith in him who is the genuine bread of life. And the central theme is that Jesus urges the listeners to see spiritual sustenance as a priority over temporary worldly provisions.

So Christ answered them this way. This is the work of God that you believe on him whom he hath sent. John 6:29. You see believing in Jesus Christ not work without faith in Christ to be your spiritual strength in maintaining your Christian life. Right? Because that is what ultimately bread is. And so he references the physical bread with the spiritual bread which is him. And so then he explains that in a spiritual sense that your spiritual sustenance is Christ himself. You see that? So now going back to passage in Philippians 2, it's not applicable to you if you have not received Christ first. Because all this is spiritual application in Christ Jesus. It cannot be obtained physically. You cannot obtain this with your own effort. It must be Christ working in you in new life. And so in Philippians 2, we see that as no work is acceptable without having the Lord Jesus.

Going back to passage two, we see this command. It's a command for believers to work out your own salvation. And this, by the way, harmonizes, you might think, with Paul's consistent message that salvation falls in Titus 3:5 says this, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us. And that Christ has accomplished everything for us, leaving us with nothing to do. You think this is a paradoxical statement, but here's the thing. This word salvation here noted in Philippians is diverse and comprehensive in its meaning. And let me draw that more deeply. So what is the depth of salvation that Paul's referring to here? Well, the term salvation again has a deeper significance than you might think at the onset. It encompasses the entire process by which we are delivered from sin in all its forms and secured in a stable position in God. So that's the overarching theme of this word salvation.

However, it can also refer to three distinct phases of this single mighty and perfect act of salvation. Here it is. Number one, there's three of them. Number one, deliverance from guilt and condemnation. Salvation in the sense is a past event for the Christian, referring to the initial deliverance from the penalty and condemnation of sin. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit. Romans 8:1. So no condemnation there. Verse two, our second distinct marker of salvation. It's a gradual deliverance from sin's power. We see this an aspect of salvation is a present process. A present process. This ongoing work. This gradual deliverance from the power of sin within our own hearts. That sanctification. We see Jesus saying this in John 17:17. Sanctify them through thy truth. Thy word is truth. So how do we get sanctified? Through this book. How do you read this book? Do you understand it? Not to your own physical eyes which own effort, own effort but the spirit working in you and that is the effort is through his power. Do you see the difference when you read the text that way? It's generated by the spirit's power and illuminating understanding the word of God as it truly what it's supposed to mean.

And then in Psalm 1, not only do you see the truth for what it is, but do you delight in the word of God as it says in Psalm 1, his delight is in the law of the Lord and in his law that he meditate day and night. Do you think about this word or is it just a checklist? Is it just something you do rather than you're just enjoying his presence in his word? There's a difference, isn't there, in our posture and our attitude with the word and how we handle it. So, it's a visible unfolding before your very eyes. This work of sanctification, you see it currently happening in your life. Third distinct marker of salvation is that final perfect deliverance. Perfect deliverance of salvation is also a future event. Past, present, future. The complete completion of this process is that it brings you to a final and perfect deliverance from sin, from sorrow, from death, the body and all earthly weariness and troubles achieving when we reach the other side which is namely heaven. And in heaven we'll be with Christ and we'll be with for him all eternity with all other believers. Amen. So these are the three aspects past, present and future. all elements of the one complete and perfect act of deliverance that we call salvation.

I had to address that because we must know what this word means here in this text. So then looking then now at the at Paul's instructions knowing that as a background is his instructions is not for believers to earn salvation. And we know that it's not earned. But to demonstrate here the salvation that God has already granted us or granted them and at the Philippians and to us that this word work out doesn't mean work for salvation. That one word is not for you see that it's work out what already has been done in the past. And so what he does here is in the original Greek word for salvation it notes again deliverance from something and namely kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the dear son Jesus Christ. We see in Colossians and so this term is used earlier also in Philippians. You saw that in chapter 1 verse 19 you saw Paul asking the Philippians to what? Pray for his

deliverance. Say that word salvation from what? Temptation of fear. Fear of what? which would prevent him from boldly preaching the gospel in the maritime prison. Right? And we saw the answer to that. He said, "I witness to everyone." So that that prayer was answered. He had no fear. And may we have that kind of fearlessness. Amen. That we preach the gospel no matter how difficult the environment may be.

So the first question to consider is from where or from what are the Philippians being delivered out of in this passage. Then this deliverance not only must be worked out by them and this working out must be done with fear and trembling. So furthermore that this deliverance is intrinsically linked to the work of God. We see that in the text who is actively working within them both to help them desire and to enable them to act according to his good pleasure. So Paul urges the Philippians to live with fear and trembling not out of anxiety. Just know that this word fear and trembling doesn't mean anxiety but out of a profound commitment to God's will. That's what it is. You see, the goal is to live a life that genuinely pleases him. Is that your main focal point? That what I'm doing, that I'm doing this because God is working in me to do his good will and for his good pleasure. Is that what is beating upon your new heart, your regenerated heart? And that action again is performed by God, ensuring that they will receive the rewards he longs to give. See, the greatest tragedy is to miss then the opportunity to please God with their lives and thus forfeit those eternal rewards.

And so therefore, the deliverance or salvation referred to here is from the terrible consequences of failing to seize the amazing opportunity to live a life that pleases God. That you have fear and tremble that God is am I pleasing myself or am I pleasing God? You see that? And so this attitude which Paul urges the Philippian believers to embrace directly mirrors what Jesus's own approach was. Here's our main example. We saw Jesus considered the enormous price of obedience to the father to be entirely worthwhile. Every process you remember he went through that he lowered himself, he humbled himself was a direct response of obedience to the father and that was entirely worthwhile. We saw that he what the joy that was set before him. He endured the cross despising the shame. Right? So the work that is required for them to achieve salvation namely deliverance the Philippians and us namely as believers is from wasting their lives opportunity to earn eternal rewards for obedience.

It's simply to yield to God's ongoing work. See we're not actually doing anything. It's yielding. It's yielding. That word yield is let God work in your life. Let God work in your life. He wants to work in your life. Let allow him. Yield him to do that. And that's his good pleasure. He wants to do it. He wants to express his pleasure through your life, through action. And so this Greek word for working out means to continually work. continue to work to bring something to fulfillment and ultimately completion. There's a work in all of us as believers while we're still living. There's still work for completion.

Amen. And he wants to complete what he has started in our lives. Again, it started with it is Christ's work on the cross. He did the work on the cross. It is Christ's work in you and making you more like him in obedience to the father. That's one of the changes in your heart. You're just more obedient to God the Father. While you were obedient, you were never obedient, right? Just acknowledge that we were never obedient before salvation. But suddenly, we just had this obedience, the new heartbeat of obedience to the father. And it is Christ who will bring us to our heavenly home for the final rest. He's going to carry us through past, present, and future. We saw that of salvation.

So the so God doesn't want us to waste our lives. God does not want us to waste our lives. He wants us to be delivered from the things that are of lesser things in this life. What is greater than living for God? What is greater? Amen. Think about it. Everything is less to that end. And so he says here with fear and trembling. I want to kind of dive into this now because interpretation is important just like with salvation. So I'm going to focus on a text first John 4:18. It says this perfect love casteth out fear because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. That's 1 John 4:18. This is true. This is a true statement. True love gets rid of the fear that brings torment. That's not what God wants for us. We're not supposed to be tormented anymore. However, there is a different kind of fear in the context of Philippians. A fear and trembling that paradoxically goes along with confidence and hope. Confidence and hope. You go, how does that work out? Well, scripture assures us of the believer's certain salvation. There's that certainty and then confirmed by their faith. Yet, genuine faith requires a deep trembling distrust of one's own power. Let me say that again. Genuine faith requires a deep trembling distrust of one's own power. Is that how you are a Christian? You have a genuine distrust of yourself now. And you know that more and more and more and so which is essential for having a thankful disposition and a faithful disposition and then being able to receive God's boundless mercy, right? He protects you from doing what you want to do. Did you recognize that in your life more and more for your assurance? That's God's mercy. He protects us from wanting to do what's in our hearts.

And so with that, he allows us not focus on ourselves, but instead be filled with this gazing upon Jesus and his obedience. Why do you think Paul spent right five verses 5 to 10 on Jesus Christ where we look upon him as our example? It's not us anymore. It's not we don't look within ourselves. We look to Christ. We look to Christ. We look to Christ for everything in our lives. And so that kind of fear that we don't look to ourselves anymore, but we look to him, that ought to bring some trembling because we still have a sinful heart, don't we? And that's the reality. And he's saying, you got to do it fear and trembling because you're still living with the sinful heart. The work hasn't been completed yet, but it is going to be brought to completion one day. And know that that's your hope. So you have the confidence salvation is certain but then you also have that hope that there is going to be greater work in you and that's namely through Christ

through Christ. And so that is the genuine focus to put genuine attention that we should bring upon these words with fear and trembling.

So as one who works with fear and tremble right? What do I mean by that? We still have this body. We still need to work. But where does that work come from? That's what I want us to examine. You see, is it a work that we're producing in our own effort or is it a work that's produced from God? That's what I'm going to want us to focus on because you will have confidence and hope if you know and you realize that what God is doing in your life that he's going to continue to work out your salvation, namely sanctification. And that should bring you that hope and that assurance and guarantee that we see in Philippians 1:6. If you look down there, it says, "Being confident," there's that word, "of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." So assuring that God will complete the spiritual work of transformation and salvation, he begins in believers, we can trust that he will continue to finish what he has started.

So then we can confidently say as this self-distrusting thought remember I mentioned about self-distrust this is what Paul said I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live but what but Christ liveth in me and the life which I now live in the flesh I still have this flesh he says of sin he says I live by the faith of the son of God I focus on him. And then who loved me, I focus on his love for me. And he gave himself for me. The greatest kind of love that he laid down his life for his friends. Galatians. So therefore, since God is the one working in all things, be diligent, be faithful, be prayerful, be confident. Since Christ has perfected the work for you, continue to yield to him and go on unto perfection. Let all fear and trial be yours as a person, but let all confidence and calm trust be yours as a child of God. You see the dynamics going on. So true believers in Christ transform their confidence and fears into sincere prayers going to God and we want him to be in our laboring of our hands that is his work and that you would hear a response I'll never leave you nor forsake you because that's who Jesus is he'll never leave us to our own devices if we truly trust that he will do what he has started because God is faithful. We are faithful. Amen.

So not fear of losing salvation. Again, that's not what this text is talking about, but call because Paul calls them my beloved. And then he also calls them sons of God in verse 15. And it's a sober awareness that we could squander our own earthly opportunity to please God. Meaning that we have so much opportunity to please God here. We have so many opportunities. And the greatest failure in life is to live in a manner that forfeits the opportunity to bring pleasure to God. And so Paul repeatedly shares how he willingly accepted suffering for the sake of Christ, motivated by the rewards he anticipated for his obedience. And we see this in other parts of the text. I'm not going to go all into it, but in 1 Corinthians 9:24 says this, "Knowing not that they which run in a race run all, but all,

but one receiveth the prize." So he's talking about rewards here. 2 Timothy 4:8, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." So it's not just work, work, work, work work, work work that God wants us to experience. But he also wants us to think that there is an end to this and there is a reward to this as a good father does isn't just have you work, work, work and never receive anything. He is a good father. Amen. And I hope as fathers we are also good in that we're not just having our kids work to death because that's not a representation of God the father.

And so through his letters, Paul urges believers to live this day for that day. Live this day for that day. Referring to the ultimate accountability of the judgment day, which is 2 Corinthians 5:10 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." But going back now to this passage in Philippians, that's ending that part. Paul exhortation here is for the Philippian believers to put forth their most determined focus to achieve the highest reward. Okay, the highest ultimate reward. Obtaining this significant goal necessitates salvation or complete freedom from worldly perspective. See, God changes our perspective too. He helps us to see things more clearly with this as our lens.

And so working out our own salvation requires the right attitude adopting true and real perspective namely the scriptures and that aligns us to the mind of Jesus. This is how we align ourselves to Jesus. And adopting those perspectives, it will lead us to work out for his own good pleasure. Not pleasing ourselves, not even pleasing other people primarily. But what? God first. God first. Pleasing God. You see that? That's a change of orientation. Now, let's look now at verse 13. Verse 13. I spent a lot of time in verse 12, but we'll speed up in verses 13 on. Verse 13. I want us to focus on for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. This is the heart of the passage. We do not produce obedience. God does. We saw that. We do not generate spiritual desire, God does. We do not manufacture spiritual fruit, God does. So, they are being called to allow God's work which is already active within them to manifest and flow out through their actions.

Here's a little bit of insight that one commentary put. I think it's reasonable. Many of the believers in Philippi were likely retired Roman soldiers. And if you know anything about Roman soldiers, they can endure a great deal amount of hardship. Let me just share some of the things that they are known for. They have the capacity for long marches. And we actually see a glimpse of that in Acts 23:23 to 32. I'm not going to go into it, but we see that the Roman soldiers marched through the night to deliver Paul to Caesarea. And then they returned back to Jerusalem the following morning. Quite a long distance there. And Paul seems to be presenting these believers the vision of extreme hardship compared to a Roman soldier undertaking for a vital purpose. For Roman soldiers, it was for Rome,

right? And but for us it's for God right difference but adopting Jesus mindset of obedient courage you see the Philippians can achieve the most profound possible outcome for their lives namely to please God and receive eternal rewards.

So there's a clear link between what we see in us with God working in us for this thing that we can't explain. I can't tell you how this works, how it is that God is working through us. We just know it and it's believing that he is doing that in our lives. So I can't tell you the intricate mechanism of how it works out. But there's something definite about this is that you act according to God's will. That your life is aligned to God's will. And what is that? that he provides the strength. Even though he might put tests in your life that may not make sense circumstantially, but if you look over time, your life is becoming more like Christ. That's for sure. You should see that that you're more obedient than you were before. You're more willing to take on God's will. Even if it was more difficult, you were still able to take it. Because again, it's God's will, his strength working in you. You see that?

And so verse 14, here's some practical things. He says, "Do all things without murmurings and disputings." See, grumbling is not a small sin. It is a low actual muttering sound of actual grumbling. It's like, "I don't want to do this." That's kind of like it actually has a meaning and a sound to it. I don't want to do this. Spiritually, this act signifies an emotional rejection of their circumstances. The will and providence of God has ordained for one's life. Do you know that he has ordained things in your life ahead of time? He has. This is God's infinite wisdom and understanding of you. It is the opposite right of Christ's mindset. Christ what I mean that he never grumbled. He never disputed. You saw that in verses 5 through 11. You see Paul urges the believers to live a life of obedience embracing even hardship with eager approval. This is key. Eager approval without complaint.

So, do you test when God is testing you, do you just eagerly approve it or do you hesitate? Do you back off? You see, as we grow in our obedience, we obey quicker. We agree sooner. And that's a sign of Christ working in you. Know that. And he is the one that helps you not complain. It's and he emphasized this commitment is worth any price. You see, he commands them to do all things emphasis all things all things all circumstances all things that God lays in your life without grumbling or disputing. This term translated as disputing is intellectual in nature. So, if you're going from emotional to intellectual, what's going on the mind, it refers specifically to negative questionings or criticisms aimed to God. You might think it's aimed to someone else, but ultimately it goes to God. If you know that, it's a little bit be more careful, right? Because every word is going to be judged that comes out of our mouths. No, nothing goes idle with God. And so, he takes that And know if you know that then it you'll be less quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger as James says.

But when hardship comes when so see when hardships comes it's not a matter of if it will come. It is human nature to grumble and that's why Paul deals with this. You're going to get hardships guess what your nature is going to want to grumble and dispute. And the harder the hardship, the more grumbling and disputes that's going to arise in your human nature, your flesh. He says, "Watch it." Because he's actually pointing back to what happened with the Israelites. Do you remember the Israelites escaped slavery? They wanted to, they were eager to escape, weren't they? If you look at the passage, we're not going to go into, they were eager, right? Remember, upon our salvation, we were eager. We wanted to get saved. But what happened? They quickly just as eagerly as quick they were began to complain when faced with difficulties. God brought them out into the wilderness. It wasn't by your strength. It wasn't by your matter of will. And maybe you might be in a wilderness moment right now. Who put you there? It was God. Know that. And if you're complaining right now, that might be your stumbling block why you're not getting to where you need to be. If that if you're a believer, because a believer, as we know, ends up on the other side, past, present, future.

So Paul knows their hearts. He urges them cherish as cherish companions in the gospel. says, he says without grumbling or disputing. Again, God's work in his people to remove this very nature in us. Did you know that God wants to remove that in you? He wants to complete that work in you that you will not be grumbling and disputing like Christ as our example. And so, why is grumbling so serious? Why does Paul note this immediately after hardship? Let's go further. You see, because it is a rejection of God's providence. It is saying God I don't like what you're doing. It might say like that or it might say God I don't trust your wisdom or it might say God I know better. That's our human nature resistance. But when God works in us he produces joyful submission. Remember the mind of Christ the joy that was set before him. That's the counter work is that is there joy in your circumstances even though it may not look good visibly but he gives you this sense to look beyond the temporal into the future into the eternal. And so when God works in us he produces a joyful submission the mind of Christ which ends all muttering all disputings.

So verse 15, God makes his children be blameless and harmless. He goes further into this now. He goes to being blameless and harmless. This is God's continuing transformative work in you to be blameless and harmless as well. And it's again having the mind of Christ. You see blameless refers to the outer, the external, what is visible. And it literally means a life above approach. You thought that was just for elders and deacons. No, it's also for all Christians to live blameless. And it's a life living integrity, namely in Christ, that is free from complaining and disputing and consistent with faith in Christ. And then we look at the word harmless refers to the inner work, the character formation, which is namely Christ working in us. And this is meaning unmixed. unmixed where there is only

one desire which is reflection of Christ not your old nature of self-centeredness that's how you become harmless you adopt Christ reflecting in you.

And because of this as a backdrop he says in a crooked and perverse nation so that's you now this is he's saying look at where you came from a crooked and perverse nation which is you were once part of this generation, a group of people that were lured to doing wrong. Was that you? You just love the wrong. You're no longer living that way. You're living right. And so as multitude of men are going living wrong and leading other people to do wrong, you are out. You are in the midst. You see that word midst? You are in the midst of this crooked and perverse generation. You're not like them. You're in the midst of them and you're different. And how are you different? We're going to go into that. But let me now emphasize the word crooked. Crooked literally means in the root word scoliosis. Scoliosis which describes a curvature in the spine. And it literally means that it's not a standard of living of God. It's your own standard namely the world's standard which is against God. Everything is bent towards I don't believe in God. He's not my standard. I'm going to live my own life. So, you're going from turning away from wrongdoing to living true. And then you're no longer living to your own standard, which is the world, but you're living to God's standard, which is his word.

Because you see in Isaiah 53:6, all we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. That was us before. We're not like that anymore. And so, this deviation is intensified by that word perverse. And it's this idea of straying away or distorting the image of God and making it twisted, right? Identity, that's one area that Satan loves to attack, right? He loves to attack our identity but we are in Christ. Amen. As believers we are in Christ and everything he says and does through his power we can do. So what is this that we are in the midst of all of this? Let's look now. He says among whom in the midst of all this among whom ye shine as lights in the world. You're that light in this all this darkness and crookedness and perverseness. Paul urges the believers in Philippi to move past their spiritual beginning. All right, new birth and actively shine as lights in the world, mirroring Jesus's role as the light of the world. We see that in Matthew 5:14. Because he is the light of the world. We can become light of the world who demonstrates God's glory through obedience. That's how you are light. It's through obedience.

The Philippians are called to live lives above approach. That's what it means to live a life of obedience. And so by contrast, their conduct with the crooked and perverse surrounding culture, they become visible as lights shining in the darkness. and the word of God matched by the character of God, namely living more and more in Christ likeness. And so as a child of God, you're ultimately a lightbearer in a world which is hidden in darkness. And again, it's not your work. It's Christ working in you. It's Christ working in you. And so we see in verse 16. Now we look at verse 16. Hold forth the word of life.

Hold forth the word of life. The Philippian believers are and all believers thereafter as children of God will demonstrate their commitment to the word of life. Again, spending time in God's word. And this act of holding forth is offering something for others to receive. Do they see the word? Do they see you like you're the visible Bible? You're walking. I remember somebody once quoted John Bunyan. He's a writer to pilgrim's progress. If you cut him, you cut him. It's that the word of God comes out. It is literally means like everything that pours out of him is the word of God. It's a good illustration.

And so the word of life is can people see the visible gospel in you that they can read this and match it up with your life. And so it produces then you then it gives you this idea I got to want more of Christ in my life so I can be a better light to the world. And so mirroring obedience exemplifies the Lord Jesus Christ ultimately. And so Paul expresses a deep personal desire regarding the Philippians faithfulness. He wants them to live in such a way that in the day of Christ he will be able to not run in vain nor labor in vain. So this connection between the Philippians conduct and Paul's future reward is a key point. The text acknowledges the inherent human drive for self-interest, noting that the biblical instruction to love others as we love ourselves confirms this desire. Here's the interesting part of this text. Paul isn't asking the Philippians to abandon self-interest. Rather, he encourages a transformed self-interest. What do I mean by that? It's this. While a pure self-seeking approach leads to self-destruction, meaning I want to do what I want to do. He's in fact saying unity in this sense a transformed self-interest is luring of oneself. So your self-interest is luring of yourself. You see that in your life? Do you see that God is working in your life? Just like with Christ lowering himself, you lower yourself to accommodate others. You accommodate others. That's the goal. And that's because the Lord set that example for us. He's going to work that in our lives.

So in your life, do you see yourself where you have to lower yourself? Lower your expectations, what you want rather than what Christ wants. Because you see, when you start living that way, God will use you more. He will magnify more of Christ in you. See, Paul openly expressed his strong desire to rejoice in the day of Christ. He's anticipating. He's looking to that day of Christ. Again, future oriented in the present, this living this day for that day. So the specific glory he seeks is rooted in the faithful obedience of his Philippian disciples which will lead to their own glory from Christ. He wants them to receive greater things from Christ. He wants them to receive greater rejoicing. And his feeling is akin to that of a proud father. What do I mean by that? A proud father rejoices when in a child's success of doing well whether in school or in competition. And Paul uses this word as spiritual father in 1 Corinthians 4:15. He's a spiritual father to the Philippians. He wants the best for them. What's best for them is to rejoice that you're running and that you're laboring not in vain. He wants to help them to focus on those things. Nothing is done in vain in the Lord. Every success that you do for Christ's sake is ultimately receives rejoicing in Christ and rewards in Christ.

And so he through their actions, he receives his own success. That's a good father, right? Doesn't just care about himself, but actually cares for his children. And we are to adopt that kind of life. And that's when he says, "I don't live in vain. I don't live just for myself. I live for you all. And so while Paul will still be rewarded for his personal faithfulness, that is true, he places a higher value on the opportunity to share in the triumph of his own spiritual children instead of an individual reward. And I got to tell you that is when I read this part of the text, it spoke loudly to me as a pastor. I'm not up here for myself. I'm here to help us God to rejoice more in Christ to help us to labor for Christ and to be obedient more in him because I know that all of us then we can receive this joy together. That's what he says. I joy and that you rejoice. I would love to see that myself. My prayer is for that for Calvary Road.

And so running and laboring running is that he uses that word run. It's literally used in the discipline of Olympic games. And you know what would they go under? 10 months of abstinence and intense training. So it's literally just like a focus. I know what my aim is. It's the day of Christ and I am running towards that. And I would do with all intensity and willing to care less of the lesser things for the greater things. That's that aspect of running. And then he uses this aspect of laboring not in vain. That literally means an intense mental exertion from so physical example to a mental exertion where I will be gladly fatigued. I will be glad to be fatigued mentally. It is exhausting to preach. It's exhausting to prepare a message. It is exhausting to minister. He's saying but it's all worth it. I'd rather be tired from this than doing something for myself, a simple thing that doesn't count for anything. You see that? So my focus, your focus, our attention in all this is not in vain in the Lord. It isn't. And so I would gladly focus my attention. I would gladly pour out my time in preparation for these kind of messages. When you abandon all things of this world, your commitment will be refocused and realigned and it will continue in that path for all time and for all eternity. Isn't that what we all want as Christians? Isn't that what we all want to one day respond to Jesus? I did everything for you, Lord, and I gladly did it for you. I rejoice in it. I don't want to end up at the end not rejoicing. Do you have that desire, that anticipation? wherever you are that you would continue to rejoice all the way through to the end because that's what he says.

Let me just quickly verse 17 18. I know this is a longer sermon but please this is all important. I want to finish up here just briefly. Verse 17 this is where Paul this is a way only Paul can conclude. He literally says in verse 17 it's literally a drink offering. What is a drink offering you might say? is essentially this is that it symbolizes a complete dedication, complete joy and total surrender of one's life. That is Paul, isn't it? If you read the life of Paul, he is completely dedicated. He has complete joy and he totally surrenders his life and poured out for others to receive. And it's actually a sweet aroma drink offering was a sweet aroma to the Lord. So he was thinking about the people that his commitment and then that he will be a sweet aroma to the Lord. So he had both aspects in

mind. And so that's verse 17. And then verse 18, Paul rejoices that the Philippians rejoice. You know it says there rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. He was so intimately connected with them and he wants to bring this out again at this juncture.

Verse 18. Look, I know where you are. The Lord has shown me these things to share with you because I know it will be worked out. I know it. That's the confidence he has. You know what that gives me confidence up here. Do you understand? No word returns void. It will always bear fruit to all believers. But I must preach this word. I must share with you everything so you will totally grasp what he has for you. He wants you to rejoice. He does. And that joy flows wherever God is working. Amen. Wherever God is working, there is joy. There is always joy. Always remember that no matter how hard the circumstances is, there is always joy when God is working. And your faith is not isolated but united with the faith of others. That's why he includes Philippians over and over and over again. Not what God is doing in my life namely, but also including the Philippians. He's doing something in your life too. And I can say this right now. God is doing something with this pastor. And he is doing something in your life right now. And I want that connection with us. It's the greatest privilege. And I get to sense that when I read this text. It humbles me. It gives me joy when I'm praying. It gives me delight when I'm spending time in the word. I'm going, "Do you see this as I'm reading this? Do you see it in the text? As I'm reading it, do you see it for yourself what you're getting?" There's no greater joy than in what your life is spent for Christ. There really is not. Know that when you have this kind of connection, this shared faith, you'll be able to overcome any circumstances. Any circumstances. Know it. No matter what God tests you with, you'll have to overcome it when we go it together. And we will do it together by God's grace and his mercy.

Like Paul, you will become a person who despite having every reason to be sad finds joy and encouragement as others do the same. May God bless us Calvary Road with this kind of deep commitment for God and for each other. Amen. Let's pray. Father, thank you for just everything that Paul shared with these passages. Oh God, it's such a wonderful thing to think upon these things. But Lord, I ask that you would help us to produce more fruit. That you would help us to produce more obedience to you. We can all say that wherever we are at, we are not at the end. We are somewhere in between. All of us in this room as believers. And I just pray and ask that this passage would have just removed any hardness, any grumbling, any disputing and all the blameless, being blameless, being harmless, all these things that we find in the mind of Christ. Lord, may it be within all of us more and more so that we can truly ultimately please you, Father, and that we will receive the ultimate accommodation. As Jesus will say to us, well done, good and faithful servant, welcome into the day of Christ. Bless us to this time, Lord, and we'll thank you in Jesus name. Amen.