

# Philippians 2:12-18

## Shining Stars

Image Church // Philippians Week 6

MPS: Living in light of our salvation for the sake of the world.

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### Introduction

Well, good morning Image family, I hope you're doing well... I want to say **Happy Memorial Day Weekend**- I'm grateful for the sacrifice of so many in our armed forces who've given their lives so that we could experience the freedoms that we have today...

Hey just a quick reminder, if you haven't already, go to [imageatl.com](http://imageatl.com) and sign up for our **weekly update**! This is going to be our primary form of communication, so make sure that you take a second and sign up so that you can stay looped in on what's going on especially in light of all of this COVID-19 stuff- *we're in the process of putting together a phased plan that we're going to be rolling out to you, so be looking for that!*

Ok, if you have your Bibles go ahead **and grab them and turn to the book of Philippians** we're going to be back in **chapter 2** as we continue our journey through the book of Philippians...

For those of you that may be new with us or for those of you who've just forgotten, here where we've been...

**Week 1: A unique beginning** to the church in Philippi where we looked at the first set of members, a wealthy Asian fashionista named Lydia, a slave girl, and a blue color Prison Guard...

**Week 2:** We looked at **courage to continue in the faith**...

**Week 3:** We looked at what it means to **live as Christ** and obstacles that hinder us from that...

**Week 4:** We looked at Paul's call for **unity** in the church...

**Week 5:** We looked at how the foundation for unity is **humility**, and that humility is an attitude that we have toward others, and the way that we have that attitude is by looking to Jesus as our **model** and **motivation**...

Which leads us to this week, **week 6:** Where Paul's going to talk about **Obedience**...

Ok, let's jump in:

### Philippians 2:12-18

**12 Therefore**, remember when we see this we always have to ask, *what's it there for??*

Well, remember there were problems in the church in **Philippi**, they were being threatened by selfishness and pride, and so Paul calls them to **unity**, and that **unity** he calls them to is on the grounds of **humility** where they're to regard others as more important than themselves...

And then Paul reminds them of Jesus, and he holds Jesus up as the **model** and **motivation** for **humility**...

And that fact that Jesus humbly laid down His life in perfect obedience... And what Paul's doing here with this **therefore**, is he's picking back up on the **humble obedience of Christ** as the continued framework for they should live...

**Just as Christ's humility gave way to His obedience, so should their humility give way to their obedience...**

Ok, so **verse 12 Therefore** [in light of the humble obedience of Christ], **my dear friends, just as you have always obeyed**, [he's reminding them of how they initially responded to the gospel] **so now, not only in my presence but even more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.**

### ***Uh oh, what do we do with that?!?***

Well, here's what Paul's *not* saying- he's *not* saying work *for* your salvation as it relates to your standing before God- He's already been clear in **1:28** that ***the act of Salvation is from God...*** ***This text isn't about people getting saved, this text is about how saved people live...***

Remember, Paul's talking to the church, and so the people he's addressing are already saved...

***What Paul's talking about is the present outworking of a future reality...***

***IOW:*** Living in light of the salvation that's been received...

- ***When you understand the gospel***, and what Jesus has done through His life in your place, and His death in your place as your punishment and His resurrection restoring your broken relationship with God so that you can be with Him forever, it changes everything...
- ***When you really understand what you've been saved from and who you've been saved to it changes everything... The future hope of your salvation has a present reality in your life impacting the way that you live now because of the magnitude of the gift you have received!***

***Work out*** in the original language was written in the ***present tense***- which means that it's an ongoing action... That we're continually working out, living out, pursuing the future reality of our salvation...

**One scholar<sup>1</sup> defines how this plays out like this, that working out our salvation is a: *A Continuous sustained effort...***

The Christian life isn't passive, complacent, or stagnant... It's continuous sustained effort...

- What does that look like? ***Obedience!***

And so, when Paul says work out your salvation here, he's saying walk in obedience, following Jesus in His life, knowing that one day we will follow Him in His glorification as co-heirs with Christ in heaven with God for all of eternity!!

***Obedience*** is what we're to continually sustain our efforts, obedience is an act of submission to the Lordship of Jesus...

And not only that, but obedience it keeps us oriented around the truths of Jesus...

Which is why I am always saying, *we don't just obey for the sake of obedience... Obedience tethers us to Christ by reminding us of who He is and what He's done...*

- ***Examples:***
  - ***Love you neighbor***- As Christ has been to me I will be to others.
  - ***Forgive***- As Christ has forgiven me so I will forgive others...
  - ***Generosity***- Jesus was generous with His life for me, and so I will be generous to others...
- Each of those areas are points of obedience, and walking in obedience in those areas helps me remember the ***Lordship of Christ***, and reminds me of the ***grace of Christ***, and orients my heart around the ***promises of Christ...***

Now I know what you're thinking, you're thinking- but that's hard, following Jesus, walking in obedience is hard... And you're not lying!

But here's the good news in what Paul lays out, we don't just have the promise of salvation that we're told to live in light of... We've also have the power to be able to do it!

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Obrien

Look at what Paul says in **verse 13**: For it is God who is working in you both to will and to work according to his good purpose.

This is where the **fear and trembling** part comes into play! It's the idea of awe and amazement- **verse 13** is why, because God's at work in you through the power of the Holy Spirit! So incredible that God's not only told us how we need to live but he's given us the power to be able to live that way!

Let me stop and just say this, this is why we say all the time that **Christianity isn't lip survive its life surrender**, this is why it's more than a prayer!

**Christianity is a life that's characterized by gospel centered obedience**... Here's what I mean by that:

- **Gospel drives** it- Spirit gives you ability to do it
- **Gospel restores** you when you fail in it driving you back to Jesus...

If that's not happening in your life to some degree, then you have to ask the question, **are you really a Christian??**

If you're living in continual **unrepentant sin** in your life, you're not working out, or living out your salvation... And the reason why you **can't** or **don't repent** is probably because the power of the Spirit isn't inside of you...

I think one of the biggest problems in our culture is that people want to do what they want to do and then hide under the label of Christianity...

But that's not at all what this text shows us... This text points us to a continual outworking of the salvation we've received... And it shows us that we have the power to be able to do that...

- This doesn't mean we will be perfect, but it means that we will live lives that are pointed to Jesus...

**Some of you listening this morning need to stop and take a hard look at your life and ask yourself is that true for you??**

Because the rest of this text isn't going to make any sense if you're really not a Christian...

Ok let's keep going as Paul presses further into obedience, **verse 14**: **14** Do everything without grumbling and arguing, **15** so that you may be blameless and pure, children of God who are faultless in a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine like stars in the world, **16** by holding firm to the word of life.

Ok let me unpack this:

**Grumbling and complaining:**

Paul says **do everything without grumbling or complaining**...

This is the cancer of any church right here which is why Paul's calling it out:

- This is negativity...
- Mumbling about the church or other people within the church about things that are not loving or helpful...
- This when your preferences become primary within the church...
- This is when it's more about what I can get from the church than what I can give to the church...

And not only does it happen within the church, but we know about **nuance** of the word complaining is that it relates to your interaction with God as well...

- When God doesn't do what you want Him to then you start complaining or calling Him into question...

**Humble obedience deals with this every time**...

- Choose to **obey** by being **humble** following the model of Jesus and you crush this every time...
  - Life isn't about you...

- Assuming others are more significant...
- Assessing the interests of others...

When you do this what's happening, you're working out your salvation...

*And you become **Blameless and pure**, this doesn't mean without sin, He's talking about faithful character as Christ followers, not actual perfection...*

*And don't miss this key phrase: **Children of God**... What Paul's saying is become what you are... **Children of God**, as you live in light of your salvation, you will start to look like your daddy!<sup>2</sup>*

- *And no one will have a reason to call your Christianity into question...*

And watch this, when you start looking like your daddy, you will **shine like stars** in a dark world...

- Shining like stars- People should see Christ in us...
- The idea is emitting light... Like a beacon, torch for the world...

**What that means is this:**

- Paul did not intend his words to mean that the Philippians were just "to stand out against" the background of their society, as just a means of contrast. He was challenge them to change their society.
- **As light dispels darkness, so Christians are to dispel the darkness of evil and ignorance that is everywhere around them.**<sup>3</sup>

**Christianity isn't just be different, it's make a difference!** Work out your salvation, shine like starts as Children of God helping others see that there is hope! There's a togetherness that comes into play here.

<sup>2</sup> Hawthorne, G. F. (2004). *Philippians* (Vol. 43, pp. 144–145). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

<sup>3</sup> Hawthorne, G. F. (2004). *Philippians* (Vol. 43, p. 146). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

**How do we do that?  Holding firm to the word of life: the gospel**

- *It is the method and the means for making a difference...*
- *It means you show it and share it!*

Paul's goal again is that the gospel would be central to their lives...

The gospel has to be central in our lives... This is why we always come back to it... It's not just me, it's what the bible holds up!

*And if they continue to hold onto the gospel Paul says this can be true, pick up in the second half of **verse 16**...*

**Then I can boast in the day of Christ that I didn't run or labor for nothing. 17 But even if I am poured out as a drink offering on the sacrificial service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. 18 In the same way you should also be glad and rejoice with me.**

Paul's saying that he doesn't want his labor for the Philippians to be just empty efforts, but rather he pours out his life for the sake of them pouring out theirs and their faith growing as a result, and that they can rejoice in together!

Here's what you need to understand **the Christian life is a labor of love that the church does together**... What we see is that the Christian life is a call to sacrifice...

- **Do we see Christianity as a labor of love, the love that we have for Jesus??**

Do you see that Paul's calling them to a life of **sacrifice** and **surrender** for the sake of the gospel?!?!?

You need to know that **working out your salvation**, isn't easy and if it is then you're not doing it right! Christianity is a **pouring out**, it is a **giving up for the sake of others** in light of what Christ has done for us.

It's the pursuit of **unity**, it's walking in **humility** as we follow Jesus in obedience- and when we do that the church will become a beacon that pushes back the darkness of our culture and of our world...

Talk about Christ in everyday-life: Christianity in the day to day! Not just in the **big things**!

## Conclusion [VAMP]

*I want to leave you with 2 Questions in light of the text today:*

**Is your life a shining star in this dark world for the glory of God?**

- Is your life free of grumbling and complaining?
- Maybe it's something else that you need to repent of, and area where you're not living out your salvation??
- Where do you need to repent?

**Can you say with Paul that you're pouring your life out for the sake of the gospel?**

Some of you need to trust in Jesus for the first time today...