

Philippians #5: Finding Joy in Working Out [Supp. Material]

Philippians 2:5-18

“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Therefore, my beloved, as you’ve always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear & trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will & to work for his good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.” (Philippians 2:5-18)

Message 1 – The Joyful Mind

I. We Are All On The Same Team (Phil. 1:27; 2:5-11)

“Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that ...I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side-by-side [*as co-athletes*] for the faith of the gospel,” (Phil. 1:27)

A. Standing firm & striving side-by-side for the same purpose (1:27)

1. All working together on the same team
2. Not outshining others
3. A team for advancing the gospel
 - “*let your manner of life be worthy of **the gospel** of Christ*” (1:27a)
 - “*striving side-by-side for the faith of **the gospel***” (1:27d)

B. God patterns joyful living (2:6-11)

1. The Tri-une God (“*Go therefore & make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father & of the Son & of the Holy Spirit,*” Matt. 28:19.) Note: The **name** (singular, not plural) of the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit is an early indication of the Trinitarian Godhead. ESV
 2. Others’ centered for mankind
- a. Each Person in the Trinity is others-centered: Timothy Keller describes their relationship like this: In the Trinity, “Each of the divine persons centers upon the others. None demands that the others revolve around him. Each voluntarily circles the other two, pouring love, delight, and adoration into them. Each person of the Trinity loves, adores, defers to, and rejoices in the others. That creates a dynamic, pulsating dance of joy and love. The early leaders of the Greek church had a word for this—*perichoresis*. Notice our word ‘choreography’ within it. It means literally to ‘dance or flow around’.” [Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism*, p. 215.] In terms of this *perichoresis*, the three of the Triune God are viewed as relational, forming a “divine community, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, [which] is complete and exists in exceeding love, fellowship and joy. The divine persons eternally love one another, rejoice in one another, serve one another, affirm one another in perfect, unbroken fellowship whose excellence so far exceeds the categories of human relationship that it is beyond our [ability] even to imagine.” [Oliver D. Crisp, *Perichoresis*, TYNDALE BULLETIN]
 - b. Obediently served mankind by becoming a man. Note: In this passage...Paul depicts Christ’s example of service...that traces his preexistence, incarnation, death, resurrection, & ascension to the right hand of God. Paul wrote this magnificent theology to encourage the Philippians to consider other people’s interests first (v. 4). Jesus is the paradigm of genuine spiritual progress: not a self-aggrandizing struggle for supremacy, but a deep love for God and neighbor shown in deeds of service. ESV
 - c. Obediently sacrificed Himself for the sin of mankind of the cross. Note: It is remarkable enough that God the Son would take on *human form* and thus enter into all the vicissitudes of a broken world. But Jesus went much farther, *becoming obedient (Rom. 5:19) to the point of death, even death on a cross*. Crucifixion was not simply a convenient way of executing prisoners. It was the ultimate indignity, a public statement by Rome that the crucified one was beyond contempt. The excruciating physical pain was magnified by the degradation & humiliation. No other form of death, no matter how prolonged or physically agonizing, could match crucifixion as an absolute destruction of the person. It was the ultimate counterpoint to the divine majesty of the preexistent Christ, & thus was the ultimate expression of Christ’s obedience to the Father. ESV
 - d. Not exalting Himself, but trusting God for that. Note: “*Therefore God...*” (2:9) It was precisely Jesus’ humiliation that became the grounds for his exaltation. By humbling himself on the cross out of love, he demonstrated that he truly shared the divine nature of God, who is love (1 Jn. 4:8). *For this reason* (“therefore”) God raised him to life and *highly exalted him*, entrusting him with the rule of the cosmos & giving him *the name that is above every name*. ESV
 - e. Glorifying the Father. Note: The worship of Jesus as Lord is not the final word of the hymn. Jesus’ exaltation also results in “*the glory of God the Father.*” This identical pattern is found in 1 Cor. 15:23-28: God gives Jesus messianic dominion over all creation, & everyone will one day rightly give praise to him as their Lord. But when his kingdom reaches its fullness, Jesus does not keep the glory for himself. Instead, “*the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all*” (1 Cor. 15:28). Even in his exaltation, Jesus remains the model of loving service to God. ESV

II. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus (Phil. 2:5)

Note: The believer's *mind* needs to reflect on the proper model, if life is to be lived for God. There is some debate as to whether this mind-set is something Christians receive by virtue of being *united to Christ* ("which **is** yours in Christ Jesus"), or whether it is to be based on the model of Christ ("which **was** also in Christ Jesus"). (The Greek has no verb; either "is" or "was" has to be supplied.) Both ideas are true. In either case, the central theme of 2:1-5 is the same—that the Philippian church would be of one mind (v. 2), united by love (v. 2) & humility (v. 3), and looking out for the interests of others (v. 4). ESV

The **selfless** mind; the **sacrificial** mind; the **serving** mind "**is yours**"

- A. Have this among yourselves
- B. Two practical ways to be others' centered/focused:
 - 1. Cooking CITYOUTH dinners - see JANE
 - 2. CITYOUTH Conference either lunch or dessert – Saturday Aug. 24th

Message 2 – Finding Joy in Working Out

I. Intro: No I Am Not Kidding

II. Working Out What God Works In You (Phil. 2:12-13)

"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear & trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will & to work for his good pleasure." (Phil. 2:12-13)

Note: The Philippians have *obeyed* in the past & should continue to do so as they *work their salvation out with fear & trembling*. They cannot be content with past glories but need to demonstrate their faith day by day as they nurture their relationship with God. But while God's justice is a cause for sober living ("fear & trembling"), it's not that Paul wants the Philippians to be anxious that they can never be good enough to merit God's favor. Rather, it is God's love & enabling grace that will see them through: *it is God who works in you*. They can rejoice in God's empowering presence even as they work hard at living responsible Christian lives. While 2:12 may seem to suggest salvation by works, it's clear that Paul rejects any such teaching (3:2-11). In 2:12 Paul means "salvation" in terms of progressively coming to experience all of the aspects & blessings of salvation. The Philippians' continued obedience is an inherent part of "*working out*" their salvation in this sense. But as 2:13 shows, these works are *the result* of God's work within his people. '*Both to will & to work for his good pleasure*' The desire ("to will") to do what's good comes from God; he also works in the believer to generate actual choices of the good, so desires result in actions. ESV

- A. God works "**in**" you
 - 1. His life is in you from regeneration (John 3:3; 1 John 5:12)
 - 2. Giftings (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11; Eph. 4:11; 1 Pet. 4:9-11)
 - 3. His promptings (John 16:13; 14:26; Acts 8:29)
- B. You work "**out**" what God worked "**in**" you
 - 1. Simple – apologizing, calling someone to read/pray, confessing
 - 2. Challenging – forgiveness, pride, self-righteousness
- C. Don't try to work "**out**" what God hasn't worked "**in**" you
 - 1. Frustrated sets in when:
 - a. We resist what God is working "**in**" you
 - b. We try to do things on our own
 - 2. God empowers us to work "**out**" (1 Cor. 12:11)

III. Not Working Against What God Is Doing (Phil. 2:14)

In 2:14-15 Paul continues the theme of "*working out*" salvation (2:12-13). The Philippians should *shine as lights* amid a *crooked & twisted generation*. Paul's choice of words recalls the wilderness generation of Israel, who in Deut 32:5 are described by these very words ("*crooked & twisted generation*") & whose spiritual progress was thwarted by *grumbling & disputing* (1 Cor. 10:1-12). Shining "as lights" probably alludes to Dan. 12:2-3—"Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, & some to shame & everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; & those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever & ever." (Daniel 12:2-3). Those who express their faith by living in this way will be raised to eternal life, to Paul's great joy. ESV

- A. Complaining rather than cooperating
- B. Questioning or disputing with God

IV. Taking The Opportunity To Shine (Phil. 2:15-16)

"you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I didn't run in vain or labor in vain. Even if I'm poured out as a drink offering on the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad & rejoice with you all. Likewise you also should be glad & rejoice with me." (2:15-18)

- A. Shining "**in the midst of**" & "**among**"
 - The crooked and twisted generation
 - The world's darkness
- B. Holding tightly to the word of life