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## Philippians – The Blueprint for Joy #9

Welcome to OIC. We are glad you are here. We are working our way through Paul's letter to the church at Philippi, a church he had started and now writes this letter of encouragement for the church. He writes with the intent of providing a blueprint for joy for the congregation at Philippi and for us, here today, at OIC. Paul knew that our joy has its continuum in our relationship with Jesus. This being the basis of our joy, Paul could easily say "if I live or die, it's all OK". Chapter 2 really begins Paul's instruction for Christian living. We have already looked at the passages that told us that we are to have the attitude of Jesus, and that attitude, was an attitude of humility. Jesus of course is our best example. Today's support text is Philippians 2:11-18.

### Philippians 2:11-18

**11** and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

**12** So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; **13** for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

**14** Do all things without grumbling or disputing; **15** so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,

**16** holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.

**17** But even if I am being poured out as a drinkoffering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. **18** You too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me

Paul's pastoral concern and love come through again within this passage. There are 3 things that Paul wanted the church at Philippi to do in order to improve themselves.

### #1 Paul wants the church to have a spiritual workout

#### Philippians 2:12-13

**12** So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; **13** for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

When Paul says "therefore" or "so then" depending on which version you're reading, he wants the church to recognize their position as Christians under the lordship of Jesus. Remember we have just learned that every knee shall bow and recognize Jesus for who He is. And to this point, Paul emphasizes the obedience necessary to be participants in the ministry of Jesus. We all like the word obey but mostly when someone is obeying us. So, what can we, as a church, extract from Paul's exhortation to the church at Philippi to obediently work out their salvation. Paul is not saying that Christians are justified by their works. He really means that Christianity must be proactive and not inactive. Too many Christians have taken the posture that salvation is a wonderful thing and then sit back and let the world go by, while reaping the apparent benefits of the world. They show up at church once in a while to see how everything is going in the Christian world. We see them at Easter and Christmas – reminds me of the old 60s drug song that says "I just dropped in to see what condition the condition was in". Too many Christians are following the **YOLO** approach.

You  
Only  
Live  
Once

If we are truly desiring to work out our salvation, we should just pay heed to the truth of verse 13 “for it is God who is at work in you...” Do you sense God at work in you? Do you have a longing after God? Paul says to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. What does that mean? It means yielding and surrendering in obedience. When we recognize that it is God that is working in us and not ourselves we should have fear and trembling. We work out our salvation in our obedience to God. Obedience should take the form of prayer, Bible study, church attendance, unity with the body, witnessing on behalf of the Lord, utilizing our spiritual gifts and displaying the fruits of the Spirit. The second thing that Paul suggests that the church at Philippi can do in order to be the best Christians that they can be is

## #2 Paul says we should have spiritual illumination

Philippians 2:14-16

**14** Do all things without grumbling or disputing; **15** so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, **16** holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.

When we are illuminated for God, there is no room for grumbling and disputing. Every time we grumble and complain while doing God’s work, it’s like we are putting a covering over our light. Maybe Paul was thinking about the Israelites in the Old Testament. They grumbled and questioned their way through 40 plus years in the wilderness!! Examine your own life. How much unnecessary grumbling and complaining do we see there? Probably way too much. Our response for one who is a partaker of the grace of God is that there really should be no instance for us to grumble and question. Think about this: He gave us life when we deserved to die in our sins. The whole idea of disputing and questioning probably stems from our lack of trust. I think there is an unhealthy amount of distrust within the universal church today because we fail to place our confidence in Christ. We tend to be unsatisfied with what He provides. How many here like ice cream? Now imagine this. Imagine it’s a hot day and Jesus brings us a chocolate ice cream cone. Wow. And when He gives it to you, you say “I want a vanilla one”. Remember Satan thrives on division amongst believers. Brothers and sisters, we are on the same team if we make every effort to be a church where we are loved and where we receive God’s love. We can have greater impact for the Gospel. When we conform to God’s Word, we will stand out as bright lights.

Philippians 2:15

**15** so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,

Yes, we live in a world that is crooked and is perverse and is directed by the prince of darkness, Satan. But when we are living like we are supposed to, we will provide spiritual illumination to this twisted and perverse generation. Don’t feel guilty for not being perfect all the time. Do your best. But if you are working out your salvation and trying to be light, you will be more effective than doing nothing. We live here in Osaka. As you know, it is not really a town that loves Jesus. So we really have to be about the proactive task of representing Jesus here, holding fast to the Word of life so that not only Paul but that our Lord Jesus will be pleased. The third thing that Paul wants us and the church at Philippi to do to be more effective Christians is this.

### #3 Paul wants us to be a spiritual sacrifice

Philippians 2:17, 18

**17** But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. **18** You too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me

Paul increases his intensity with these verses. Paul uses the imagery from the book of Numbers where a strong drink offering was poured out in the holy place. Paul knew what it meant to give everything for the sake of Jesus and His church. His aim here is to encourage the church at Philippi and us to have the same approach he had. Verse 18 really says we should follow the example of Paul as he lived for Jesus. How much of a spiritual sacrifice are we really making?

#### **Conclusion**

Where are each of you at as individuals? Where are you at this morning in your appreciation of what Jesus has done on your behalf? Are you glad and can you rejoice or are you grumbling and complaining? If you could break your life down to a balance sheet that an accountant has prepared, and imagined that God is that accountant, and for every Christian He has a profit and loss statement, what have you done that profited the Kingdom of God and what have you done that subtracted from the Kingdom of God? Now imagine our accountant, God, has another report. Probably not one you get from your every day accountant. It has 2 columns. One column is for every time you express joy because of your relationship with Jesus. The other column is for every time you did something and did it with grumbling and complaining. Which column has the most entries?

We forget that we are ambassadors here, serving Jesus by living a life exemplary of what He has done for us, in a proactive manner which will make us all stronger Christians and our church here at OIC a more spiritually prosperous one.