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PHILIPPIANS 2:12-30

Last week, we saw in the first eleven verses of *Philippians 2* that Paul told us that the Lord Jesus Christ emptied Himself and took on the form of a bondservant and was made in the likeness of men. We also saw that He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

We saw that God **highly exalted Him.**

We saw that God **gave Him a name which is above every name.**

We saw that one day at the name of Jesus **every knee shall bow**
and that **every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is**
Lord to the glory of God the Father.

But, we mustn't forget that Paul prefaced all this with the words, **"Have this attitude (mind) in you that was also in Christ Jesus..."** What attitude is Paul talking about? He is talking about **humility**. He is talking about the **obedience** we see in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is talking about living a life that is pleasing to our heavenly Father.

Wouldn't you like to have the mind of Christ?

Well, I believe we can! I don't believe God has told us in His precious Word to do something that is absolutely impossible for us to do! In the lesson before us today, Paul teaches us some practical ways we can do this, and also gives us some practical examples of folks who have done it.

So, with that in mind, let's look first at

Verses 12-13...

The first thing I want us to think about this morning is the fact that **God lives inside every believer.**

Have you ever thought seriously about the fact that God lives inside you?

Has it ever really sunk in that if you're a child of God, the Creator of all there is lives inside you?

Is that not an amazing fact?

God doesn't live inside all people. God has chosen to live only within the heart of those who trust in Him for salvation.

The second thing I want us to think about is this. **That which is inside you is to be "worked out."** Paul is telling the church at Philippi and he is also saying to you and me this morning, *"that which is inside of you is to be manifest on the outside."*

Paul is saying that not only is there the **indwelling** Christian life,
but there is also the **outworking** of the Christian life.

When you became a Christian, God began to indwell your life.

That's the indwelling. He lives in you. And He lives in me. **"You ask me how I know He lives...He lives within my heart."**

Paul says, "God is at work in you..." and Paul also says, "...work out your salvation..." Paul doesn't say, "Work **for** your salvation..." That's where so many folks get messed up. They believe they must work for their salvation.

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There are basically two camps...two views of salvation. There is the view that we take...that salvation is **by grace through faith**. We believe salvation is a gift of God. ***We did nothing to earn it. We do nothing to keep it. It is all of Him. All we did is believe and accept it.***

But there are those who look at this very verse and say, "**See, a person must work for their salvation.**"

But, that's not what **Scripture** teaches...that's not what **this** verse teaches. If Paul had said, "You must with fear and trembling, work **for** your salvation," then that would mean that I must do something...

I must take the **Lord's supper** or
I must be **baptized**, or I must **say enough prayers**,
I must say enough "**hail Marys**"...

I must do **something** to earn and merit my salvation! And, then I must **keep** on doing something in order to **stay** saved!

The phrase, "work out your salvation" means "to carry out to the goal."
It brings to mind the winning of a race, or the crossing of a goal line, or the running of bases to home plate.

I heard John MacArthur tell of a time when he was running track in college and he was on a relay team and he said that his team was winning the relay. He had run one leg of it and two others had run their legs and when the anchorman got the baton and was running the final leg, suddenly he just went over to the infield and sat down.

Dr. MacArthur said all his teammates gathered around him thinking that surely he had pulled a muscle, a hamstring, or something, and they asked him what was wrong, and Dr. MacArthur said the guy just looked up at them and said, "Nothing's wrong, I just didn't feel like running anymore." He didn't want to reach the goal...

This past summer our four-year-old grandson, who was three at the time, played Tee-ball for the first time. Well, he got up to bat one night and hit the ball pretty well...and then he just stood there. His coach said, "Run, Chase...run to first base." And Chase looked up at him and said, "No, I'm tired...I don't want to run," and he went over and sat down.

**I believe that's what many Christians do. They just sit down.
They don't feel like running anymore.**

But, I want to tell you. On the authority of what Paul says in these verses, we're to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. I believe the KJV says that we're to work out our **own** salvation... See, I can't work out your salvation and you can't work out my salvation.

We must each work out our own salvation.

Well, what does this mean and how do we do it?

We touched on this a couple of weeks ago. I believe it means being conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus. I believe it means a process that begin in our lives at conversion, and continues on until we die. And this process is called sanctification. And it involves having the mind of Christ!

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Well, then how do we do it?

I believe the first thing Paul is telling us is that we must be obedient.

Verse 12: "...just as you have always obeyed..."

I want to tell you the most frustrated person alive isn't the **lost** person...the most frustrated person alive is the **disobedient** Christian.

A disobedient Christian doesn't **get any joy out of coming to church.**

A disobedient Christian doesn't **get anything out of his Bible.**

A disobedient Christian doesn't **have any peace.**

A disobedient Christian doesn't **have any power.**

A disobedient Christian doesn't **have any witness.**

We must be obedient!

The next thing Paul says is that this working out of our salvation must be done a certain way...with **fear and trembling**. This simply means **reverence and respect**. Paul wanted us to know that living the Christian life is not to be taken lightly. **We must live it in the light of what we know about Almighty God!**

I must live a life of obedience. And I must live that life of obedience in reverence and respect of who God is! Someone once said, "When we are aware of God's greatness, we will fear Him. And when we are aware of God's goodness, we will love Him."

One does not cancel out the other. We are to revere and respect **and** love Him! Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."

Having said all that, let me say this. Do you know what enables you to be obedient? Do you know what empowers you to work out your own salvation with reverence and respect?

It is God who is at work in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

The only way you and I are ever going to be all that God wants us to be is to **completely surrender our will to His will...and allow Him to will and to work in us those things that please Him!**

I believe we should ask Him every day, "Lord, help me today to do only those things that bring You pleasure."

That takes a submission and a surrender on our part! And He will do it through us, but we must allow that to happen...

Verses 14-16...

Paul continues telling us how to have the same attitude in us as is in Christ Jesus. And he said, "Do all thing without grumbling or disputing." If we had the time we would go back to the book of **Exodus** and see how seriously God takes grumbling and disputing. You all know the story. God punished an entire generation of His children for grumbling and disputing and complaining and murmuring.

How are other people going to know who lives within us? Well, I can tell you one thing...they're certainly not going to know that God lives in us if we grumble and dispute.

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Listen, if **Jesus is Lord**...and He is...
and **He is in control of our lives** and
we belong to Him and
He lives within us and
He is at work in us to will and to work for His good pleasure,
what in the world do we have to grumble and complain about?

Paul is saying that for us to show forth the love of Christ and the fact that Christ lives within us, we must be different from the world. **We must be blameless and innocent and above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.**

And he goes on to say that we are to be lights in the world. The **NIV** says,
“Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you **shine like stars in the universe** as you hold out the word of life...”

Who does the world say are stars? **Movie stars, TV stars, sports stars, even political stars...**

But, you know what? The world's stardom is so fleeting. If you think about it, whose star would you rather be? The world's star or God's star?

Dr. W. A. Criswell said this, “Who are God's great? Who will shine forth forever and ever? The answer is not they whom the world magnifies, exalts and applauds. Rather, it is God's humblest person who points a soul to Jesus.

Tell me, in the 13th century, who were the lords and the dukes and the viscounts and the rulers of the earth? Who were they? I have no idea. But, we all remember John Wycliffe, the translator of the Holy Bible, one who shines as a star forever and ever. We remember John Wycliffe, whose body they dug up and burned and whose ashes they scattered on the River Swift that runs into the Sevron that runs into the Avon that runs into the sea that laps the shores of the earth. We know John Wycliffe.

Tell me, in the year 1660, who were the lords and the dukes and the viscounts and the rulers of the earth? Some of us might guess one or two, but all of us know John Bunyon who shall shine in God's galaxy forever.

Tell me, who were the lords and the viscounts and the dukes of the world in 1750? Most of us have no idea. But, we know John Wesley and Charles Wesley. We frequently sing their hymns of praise. These are the stars in God's sky that will shine forever and forever. Oh, think of their reward!”

Daniel said in the last chapter of his book, “And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.”

God has called you and me to **shine like stars in the midst of this crooked and perverse generation!**

Then, Paul presents to us three examples of men who have lived in such a way as to show you and me how to live...men who shown brightly as stars in a crooked and perverse generation...

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Verses 17-18...

Paul said even though he was being poured out as a drink offering, he could still rejoice!

He didn't grumble!

He didn't complain!

He didn't dispute!

He didn't murmur!

What an example to us of how to live in the midst of pain and suffering and persecution!

We said this book could be entitled **"How to Have Joy No Matter What!"** It could also be entitled, **"How to Keep On Serving Jesus With Joy No Matter What!"**

I believe this picture of being poured out as a drink offering is such a clear picture of how Paul really felt. Bro. Bob is going through the book of **Leviticus** on Wednesday nights and he's teaching us about the different offerings the children of Israel were to offer.

He won't get to the drink offerings for quite some time, but I read this past week that the drink offering was usually an offering of wine that the priest would pour over the sacrifice that was being consumed by fire. What happens to liquid that is poured on fire? **It goes up in steam and disappears, doesn't it?**

Dr. J. Vernon McGee said, "Paul is saying, 'I want my life to be poured out like a drink offering on the offering of Christ.' Paul knows that the Lord Jesus Christ made the supreme sacrifice. He wanted his life to be a drink offering – just poured out to go up in steam. He wanted to be so consumed and obscured that all that is seen is just Jesus Christ. He wanted Christ to receive all the honor and the glory. This was the mind of Paul." And Dr. McGee concluded, "I can think of no higher wish for the Christian life."

Then, Paul gives us another example of a man who lived the Christian life in humility and submission by allowing the Lord to will and to work His good pleasure.

Verses 19-24...

Paul and Timothy had a unique relationship. Paul was Timothy's mentor and father in the faith. Timothy was Paul's student and son in the faith. And Paul told the Philippians that he couldn't come to them himself, but he would do the next-best thing...he would send Timothy to them.

And he said four things about Timothy.

- 1) He said that Timothy and he were likeminded. He said Timothy was a kindred spirit...verse 20...**

I don't believe Paul could say that about a lot of people. I believe Paul was a dedicated man of God, determined to do all that God had called him to do, and he didn't have much patience with folks who were not as dedicated as he.

But, I believe Paul is telling the Philippians that this young man, Timothy, may not be as old or experienced as himself, but that he was every bit as dedicated and committed to the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Not only did Paul say Timothy had a kindred spirit with Paul, but

- 2) He said that Timothy had a genuine concern for the welfare of the Philippians...verse 20...**

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Timothy was not a phony. Timothy had a genuine caring concern for the Philippians. And Paul wanted the Philippians to know this. Paul knew that the Philippians wouldn't care how much Timothy knew until they knew how much he cared.

So, Paul commended Timothy to the Philippians, not on the basis of his knowledge of Bible doctrine, but on the basis of his compassionate concern of the people of the church of Philippi.

3) He said that Timothy put the Lord Jesus first...Verses 21-22a...

We've already seen in this book that there were some who preached Christ, but they preached Christ from **selfish ambition**. But, not Timothy. Paul knew Timothy loved the Lord Jesus with all his heart, and that he was committed to preach and teach and exalt the Lord Jesus Christ wherever he went.

Lastly,

4) He said Timothy knew how to work with others...verse 22b...

One of the most significant things about Timothy is that he had learned to follow good leadership. It was never "Timothy and Paul." It was always "Paul and Timothy." Sometimes God puts us in places of leadership. Sometimes God puts us in places of "followship."

And the person who is faithful to follow good leadership will receive just as equal and great and glorious a reward as the person who is faithful to lead.

So, with all that said about Timothy, I want to challenge you in these four areas.

I want us to be as faithful as Timothy was in the area of **being a kindred spirit with those who minister in the name of the Lord Jesus**.

I want us to be as faithful as Timothy was in the area of **compassion and caring and concern for the children of God**.

I want us to be as faithful as Timothy in the area of **putting the Lord Jesus Christ first**.

And I want us to be as faithful as Timothy was in the area of **following good and godly leadership**.

May we all seek to further the gospel as Timothy did!

Paul has taught us today how to live a life of humility and obedience to the God who bought us with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. And he gave us the example of himself and also of Timothy. Let's see one last example and we'll be through.

Verses 25-30...

Paul tells us a lot about this man in these six verses.

Paul called Epaphroditus his **brother**.

He called him a **fellow-worker**.

He called him a **fellow-soldier**.

He called him their **messenger**.

And he called him a **minister** to his needs.

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Paul tells us here that Epaphroditus went to Rome and became ill. In fact, Paul says he was sick to the point of death.

Well, why didn't Paul heal Epaphroditus? Isn't that what the faith-healers would say today? I mean, surely God didn't want him to be sick! The faith-healers of today would say, "*Well, old Epaphroditus never did have much faith. He could have been healed if he had had enough faith. He was probably out of the will of God and that made him sick.*"

No! Paul doesn't say that! Paul simply says that Epaphroditus was sick to the point of death and became sorrowful because the Philippians had heard of his illness.

But, now Epaphroditus is well and Paul is going to send him to the Philippians to show them he is well. Paul also instructs the Philippians to receive him with joy and to hold men like him in high regard.

I want us to remember the times in which these three men lived. They lived during the First Century, when Christians were indeed losing their lives for the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yet, they were willing to be broken and spilled out to further the Gospel.

We see Paul, chained to a Roman soldier, but witnessing and teaching every day...so much that the Gospel had gone forth to the whole praetorian guard. We see Paul rejoicing in the fact that the Lord would count him worthy to suffer for the cause of Christ. **Paul had the mind of Christ.**

We see young Timothy, willing to serve Paul in the furtherance of the Gospel as a son serves his father. We see Timothy willing to follow good and godly leadership and travel from Rome to Philippi so that he can come back to Paul with news of the Philippians. **Timothy had the mind of Christ.**

And we see this man Epaphroditus, a man who came close to death for the work of the Lord Jesus Christ...risking his life for the cause of Christ. **Epaphroditus had the mind of Christ.**

I pray that one day that can be said about you and me.

What is important to us today? Is it things that will pass away? Or is it things that are eternal? What do we spend our time and energy and money on?

You know, there are only two eternals...**people and the Word of God.** Are we investing in the lives of people as the Lord Jesus did...and as Paul did...and as Timothy did...and as Epaphroditus did?

J. C. Ryle said: "No one ever said at the end of his days, 'I have read my Bible too much, I have thought of God too much. I have prayed too much. I have been too careful with my soul.'"

I might add, "No one ever said, 'I have cared too much for the souls of others. I have followed too much godly leadership. I have labored too much for Jesus and I have been

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too much of a minister and a messenger and a soldier
for the cause of Christ.”

My prayer for myself and for you is that we will allow the Holy Spirit to reproduce the mind of the Lord Jesus Christ in each one of us.

We're all different. And the men we've seen today were different. We don't all have the same kind of **family** or the same kind of **talents** or **gifts** or **ways of doing things**...but we all have the **same calling**...and that is **to have the mind of Christ**.

My prayer is that whether we are a bold and fearless leader like Paul,
or a quiet, devoted Christian like Timothy,
or a diligent, behind-the-scenes minister like Epaphroditus,
we will have the mind of Christ.