

Home Group Leader's Notes
Philippians 2:12-30

Comments on 2:12-18

2:12 "Obeyed"-- cf. Jesus in 2:8 who was "obedient to the point of death." See also 1:27, that we are to have "conduct worthy of the gospel." Remember that our obedience is always out of love for Jesus and His family.

2:12 "as you have always obeyed . . . continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling" does not mean to earn salvation. Rather, it is to continue to live in obedience, even when life gets more difficult. (The recipients were suffering persecution). This life is sometimes described as a 'long obedience.' We are not to live as 'religious tourists' but worthy of the gospel.

2:12 "salvation" – the recipients have already been assured of salvation that is by and from God (1:28). Paul call's them to be motivated by their assured salvation to express this by living like Jesus, thoughtful of others, unselfish, without grumbling or arguing (2:14), etc.

2:12 "fear and trembling" – i.e. humbly, knowing you are in the presence of God. (see 1 Cor. 2:3). "Fear and trembling" is the description of how we respond to the presence of our all-powerful all-ruling "God who works in you." (13) We are to live in awe of His presence. (Above, Paul said that soon, "every knee shall bow." Our humble attitude is to be the opposite of selfish ambition or vain conceit" (4).")

2:13 "To will and to work" – the work is how His will is carried out. So God fulfills His purposes (will) as He works in us. (Please note that this is a plural directive addressed to "you all")

2:14 "Do all things without grumbling or questioning" – this almost seems like a strange thing to follow such a grand statement about God working in us. But (1) grumbling and arguing" are the results of being self-focused rather than others focused, and (2) as God is one, we are to live in unity. Our outward behavior is a result of our inward attitude (mindset).

2:15 "become blameless and pure . . ." is the result of living with the above mindset -- humble, and living with fear and trembling (in awe of God).

2:15 "shine among them like stars" -- shining like stars is the result of the community of Christ living as above. When we have Jesus' attitude, it results in unselfish living and then we make Jesus known and glorify God. Our community lifestyle will be in contrast to the world.

2:17-18 "rejoice . . . rejoice" – The result of God working through us will be unity and rejoicing.

Home Group Notes

Looking Back

When you became a Christ-follower, who modeled Jesus life in your world?

- This might be a good time to ask someone to share his or her story of coming to or growing in faith.
- Or, if your group is glad to share, you could focus on what people modeled for each of you.

Learn from the Bible

Review the key commands in Philippians 2:3-5 and the example of Jesus that follows. Then read Philippians 2:12-18.

What are the commands to us (“you” is “you all”) in this passage? What are the results?

- “Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling”,
- “Do everything without grumbling or arguing”
- “Be glad and Rejoice with me” could be a command or a result
- Results: Fulfill God’s purpose
- Results: “that you may become blameless and pure”
- Results: “Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life.”
- Results:

What factors make it possible to fulfill these commands? What partnerships / relationships are in view in this passage? (There are several)

- We’re doing it together as God’s family
- We have obeyed in the past (and seen God work)
- God is at work in us
- We have the joy of knowing and seeing God work together
- We have God’s favor
- We have Paul’s example of serving God in joy

What specific behaviors are named? (14) How are these connected with the previous passage? What is the result of this obedience?

- “Do everything without grumbling or arguing,¹⁵ so that you may become blameless and pure“
- These behaviors are the result of humbly allowing God to work through us. He will empower us to have the attitude of Christ which results in unity and selfless actions. (The opposite of grumbling because I didn’t get my way)

Read 2:19-30. What is commendable in the lives of Timothy and Epaphroditus?

- Timothy was concerned for the welfare of others (the Philippians)
- He was faithful to Paul’s instruction and leadership
- He was focused on the work of the gospel
- Epaphroditus took care of Paul
- He was passionate about his relationship with the church family

- He was risked his life / was willing to suffer and even die as he served God and others
- He was deserving of honor

Discuss Together

How are these commands (2:12, 14) relevant today to fulfilling God's will? To life in God's family? To our mission to be Rooted and Reaching?

- We are challenged to live out the same commands
- Selfishness / focus on my own needs is rampant in America
- We are becoming a small minority in America. We need each other
- If we are going to shine like stars and reach out worlds, we will need to obey these commands
- Our Reach begins with how we live as followers of Jesus. Our love for one another is our calling card to the world.

"Shine like stars" seems like a tall order. What makes this "blameless and pure" lifestyle possible? How can this happen at Trinity? What helps? How would this be in contrast to our world?

- There is always a danger of living by laws. Legalism is believing that we can please God by actions of the flesh following rules.
- Rather, we are to believe that God is at work in us and trust in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Our obedience should flow from love for Jesus and one another.

May our Father empower you to shine like stars,
Steve