

Philippians 2b

12,13 Work out what God is working in. Obeyed- just as Christ obeyed the Father, continue that demonstration of salvation, of obedience, but not in a nonchalant way, but in fear and trembling before a holy God to Whom you owe everything. If we act out obedience when a certain person is present it would show that it is not to God but to conform to what that person respects. We are then men-pleasers. If the person who is an example to us is not around we must be all the more clear in our hearing and obedience of God. The fear of God was something Jesus delighted in. Is 11:1-3 God is the One who is living this obedience in us when we are yielding, and that is in step with His good purposes. His life in us even helps us to will what He would. The obedient action begins with a transformed will.

14 -16 What God has set before you is his will, and therefore we should gladly do it. We have the life of Christ in us to help us do it. To complain says that we do not believe God is Sovereign or that we think we know better. OC says the more disagreeable a task the greater the opportunity to demonstrate the life of Christ in me.

Accepting what God brings your way (without complaint) and acting in obedience, is the road to being pure and blameless, holy in the midst of depravity (this is a description of the life of Christ) shining lights. How different we appear when we do not argue and complain and obey the leading of the Father in everything. Just like Christ seemed so different so you too will be a light in the dark world by your actions and responses. The shining light is presenting the Word of Life. Then Paul can look back and say it was fruit that remained, wrought in God, and therefore of value and enduring purpose. We can labor in the Kingdom and it come to nothing if the fruit does not remain. If it is not wrought of God it is going to pass like everything in this world. Are your actions obedient to Christ or are you laboring for nothing?

17,18 The altar - sacrifice and service - comes from their faith - Is it Paul's sacrifice and service or theirs? Either way it comes from their faith. It could be both. And on this altar Paul's life is being poured out like a drink offering. I think in the context it is their service and sacrifice and Paul adds to it his life. By faith they are obedient and Paul adds to that obedience his oversight and encouragement - his gift as an apostle, and that with joy and rejoicing. He is not complaining that it has resulted in his imprisonment, but is a living example of what he is teaching here. He encourages them to follow his example and be glad and rejoice with him no matter the conditions, even if they lose his physical presence. It is about the Kingdom and God's will not our individual worldly presence. If my passing is good for the Kingdom - let me go and that with rejoicing.