

Let us begin with a brief review so that we take our passage today in the context in which it is written. Paul is writing to this church that he is very fond of to encourage them to return to unity they once had. He's told them the basis for that unity is the encouragement we have in Christ, the comfort we receive from His love, the participation of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and the affection and sympathy He gives us for one another.

Then Paul shared a rich poem of how Christ demonstrated this attitude for us by emptying himself to become a man and by humbling himself to completely surrender His will to the Father. That dependence and trust took Jesus to the cross, but it didn't stop there. His perfect example of humility and trust were rewarded with the greatest exaltation ever given to one that walked the earth. His name is now the name above all names. In refusing to cling to his power and rights, He was given full authority to rightfully possess them.

And now we know what the following "therefore" is there for. *12 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 and trembling,* Paul is calling on these believers who he loves so dearly to obey his request to live in a way that is worthy of the gospel. (1:27) That is to humbly obey the Father like Jesus did, serving one another in love. It is to take the low place and die to self that we might consider others interests but especially the will of the Father. (2:3-4) That is the way to overcome the division they were experiencing.

Paul is not referring to good works to save our soul. (Romans 5:8) He is adamantly opposed to the idea of earning salvation and teaches that it is unrelated to works. (Ephesians 2:8-9) He is referring to living out or expressing what is already ours. We can add nothing to what Jesus did, but we must with concerted effort cooperate with what He has done in us. (Ephesians 4:3) We often refer to this as the process of sanctification. The words "work out" (*katergazomai*) can also be translated to do or perform. In other words Paul is asking them to live out what God has done within. If you are a new creation, live like it!

That's a main ingredient in half the sermons you will hear. If we've been redeemed, if we have a new heart, then we should live a Christ like life. (2Corinthians 5:17) The fruits of the Spirit should be demonstrated in all that we do. (Galatians 5:22-23) We should humbly serve one another and our Lord every day. That's what it means to live in Christ and for Him to live in you. And why is it that we need to hear it again and

Commented [Paul1]: Philippians 1:27 (ESV)

²⁷ Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel,

Commented [Paul2]: Philippians 2:3-4 (ESV)

³ Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Commented [Paul3]: Romans 5:8 (ESV)

⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Commented [Paul4]: Ephesians 2:8-9 (ESV)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,

⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Commented [Paul5]: Ephesians 4:3 (NIV)

³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Commented [Paul6]: 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

Commented [Paul7]: Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV)

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

again? You guessed it, the old zombie called the flesh would love to rise from the dead and take back over your life. (Galatians 5:16)

That is why Paul says to perform your salvation with “fear and trembling”. Paul used the combination of these two words to describe how he carries out his ministry. (1Corinthians 2:3) Paul knew he did not have the power within himself to deliver the life changing Word of God without any element of self, exalting God alone. He needed to carefully carry out his calling.

It is the same with our daily life. Can you in your own power live as a representative of Jesus? And since you are called by His name, Christian, you and I need to live every day in performing the life of Christ with fear and trembling. I looked up those words, (*phobos kai tromos*) and they mean fear and trembling. But wait a minute, aren't we supposed to be free from fear and confident in the Lord?

Paul just explained what he meant with his example of Jesus. Jesus found himself in human form and so became totally obedient to the Father. (2:8) The implication is that we as humans are weak and prone to error. Even when we are in Christ, even when Paul could say that for him to live is Christ (1:21), we still have the enormous potential to get on a pride trip or justify giving in to some temptation. When influential Christian leaders fall it is because they lost the sense of fear and trembling and became self – confident.

So while we know that the Good Shepherd can keep his sheep (John 10:29), we also know how prone we are to sin and how powerful the allure of the flesh can be. We don't fear the enemy, for greater is he that is in us. (1John 4:4) We do fear our weak, sin prone nature and how easily we slip back into it. We tremble at the thought of stumbling someone and turning them away from Christ through our poor testimony. The more we realize the destructive power of sin the more we will fear and tremble to live out our salvation.

Paul is probably alluding to the language of Psalm 2:11 (ESV) *“Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.”* Everyone will stand before the glorified Christ and give an account to Him. He is the final judge of all mankind. That is why we should work out our salvation with fear and trembling so that we may know where we stand. Live it every day!

The Message translation puts it like this, “Be energetic in your life of salvation, reverent and sensitive before God.” I want to catch those checks in the Spirit that tell me not to go some direction. I want to sense that tap on the shoulder that says to check my motives. Paul is asking them, and the Spirit is asking us, to live in daily awareness of

Commented [Paul8]: Galatians 5:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Commented [Paul9]: 1 Corinthians 2:3 (ESV)

³ And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling,

Commented [Paul10]: Philippians 2:8 (ESV)

⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Commented [Paul11]: Philippians 1:21 (ESV)

²¹ For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Commented [Paul12]: John 10:29 (ESV)

²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

Commented [Paul13]: 1 John 4:4 (ESV)

⁴ Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

the battle that rages around us for our soul and the souls of all men and women. The Living Bible says it like this, "...*be even more careful to do the good things that result from being saved, obeying God with deep reverence, shrinking back from all that might displease him.*" We should know our own weaknesses and be on guard.

¹³ *for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.* Why should we live out our salvation with a serious concerted effort? It's because God is at work in us to do so. Cooperate with Him! He's giving you the will power. He's empowering your ministry. He hasn't given you an impossible task. What He asks of you He is helping you to do. He is the life giving sap that produces the fruit on the vine. (John 15:5) But we must allow that sap to flow. We must obey with deep reverence, because His good pleasure is all that matters. His good pleasure is what is best for you and me. His good pleasure is so much more than all we can ask or imagine. But even more, His good pleasure is what is right and holy and just. Get caught up in going the other direction and it quickly spirals into the ugly destruction of sin and death. That is why we live out our salvation with fear and trembling. (James 5:20)

Paul goes on to give them the manner in which we obey the Lord. ¹⁴ *Do all things without grumbling or questioning,* No whining! If we learn anything from Israel in the wilderness, we should realize how self-destructive it is to murmur against God and His goodness in our life. (Numbers 14:29) **It is the old nature that wants to wallow in complaint instead of living in praise.** Did you hear that? Complaining draws toward the old nature like a magnet and pulls our thoughts and speech in an ungodly direction. We focus on what we perceive to be bad when in fact the circumstance is often God at work waking us up for our eternal good.

Complaining about God's goodness is a dangerous way of dealing with difficulty in your life. It may mean God has to allow things to become even more difficult for us so that we turn from the direction we are taking. Complaining is a way of declaring our lack of faith and lack of trust in God. It is one way we declare that we don't believe in Romans 8:28, That is that all things are for our good.

Paul included this important imperative command because grumbling is often the source of discord within the church body. Someone doesn't like this thing or the way that is done. Then they seek to draw others to agree with them so they can have enough voices to demand change and have their way. It is the opposite of the humble, serving attitude that Christ exemplified.

We are also not to question everything, or as the NIV translates it, argue. By this I believe Paul meant to question or argue with what God has allowed. It can also be translated disputing or debating. The general idea is an attitude of vocal discontent.

Commented [Paul14]: John 15:5 (ESV)

⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

Commented [Paul15]: James 5:20 (ESV)

²⁰ let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

Commented [Paul16]: Numbers 14:29 (ESV)

²⁹ your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness, and of all your number, listed in the census from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against me,

Commented [Paul17]: Romans 8:28 (ESV)

²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Together, the whining and arguing show a person to have a spirit of ingratitude. The flesh is disappointed because it is not having its way and everyone needs to know it because you are the self-appointed arbitrator of what should be done. **The body of Christ should be a "NO WHINING ZONE"**. Instead we should be thanking God for His goodness and considering what is praiseworthy. What a different attitude will fill a church when it turns from whining to praise! This does not mean that we ignore real problems or relationships that are at odds, but that we look for positive solutions and expect God's intervention.

Obediently cooperate with the work of God in you without complaining and arguing so ¹⁵ *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*, The goal of our cooperation with the Spirit, our Christ like expression of humility and service, our lack of grumbling and arguing is so that we might shine in this dark world. If we express the salvation that is ours in Christ, we will be blameless and innocent children of God living in unity. There won't be anything the world can point to that discredits our testimony. God will be glorified.

The world of the first century was just as twisted and perverted as the world today. In fact, the Christian faith has illuminated much of the darkness that was in the world of the first century. That has brought prosperity which is the natural outcome when evil is suppressed. But the cycle of man goes from prosperity to a turning away from God which results in an increase of the darkness which is followed by a desperation that once again seeks revival out of desperation. The West is heading down that path from prosperity to an increase in darkness.

If we will shine with the life of Christ, like stars in a dark night sky, we'll slow that descent into darkness and offer hope to those who are already in desperation. But how do we shine? We shine by doing what Paul has just instructed, expressing our salvation with fear and trembling, obediently cooperating with the Spirit, without grumbling and arguing. (Matthew 5:14) The world notices people that are at peace and filled with gratitude. The life of Christ in us is what shines. (John 8:12) As long as He is coming through, people can see the light in us. It leads them to Him.

We must therefore be ¹⁶ *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*. The word of life is something we must cling to. Do you know the Scriptures? Do you hide them in your heart (Psalm 119:11), meditating upon them (Psalm 1:2) and letting them guide you? They will strengthen us and renew our mind so that we don't give in to those temptations. They

Commented [Paul18]: Matthew 5:14 (ESV)

¹⁴“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.

Commented [Paul19]: John 8:12 (ESV)

¹² Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Commented [Paul20]: Psalm 119:11 (ESV)

¹¹ I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

Commented [Paul21]: Psalm 1:2 (ESV)

² but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

show us the devices of the enemy of our soul so that we know what to watch for. (2Corinthians 2:11)

Everyone is running through life, chasing something. What are you chasing? Paul writes that he will cling to the word of life so that when he gets to the end of the race he won't find he ran in vain. Life is an effort. You might as well make it an effort to serve the God who loves us and will richly reward us for our faithfulness. We might as well serve a God that modeled for us the way to live and showed the great reward for humble obedience.

How many will end up finding they worked all their life for religion and hear God say He never knew them? (Matthew 7:23) How many will enter heaven because they trust Christ but find they never worked out their salvation with fear and trembling and have nothing to show for this life they were given? (1Corinthians 3:15) Are you running in vain? The only way to know for sure is by clinging to the sure Word of God, the word of life. (2Peter 1:19)

Paul had said he was confident that God would answer their prayers and that he would be released (1:19), but he now writes,¹⁷ *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.* If the church at Philippi will just do these things so that it will shine in this dark and twisted world, Paul would be joyful even if he is to be martyred for his faith. He compares his eventual death to a drink offering that the priests poured out on the altar.

The end of the race has us standing before the heavenly Judge who rewards the winners. Paul's mind shifts to the potential end of his earthly life. The daily sacrifices that the Jewish priests performed were offered with a drink offering. After the lamb was slain and placed on the altar, a quarter hin of wine was poured out to the Lord. (Exodus 29:40-41)

Greeks also had a daily tradition. Before and after a meal, they would pour out a cup of wine in gratitude to the gods. Paul is saying that he is glad to be the wine the Philippians pour out in gratitude to the true God. Whether it is the Hebrew or Greek custom, the idea is the same. Paul is glad that his life can be an offering to God.

¹⁸ *Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.* Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints. The home going of a believer is a time to be glad and rejoice for them. We weep for ourselves that we no longer have their fellowship, but we should be glad and rejoice with them.

Commented [Paul22]: 2 Corinthians 2:11 (ESV)

¹¹ so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.

Commented [Paul23]: Matthew 7:23 (ESV)

²³ And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness. E

Commented [Paul24]: 1 Corinthians 3:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

Commented [Paul25]: 2 Peter 1:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts,

Commented [Paul26]: Philippians 1:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance,

Commented [Paul27]: Exodus 29:40-41 (ESV)

⁴⁰ And with the first lamb a tenth seah of fine flour mingled with a fourth of a hin of beaten oil, and a fourth of a hin of wine for a drink offering.

⁴¹ The other lamb you shall offer at twilight, and shall offer with it a grain offering and its drink offering, as in the morning, for a pleasing aroma, a food offering to the LORD.

Two weeks ago our brother Robert Hornby finished his race. He clung to the word of life. His life was poured out like a drink offering in gratitude to God. We'll miss him, but our parting is not a goodbye, but a "see you soon". That is why we should be glad and rejoice with him.

May I ask you the destination of your run? Are you clinging to the word of life or are you running in vain? Will those you leave behind rejoice and be glad with you because your life gave evidence that Jesus was your life? Will they be able to say that your gratitude and peace shone like a light in the darkness of this world leading others to all we have in Christ?

Questions

- 1 What is verse 12 "therefore" there for?
- 2 What does "work out" mean in 12?
- 3 To what "salvation" was Paul referring?
- 4 Why with "fear and trembling"?
- 5 Who helps us will and work?
- 6 What is God's good pleasure?
- 7 What are the negative commands here?
- 8 What does complaining say about us?
- 9 Instead of whining we should be ____?
- 10 How do we shine?
- 11 Why do we shine?
- 12 What are the cycles of man?