

Lesson 5 *Shining as Lights in the Night*

SABBATH AFTERNOON

Memory Text: **Philippians 2:14, 15**

“Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world”

God told the Hebrews to obey because that obedience “is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people’” (*Deut. 4:6, NKJV*).

Centuries later He said, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life” (*John 8:12, NKJV*). He has also said, “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden” (*Matt. 5:14, NKJV*). How can we be that light? Only through a close connection with Jesus, “the true light that gives light to everyone” (*John 1:9, NIV*). As Philippians 2 says, God “has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord” (*Phil. 2:9–11, NKJV*).

The light and power of heaven is available to all of us who have surrendered our lives to Jesus. But too often either we expect God to do it all or our own ideas and plans get in the way. That’s why Paul’s words to the Philippians are so relevant today.

Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, January 31.

SUNDAY January 25 We Work Out What God Works In

- Last week = **Philippians 2:5-8** = Paul described God becoming flesh
- in Person of Jesus = perfect example of **humility / obedience**
- Now = Paul turns from Christ's obedience = **TO OURS**

Philippians 2:12–13 “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”

- Two verses = capture one of greatest mysteries / Christian life
 - How God's grace / and our cooperation = work together
- Paul says, “You've obeyed in past = when I was w/ you
 - Now, keep obeying
 - Keep living out your faith = in process/sanctification
 - “Work out your own salvation with fear / trembling.”
- Not teaching salvation **BY** works = teaching salvation **THAT** works
- Phrase “**work out**” = **carry to completion / live out / bring to its full expression**. Paul /saying...,
- “Let the salvation God has given you show itself in your daily life.”
 - Like musician who practices = music already written
 - Like miner who digs out = treasure already hidden in the earth
 - We don't **create** salvation = we **cooperate** w/ it
- **Verse 13 = key** = not in our own power / but God's = “**For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.**”
- Beautiful balance: God **works in** = we **work out**
- Salvation begins w/ God = His initiative / His grace / His power
 - Our part = to respond / to surrender / to allow that grace to shape our character / conduct
- Paul's message here /aligns perfectly w/ what he wrote elsewhere

Romans 3:23–24 “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”

Ephesians 2:8–10 “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works... For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.” **SEQUENCE**

1. **Saved by grace** = not by our efforts
 2. **Receive salvation thru faith** = gift from God
 3. **Created for good works** = as evidence of that salvation
- Faith / works = partners
 - Obedience not **ROOT** of salvation = **FRUIT** of salvation
 - Grace saves us = obedience reveals our salvation
 - “With Fear / Trembling” doesn’t mean living in dread / insecurity
 - Means living in **awe of God’s presence** / deep **reverence**
 - It’s about being amazed = at His grace
 - For His power working within us
 - **Psalms 2:11** “Serve the Lord w/ fear = rejoice w/trembling.”
 - Recognize = Holy Spirit / very presence of God = lives within us
 - guiding/thoughts = convicting/hearts = transforming/character
 - How can we not approach = His work w/ humility / gratitude?

Philippians 2:13 “For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”

- God doesn’t just ask for obedience = He enables it
- Same Spirit who convicts us of sin = empowers us to overcome it
- Same Christ who paid our sin penalty on cross
 - now lives in us = to shape us into His image.
- He works in us in two ways
 - **To will** = He gives us = new desires / new motivations
 - **To do** = He gives us = strength to act on those desires
- We don’t = fight temptation alone / or try to manufacture holiness

- God Himself = power behind our perseverance
- **Philippians 1:6** “He who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”
- What a promise! = One who started your salvation / will fulfill it
- Our fallen nature resists = what God is doing in us
 - Old self doesn’t die easily = Paul experienced / battle himself
 - **Romans 7:19** “The good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.”
- But Paul also declared victory: **Philippians 4:13**
 “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”
- Each day /we must choose to yield = to let God’s work continue in us
- When temptation comes = can say, **“Lord, I can’t, but You can.**
 - **Work in me. Change me. Live thru me.”**
- Imagine **GLOVE** / lying on table = glove can’t move /
 - can’t grasp / can’t do anything on its own
- But when a hand slips inside it = that glove suddenly comes alive
 - It moves / grips / works / accomplishes **what hand directs**
- That’s / Christian life = W/O Christ = we are powerless
 - But when His Spirit fills us = His hand moves our life
 - shaping our actions for His good pleasure
- We don’t boast in / what **glove** can do = we glorify **HAND** inside it
- Paul wanted Philippians —and us— to live out / reality of gospel
- He knew obedience = not burden / but blessing
 - Natural outflow of = knowing Jesus
- When Christ lives in our hearts = by faith = thru Holy Spirit
 - **Obedience** becomes joy = **Service** becomes privilege
 - **Growth** becomes our daily goal
- He works in our hearts thru = Scripture/ prayer/ trials/ community
- We “work out” that grace thru choices = each act of kindness
- Each moment of honesty = Each prayer for strength

- Step in journey of salvation = being lived out
- Salvation = not a one-time event
 - It's lifelong relationship = of surrender / growth
- God begins the work = but He invites you to cooperate

CLOSING THOUGHT:

- Salvation is God's work from start to finish
 - You simply live out = what He's already begun
- When you wake each morning = **pray**
- "Lord, today work in me—change my thoughts / purify my motives, strengthen my will. Help me to work out / what You are working in."
- And when day is done = you'll be able to say w/ confidence
 - "Christ in me, the hope of glory." **Colossians 1:27**