

## PHILIPPIANS: Picture Joy

**July 14: Shine Like Stars: Philippians 2:12-18:** *12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to **WORK OUT** your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.*

*14 Do everything without grumbling or arguing, 15 so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky 16 as you **HOLD FIRMLY TO** the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. 17 But even if I am being **POURED OUT** like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. 18 So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.*

Intro: My “shine like stars” story. You are going to shine if you will:

**I. Work Out What God Works In:** *continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose (Phil. 2:12-13)*

A. God works in you. You will be happy to know that God is at work not only on your behavior but also on your heart, your spirit.

1. To will—the desire to do what is right comes from God. This is the inner work of the Spirit, changing you inside out.

2. To act—this is the power you must have to proceed.

3. God is changing both the will and the behavior.

B. You work out. This is a continuing process that never gets done in this life. It is how you live your life every day.

1. Fear—*phobos*, and trembling—*tromos*. “Fear and trembling” describe the person who knows his duty and knows that he does not have enough strength in himself to accomplish it, but goes forward anyway because he is trusting in God to help him.

2. Some people, instead of going forward with fear and trembling in the Christian life, turn and flee. I hope you are not one of those. You must trust that God can do through you what you cannot imagine yourself doing alone.

C. Fulfill his good purpose: \*\*\*Swallows made a nest in the exhaust stack of a big tractor at the farm. The tractor has two flat tires in the front and has been sitting there for months. It is capable of pulling a huge plow through the earth, of doing enormous work. But right now it is just a nesting place for swallows. \*\*\*PIC

That happens to people, too. They forget the reason they were made, the purpose for which they were created, and who they actually are. They sit immobilized with all the power imaginable available to them, and they never fulfill their potential.

1. God has a purpose for you. He made you for a reason.

2. God’s purpose is good. That is, it is right and true and beautiful. He is not playing games or toying with you. He is working out his good intentions in your life.

**II. Hold out what God speaks in. “Shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life” (Phil 2:16).**

This is my calling, to help Christians shine like stars. Paul uses three couplets to describe how this happens:

A. *Grumbling and complaining:* GRATITUDE.

1. The Word of Life does not originate with you. It is passed on to you as a treasure and a trust from God who made you and Christ who saved you. You hold this treasure in earthen vessels (2 Cor. 4:7).

2. *Do everything without grumbling or arguing.* I spoke to a man this week who endures terrible pain every day. This has been going on for years. But he refuses to complain because God has been so good to him. He feels the gratitude, so he cannot descend into grumbling and complaining. We need to remember how terrible grumbling and arguing are to God. The people of Israel who wandered in the wilderness grumbled constantly even though God provided for their every need including manna.

B. *Blameless and pure:* PURITY extends the light: *So that you may become blameless and pure.*

1. *Blameless and Pure* are two adjectives that are to describe us as believers. We are to live our lives in such a way that no one can point an accusing finger at us and rightly charge us with immoral or unethical behavior. We are to have pure motives and intentions in our work in the world.

Purity is in part a result of gratitude, avoiding grumbling and arguing. That is the function of *so that you may become*.

C. *Warped and crooked*: INTEGRITY. We stand in CONTRAST to a *warped and crooked generation*. Maybe it surprises you to hear Paul describe his own generation as *warped and crooked*. Maybe you thought that being warped and crooked was a modern invention.

1. The first word, *warped*, is the Greek word from which we get the word *scoliosis*. This is a condition where your backbone is curved instead of straight. Paul wants us to be straight and true.

C. DETERMINATION: *hold out the word of life*. This may be translated either *hold on* or *hold out*. In the first translation we have a firm grip ourselves on the Word. In the second, we have a firm grip so that we may extend it outward to shine like those two lanterns in the Old North Church in Boston that announced the coming by sea of the British army. It is the kind of grip that you maintain on the baton when you are running a relay race. If we do not hold fast and hold forth the word of life, then we might as well not run the race.

1. We emphasize both WORD and DEED in our church. We are people of the Book. We believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. We are also people who believe that GOOD WORKS are evidence of our salvation.

2. Hold firm to the Word is the internal allegiance to it. Holding forth the Word is the evangelistic duty that we sang about in VBS this week. We are to be BOLD in sharing the Gospel just as Paul was bold even when he was in prison.

### **III. Pour out what God pours in. "I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith" (v17)**

A. **Sacrifice and service**: This couplet is about priestly worship.

1. Sacrifice refers to the victim on the altar.

2. Service refers to the liturgy, the act of presentation.

B. Living Sacrifice: Rom 12:1-2: ***Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.***

1. This living sacrifice is both Holy and Pleasing to God. This means that your life is set aside for God's purposes, that you are committed to do his will, seeking to please him.

2. THEN you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will for you. When you offer yourself as a living sacrifice, then you will see the unfolding purpose of God in your life.

C. Christ poured out his life for us. The anointing at Bethany with expensive perfume was an illustration of this sacrifice. Philippians 2:1-11 describe this condescension of our Savior.

D. The Apostle Paul also poured out his life as a true disciple of Jesus. He followed in the footsteps of his Savior.

E. This is what it means to "worship with our lives," one of our five core competencies. It means that we pour out our lives as an offering unto God every day in every way.

\*\*\*The three-second-rule is quite prominent in our house. If you drop your food and pick it up within three seconds, you can still eat it. This applies to all solid food that you wish to scoop off the floor including but not limited to bread, fruits, and veggies. I actually observed this rule while trying to eat a donut Friday on this platform with my hands behind my back and the donut hanging on a hook about a foot off the floor. It did fall to the floor, but I very quickly scooped it up and not only I, but two other fellows ate the remainder of it.

But you cannot do this with any beverage. You may drop your apple and pick it up and eat it. But you cannot spill your diet Coke and pick it up and eat it. No matter how sick you are that you have now

doused your new leather car seat with a sticky beverage, that liquid is not going to reverse its course and drain back into your cup. You have lost it to the carpet and the crevasses.

That is the unique thing about a DRINK OFFERING. You cannot drink it once you have poured it out. It is gone.

\*\*\*A businessman in our church has just stepped down from running his very substantial business. He feels compelled by God to commit himself to cross-cultural ministry of the gospel. God's will for him was not revealed until he aligned his life with the heart of God.