



PHILIPPIANS

BASICS FOR BELIEVERS

Lesson Three:
**Adopt Jesus' Death as a
Test of Your Outlook**
(Philippians 1:27 – 2:18)

Part 3: Philippians 2:12-18

Basics for Believers

1. Put the Gospel First (1:1-26)
2. Focus on the Cross (1:27 – 2:18; emphasis on 2:5-11)
3. **Adopt Jesus' Death as a Test of Your Outlook**
(1:27 – 2:18; emphasis on 1:27-30; 2:1-4, **12-18**)
4. Emulate Worthy Christian Leaders (2:19 – 3:21)
5. Never Give Up the Christian Walk (4:1-23)

Outline for Lesson Three

Three implications that the cross has for believers who follow Christ Jesus:

1. We Are Called Not Only to Believe on Christ but Also to Suffer for Him (1:27-30)
2. We Are Called Not Only to Enjoy the Comforts of the Gospel but Also to Pass Them On (2:1-4)
3. We Are Called Not Only to Take Early Steps of Faith and Obedience but Also to Work Out Our Salvation Throughout our Lives (2:12-18)

Philippians 2:12-18

Because God is at work in His people, believers must pursue obedient, reverent, joyful holiness that shines as a witness in a corrupt world.

- I. The Call to Work Out Our Salvation (vv. 12-13)
- II. The Call to Pursue Holiness Without Grumbling (vv. 14-15)
- III. The Call to Hold Fast to the Word of Life (v. 16)
- IV. The Call to Joyful Sacrifice (vv. 17-18)

I. The Call to Work Out Our Salvation (2:12-13)

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, ¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

A. Obedience as the pattern of the Christian life

- Paul commends their obedience
- True obedience is not dependent on human supervision (recall 1:27-28a)
- True obedience flows from our **love for Christ** and is the **evidence of genuine salvation** (John 14:15; 1 John 2:3-6)

I. The Call to Work Out Our Salvation (2:12-13)

*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, ¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.*

B. Work out your own salvation

- Gr. *katergazesthe* – to work out fully, to bring to completion; **to develop what is already present**
- It does not mean to work *for* your salvation, since salvation is **by grace through faith**, not by works (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5)

I. The Call to Work Out Our Salvation (2:12-13)

*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**,¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.*

C. With fear and trembling

- *Gr. phobos kai tromos*. This phrase speaks of **reverent awe** and **sober seriousness**. It is not:
 - Cringing terror of a capricious God, or the fear of losing salvation
- It is the fear of dishonoring the God who saved us; the trembling of a heart that knows it is dealing with **the living God**

I. The Call to Work Out Our Salvation (2:12-13)

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, ¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

D. God's sovereign work undergirds our sanctification

- “works” – Gr. *energōn*. The One who is **continually energizing, powerfully at work**
- “to will and to work”. God gives both the **desire** and the **ability** to obey
- Our effort is real and necessary, but God's **enabling grace** is primary and decisive (Hebrews 13:20-21; Ezekiel 36:26-27)

II. The Call to Pursue Holiness Without Grumbling (2:14-15)

Do all things without grumbling or disputing,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 ...

A. Do all things without grumbling or disputing

- “grumbling” – Gr. *gongysmos* – murmuring, quiet complaining
- “disputing” – Gr. *dialogismos* – contentious arguing, skeptical questioning, divisive debates
- Grumbling and disputing are not small sins!
- Question: Grumbling and disputing are symptoms of what greater issue?
 - Answer: Unbelief

II. The Call to Pursue Holiness Without Grumbling (2:14-15)

Do all things without grumbling or disputing, 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 ...

B. Holiness is the goal/purpose

- “blameless” – Gr. *amemptoi* – not sinless, but **free from legitimate accusation**; a life that does not give obvious grounds for reproach
- “innocent” – Gr. *akeraios* – pure, unmixed, unalloyed; a heart **without duplicity or mixed motives**
- “without blemish” – Gr. *amōma* – spotless; echoes God’s purpose that we should be **holy and blameless before Him** (and to the world)
- Paul is not calling for perfection, but for **sincere, observable holiness**

II. The Call to Pursue Holiness Without Grumbling (2:14-15)

*Do all things without grumbling or disputing, 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 ...*

C. In the midst of a crooked and twisted generation

- “crooked” – Gr. *skolias*; “twisted” – Gr. *diestrammenēs*
- Describes a world that is morally bent, distorted, and perverted

II. The Call to Pursue Holiness Without Grumbling (2:14-15)

*Do all things without grumbling or disputing, 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 ...***

D. Among whom you shine as lights in the world

- “shine as lights” – Gr. *phainesthe hōs phōstēres*. This phrase pictures believers as luminaries, stars shining in the night sky.
- We are not the source of the light – Christ is the light of the world. We **reflect** His light (Matthew 5:14-16)

III. The Call to Hold Fast to the Word of Life (2:16)

... *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.

A. Holding fast to / holding forth

- Gr. *epechontes*. Can mean both *to hold firmly* and *to hold out*. Both ideas fit the context.
- We **hold fast** to the gospel for ourselves. We cling to it, refusing to let go. The word of life is our anchor.
- We **hold forth** the gospel to others. We extend the word of life to a dying world (Romans 1:16; 2 Cor. 5:20). A shining church is also a proclaiming church.

III. The Call to Hold Fast to the Word of Life (2:16)

*... 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.*

B. Word of life

- Gr. *logon zōēs* – literally, “the word that gives life”
- The gospel is not merely information; it is life-imparting truth!

III. The Call to Hold Fast to the Word of Life (2:16)

... 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.

C. Paul's pastoral joy – not running or laboring in vain

- Paul's joy is tied to **their perseverance**.
- Faithful, steadfast believers are the crown and joy of a faithful pastor (1 Thess. 2:19-20; 2 Tim. 4:7-8)
- Paul is not concerned about his own personal reputation but about the fruit of his ministry.

IV. The Call to Joyful Sacrifice (2:17-18)

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. ¹⁸ Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

A. Paul's life poured out as a drink offering

- Gr. *spendomai* – to be poured out like a libation, a drink offering in the sacrificial system
- Paul pictures **their faith and obedience** as the main sacrifice, and his own suffering as the accompanying drink offering poured on top
- Paul's life is being spent for their spiritual good (2 Timothy 4:6; Romans 12:1)

IV. The Call to Joyful Sacrifice (2:17-18)

*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. ¹⁸ Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.*

B. Sacrificial offering (sacrifice and service) of your faith

- “sacrifice” – Gr. *thysia* – sacrificial offering
- “service” – Gr. *leitourgia* – priestly service, liturgical ministry
- Their faith expresses itself in **sacrificial obedience and service** to God
- Paul’s ministry is not in competition with theirs; it **complements** it. Together, their lives form a **united** offering to God.

IV. The Call to Joyful Sacrifice (2:17-18)

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. ¹⁸ Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

C. Joy in costly obedience

- “be glad” – Gr. *chairō* – I rejoice
- “rejoice” – Gr. *synchairo* – I rejoice together with
- Joy and sacrifice are **not** opposites in the Christ life. (Hebrews 12:2; Acts 5:41)
- Paul invites the Philippians into this **shared** joy.
- Their suffering and his suffering, offered to God, become a context for **mutual rejoicing**.

Philippians 2:12-18

I. The Call to Work Out Our Salvation (vv. 12-13)

Work out your salvation with reverent awe, because God is powerfully at work in you, giving both the desire and the ability to obey.

II. The Call to Pursue Holiness Without Grumbling (vv. 14-15)

Put away grumbling and disputing, and pursue holiness that is blameless, pure, and without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted world.

III. The Call to Hold Fast to the Word of Life (v. 16)

Shine as lights in the darkness by holding fast and holding forth the word of life.

IV. The Call to Joyful Sacrifice (vv. 17-18)

Embrace a life of joyful sacrifice, being willing to be poured out in sacrifice and service, rejoicing and rejoicing together in Christ

Philippians 2:12-18

Being a follower of Jesus Christ is not a burdensome life.

It is a

Spirit-empowered,

Christ-centered,

joy-filled life

that displays the beauty of the gospel
to a watching world.

GRACE CHURCH
WILLIAMSBURG