



Philippians

Living in the Joy of Knowing Christ!

The Joy of Knowing Christ's Mind!

Philippians 2:12-18

Message #8 of 16 – S994

Sermon given on May 1, 2022



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

The Joy of Knowing Christ's Mind!

Philippians 2:12-18

Opening Comments

- Turn to **Philippians 2**
- Today, we continue our series through the book of **Philippians – Living in the Joy of Knowing Christ!**
- People will sometimes ask me what God's will is for their life.
- The answer is simple: sanctification **1 Thessalonians 4:3a**

For this is the will of God, your sanctification...

- What they actually want to know is what they should do – how does God want to use me for His glory, for the blessing of others, for the growing of faith?
- If they are asking me that it is either because God hasn't told them, or because God has said, and they don't want to do what God said.
- I choose to believe they don't know – they haven't discovered God's specific will for their lives.
- God does want all His people to know what His specific will is for their lives
- Later in the message, I will share what I tell people who ask me about God's will.
- In today's text Paul tells his readers and us what we ought to be doing while we wait
- Let's pray and then look at a few verses
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **The Joy of Knowing Christ's Mind!**
- We are starting in verse 12
- **Philippians 2:12a**
- 'Therefore...' - Paul told them to humbly consider others as better than themselves and to look out for the interests of others (v3-4).
- He then described how Jesus lived out this truth in Christ's humiliation which led to God's exaltation of Christ to heaven.
- That is the context for verses 12 to 18.

- While there is an individual application to this verse, the context of it is to the church.
- The context is first corporate and then individual **R. Kent Hughes** “This is a both/and text that focuses on the communal conduct of the church, which, of course, includes individual behavior.”
- Paul, first, acknowledges their faithful obedience to God
- Earlier in this chapter Paul taught us that humility and obedience cannot be separated
- He used Christ as our example – humbled Himself and was obedient to death – the death of the cross
- **Philippians 2:12b-13**
- Notice that work is mentioned in both of those verses
- First, Paul exhorts them to work out their own salvation
- And then, he encourages them that God is working in them
- We must always keep these two things in mind
- We must understand that Paul is not talking about you playing a role in saving faith
- God saved you as a radical expression of His grace **Ephesians 2:8-9** **For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.**
- What Paul is referring to is what happens after you were saved
- Think about this way – a seed contains everything needed to grow a plant or a tree
- But if I take that seed and stick it in my pocket, will it grow into a fruit-producing plant? No!
- There is a series of things that need to happen for that seed to sprout, mature, and bear fruit
- When God saved us by His grace, He implanted the seed of Jesus Christ into us – everything needed to be what God desires us to be **Romans 8:29**
- **For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.**
- Everything you need to be like Jesus is in you right now
- Paul then says, ‘work out your own salvation’
- The Bible term for this changing to be more like Jesus is sanctification

- It cannot be done passively, must be a deliberate act of the will 1

Timothy 4:7-8

But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. 8 For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

- The question then becomes, how do you do that, right?
- That is where humility and obedience come in
- Let's read verse 13 again

Philippians 2:13

- God is working in His people to will and to do – to will and do what?
- To be conformed into the image of His Son, Jesus Christ
- If God wasn't working inside of you to give you a desire to be like Jesus, you wouldn't
- If His Spirit wasn't leading you to do those things that cause your faith to grow, it wouldn't **Psalm 33:14-15**

From the place of His dwelling He looks on all the inhabitants of the earth; He fashions their hearts individually; He considers all their works.

- Paul is saying you need to work out what God is working in
- And to do it with fear and trembling
- We should take our own sanctification seriously, as though we were doing it in God's presence, which we are.
- 'fear' has the idea of being afraid to offend Holy God out of reverence and gratitude.
- Here is another way to look at this
- It has been said that every sculptor sees within a block of marble the beautiful statue hidden within.
- It is his responsibility to chip away with hammer and chisel until all the superfluous material is removed.
- Within every believer is the outline and image of Jesus Christ.
- Instead of hammer and chisel, we use obedience to God's Word and the power of the Holy Spirit to remove all that stands in the way of Christ's image showing forth.
- Sin, doubt, and fear must be removed so that Jesus is all that is left.
- Everything that is needed to bear Christ's image out into the world is in you
- Sanctification is the process we use to bring it out

- **Philippians 2:14**

- Paul is speaking to the church.
- Complaining or disputing within the church is a sign of pride and is not worthy of the gospel of Christ.
- The obvious application is to verbal complaining and disputing.
- Paul is telling them not to do it, which means that doing it is wrong - it is sin.
- What we must keep in mind is where the verbal expression of those things come from, our heart **Luke 6:45**

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

- Thinking and feeling like complaining and disputing is just one step away from doing it.
- If we want to keep from doing it, which we should, we must deal with what is in our heart and mind.
- While the context of this verse is the church, it applies to all areas of life.
- Complaining or disputing in your marriage, family, at work or school is a sign of a lack of humility and a weakness of faith.
- Complaining is expressing displeasure or frustration that something isn't the way you think it should be.
- If we believe that God is sovereign, then the way things are – are!
- Humility reminds us that God doesn't need our opinion or help and if He has allowed something to be the way it is – then it is His responsibility to do something about it.
- This might include using us to change the situation, but it might not.
- Faith reminds us that God can do something about it, and trusts Him to do what is right, holy, and good.
- Paul then goes on to explain why this is important

- **Philippians 2:15-16a**

- When God's people live in unity and harmony with one another in humility, esteeming others better than themselves, in a manner that is worthy of the gospel of Jesus, the world notices.

- ‘blameless’ = There is no disconnect between what they say they believe and what they do – they are living out the gospel of Jesus as well as they are able.
- Daniel was an example of this **Daniel 6:5**
Then these men said, “We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God.”
- ‘harmless’ = pure or innocent. There is no obvious sin which is corrupting their witness to the world.
- ‘blameless and harmless’ – before God.
- The world may reject the blameless and harmless witness of Jesus.
- In fact, they will probably accuse you of evil.
- To speak out and say that a man cannot be a woman may be interpreted as hate-speech.
- To say that small children should not be taught perverted sexual ideologies in school might get you cancelled, threatened, or even arrested.
- ‘without fault’ – live in such a way that people would have to lie to find fault in you.
- ‘shine as lights’ – Living a life worthy of the gospel by esteeming others as better than yourself and walking in Christ’s humility will shine your faith out into the world around you.
- God does not call us to straighten out the ‘crooked and perverse’ generation – He tells us to shine into it **Matthew 5:16**
Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.
- It is God’s work to do the straightening.
- ‘holding fast the word of life’ keeping the gospel of Jesus the main thing and primary motivation of life.
- Paul closes this section with his response and encourages them to respond the same way
- **Philippians 2:16b-18**
- Paul is acknowledging that they are being faithful to God in spiritual sacrifice and service.
- In an expression of humility, Paul sees himself as a compliment to their sacrifice and service.

- ‘if I am being poured out’ could be rendered ‘if my life is taken from me’.
- Paul’s death would add to their sacrifice and service – if it be God’s will.
- The thought of that caused Paul to rejoice and he encouraged them to rejoice with him. Paul had no fear of dying in service to Christ

Philippians 1:21

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

- It is God’s will for every believer that they do their part of working out their salvation in the process of sanctification
- In my life as I was growing in my faith, I started to wonder if there was more to my faith than reading the Bible and going to church
- That wondering was a growing awareness that God was working in me to will and to do His will for His good pleasure
- I want to leave you with three things to help you live God’s will as lights in this crooked and perverse generation
- **First – Say Yes to God!**
- Jesus humbled Himself and was obedient to the point of death
- If you want to know and live God’s will, humble yourself and tell God that whatever He wills, your answer is yes
- If you can’t say yes to God, say yes to His church.
- Find something to do in the church
- Ask one of the pastors or elders to help you find something
- **Second – Seek His Will Daily**
- Pray, read your Bible, fellowship, come to church weekly
- **Third – Work Out Your Salvation**
- As you say yes to God and seek His will daily, you will sense what God is working in you to will and to do
- When you sense Him working, respond immediately
- And do it all without complaining or disputing or arguing
- And rejoice, there is a masterpiece inside of you that God wants to work out of you
- There is great joy in knowing and doing God’s will
- There is even greater joy when we do it together - **Pray**