



“JOY” - Philippians - Week 5

March 31st

Philippians 2:12-18

What daily task is most difficult for you to do without complaining or arguing? Why?

When do you most often find yourself grumbling in your relationship with God?

We all find certain aspects of the Christian life difficult and demanding. We can be tempted to complain about or give up on the things that challenge us. Paul didn't advocate passivity in the Christian life. He taught that God works in believers and believers actively work. God doesn't work in us because we have worked. Just the opposite is true. Because God works, we therefore work.

Read Philippians 2:12-13.

How do we live obediently to God, according to Paul in these verses?

What is the difference between working out your salvation and working for your salvation?

Arrogance and pride are the opposite of “deep reverence and fear.” Why is there no place for arrogance and pride in a believer who is working out his or her salvation?

How would you respond to a friend who said, “I’m not good enough to be an example of Christianity”?

What is God’s responsibility and what is yours for achieving “what pleases Him?”

For Paul, sanctification was working out what God was working within. That is, sanctification is a combination of human effort and divine activity. Throughout his writings, but especially in the passage under examination, Paul linked human striving with God’s power in the pursuit of spiritual maturity. He called believers to self-activity by virtue of God’s powerful working in them. Paul instructed the Philippian church, that in his absence they must diligently work out their own salvation. But their obedience isn’t to be understood in the sense of following rules but of being completely devoted to Christ.

Read Philippians 2:14-18.

Why are complaining and arguing so harmful to the church and its witness to the world?

Having Christ's mind-set and demonstrating it in the church's fellowship would preclude grumbling (expressing indignant complaints, whispering secretly) and arguing (disputing, wrangling). Both terms indicated self-assertiveness, which was the opposite attitude of self-giving that Christ modeled.

In what way do you shine forth as different from the world? Does this fact bring you joy or sorrow? Why?

What should be our motive in seeking to be shining examples of Christian living? What is your motive?

Holding firmly to the gospel (v. 16) is the key to shining brightly in our world. We shine as believers when our Christian lifestyle stands out as different from those of lost people around us. We not only must believe, but we also must behave in a way that the light of Christ shines brightly and steadily before others.

Read Matthew 5:14-16. In this symbolism, what does the "light" represent?

What's wrong with putting a light under a basket? What's wrong with acting as though faith in Christ is a private matter?

The illustration of the lamp shows the absurdity of someone claiming to be a believer but trying to keep it a secret from others. No true Christian who has the light of Christ covers it. A true believer displays faith not in a self-righteous or self-glorifying way but so others may see the light and come to Christ. Each person bears personal responsibility for sharing the light of the gospel with others. People genuinely committed to Jesus will show it by what they do and how they grow spiritually.

CONCLUSION

What step can you take this week to make your faith in Christ and the power of the gospel more evident to others?

What are some ways we can control the temptation to "argue and complain?"

PRAYER

As you lead in a closing prayer, invite your group members to confess silently to God areas where they fall short in working out their salvation and shining for Him.