

PHILIPPIANS 2:12-18

REVIEW...

- **PHILIPPIANS 1:1-30 – REJOICING IN SUFFERING**
 - Our natural reaction to trials is to want to complain – we want to curse and get mad...
 - But we are called instead to rejoice – because our trials have a purpose...
- **PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11 – REJOICING IN SERVING**
 - 1st - To be a servant we must bring unity to the Church of God...
 - When there is dissention in the church - it breaks up the unity of the church...
 - We need patience - to be able to overlook the little differences we may have...
 - To be able to encourage each other to instead keep our eyes on Jesus...
 - 2nd - To be a servant we must have humility...
 - We tend to think that life revolved around us – we only think about our needs...
 - And when we are self focused it is misery – only seeing our problems / troubles...
 - But when we serve others - our perspective changes - we see things in a new light...
 - 3rd - The perfect example of a servant is Jesus Christ!
 - We are to have the mind of Christ – God who humbled Himself to die on the cross...
 - Jesus did not come to be served – but to serve and give His life as a ransom...
 - As a result God gave Him a name above every name – every knee will bow to Jesus!

JOY IN SERVING – THE EXAMPLE OF THE CHURCH... (4 THINGS)

- **PAUL GIVES THREE MORE EXAMPLES...**
 - Paul gave the perfect example of a servant in Jesus Christ...
 - But he also adds three more example of a servant – and the joy of serving...
 - 1st - The church in Philippi set an example for the Joy of serving... vs. 12-18
 - 2nd - Timothy – the young man who was Paul's traveling companion... vs. 19-24
 - 3rd - Epaphroditus – a man from Philippi who had gone to Rome to serve Paul... vs. 20-30
- **1ST – AN EXAMPLE IN SERVICE... VS. 12**
 - The saints in Philippi were servants (*always obedient*) ...
 - They were not just a servant when Paul was around – they were always a servant...
 - I have noticed many times people want to help – so long as others are watching...
 - We want to be a servant – so long as there is an audience...
 - There are a lot of 'Christians' who live for Jesus – serve others – on Sundays...
 - But even if no one else is around – God is still watching – and He sees our heart...
 - The true test of being a servant - is not what you do when people are watching...
 - It is what you do when no one is looking - that is who you really are!
 - The ability to be a servant / obey - comes from the Grace of God – **Romans 1:5**
 - If you want to be a servant for God – do what God desires for you to do...
 - Then you need the Grace of God – Jesus gives us grace to be obedient / serve!
 - How do you receive this grace – just ask – **James 4:6** – grace is for the humble!

- **2ND - AN EXAMPLE IN SALVATION... VS. 13**

- o The church was to work out their own salvation...
 - 1st - This is a bit of a controversial comment – what did Paul mean – 2 possibilities...
 - It is possible Paul was talking about eternal life...
 - The idea being we have a part to play in ‘working’ towards heaven...
 - In other words, our salvation is at least partially based on our own efforts...
 - We need to be baptized / go to church / read / pray – in order to be saved...
 - This is a common verse Catholics will point to – work for salvation...
 - The problem with this view is Paul does not say ‘work for’ – but ‘work out’...
 - We CANNOT save ourselves – we ARE saved only through grace – **Ephesians 2:8-9**
 - So many people think that if they are good enough God will accept them...
 - But it is when God gets a hold of your life - changes your heart - you become good!
 - The cart does not push the caribou - the caribou pushes the cart...
 - Good works do not make us righteous - being right with God produces good works!
 - 2nd – It is more likely Paul was talking about exercising (*work out*) our salvation...
 - There is a great danger in the Christian walk of becoming complacent/comfortable...
 - We believe in Jesus / we are going to heaven / we go to church / read our Bible...
 - We come to a place where to feel like we are safe - we don’t need to go any further...
 - Yet part of growing in God - is continuing to step out in faith - doing new things...
 - Like a muscle that atrophies when it is not used - faith needs to be exercised...
 - When things that were once a step of faith - praying in public - no longer stretch us...
 - We need to step out again - reaching out further - going beyond our comfort zone...
 - The moment we stop stepping out to serve others - we start to drift from God...
 - We run the risk of losing our excitement - falling into an empty routine!
- o We ‘work out’ our salvation with fear and trembling...
 - There is a very real consequence to only ‘looking’ like a Christian...
 - The church of Laodicea thought it was rich – thought they were Godly...
 - **Revelation 3:15-16** – “I know all the things you do, that you are neither hot nor cold. I wish you were one or the other! But since you are like lukewarm water, I will spit you out of my mouth!”
 - How many have heard the Word of God / attended a church / heard in the market...
 - How many have had dinner with a Christian / a friend who invites them to church...
 - But in the end they know all about Jesus – but are only a ‘play Christian’...
 - And Jesus will say to them ‘I never knew you’ - and throw them out!
 - **Luke 13:27** – “He will say, ‘I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.’”
 - Our lives after we believe in Jesus should also be different – changed...
 - If we are saved – our lives will show the difference - **James 2:17-18**
 - It is easy to say we have ‘faith’ and ‘believe’ in Jesus – the proof is in our actions...
 - If we say we are Christians – but live like the world – then do, we really have faith...
 - Only God knows the heart – we do not know – but be sure God does...
 - We can call ourselves Christians – but are continually to living in sin – are we really!
- o God is working (*energeo*) in you – giving you the desire to obey / and please Him...

- God alone gives us the energy to desire to serve / be saved ...
 - Without God moving in our heart – we would not even want to serve...
 - Our natural desire is to only want to serve ourselves – self-centered...
 - Only God can change our desire to want to live to serve others!
 - God alone gives us the energy to be able to obey Him / please Him...
 - If you plug a TV into a dog – nothing happens – there is no power...
 - In the same way we often try and ‘plug our lives’ into our own efforts...
 - And then wonder why we have no power – why we are always in the dark...
 - It is because only when we plug into Jesus – that we have the energy to serve!
 - We cannot serve in our own power – we would be doomed to fail...
 - God gives us the will and desire – for His good purpose...
 - Both the will and ability to serve comes from God and God alone!
 - He does it so that we can be effective – and have joy in serving Him!
- **3RD - AN EXAMPLE TO THE WORLD... vs. 14-16**
- o The church was to do everything without complaining or arguing...
 - Too often in the church people serve – but they are NOT HAPPY about it...
 - There have been times when I am cleaning up the church – I start to complain...
 - Why can the people not at least pick up their song sheets / wrappers / cups...
 - And the Lord tap me on the shoulder – who are you doing that for...
 - If we cannot serve without complaining – then we should not serve...
 - God does not need our help – and God will not MAKE us do anything...
 - If we serve – we should serve out of love – love for God and love for others...
 - No matter what our work - we should do it full of the joy of Jesus!
 - Or if there is a difference of opinion – do not argue and try to prove you are right...
 - Perhaps over some issue of doctrine – ‘should we literally wash each other’s feet’...
 - Our instinct is to fight for our opinion – after all we are right...
 - And because we are right – we have to correct everyone else who is wrong!
 - What we fail to see – is that we are not motivated by truth – it is pride!
 - And our pride will only cause division / problems in the church!
 - Do not fight back – do not try and correct - just be wrong – **I Corinthians 6:7...**
 - o Instead we are to shine for Jesus...
 - By being blameless / harmless – children of God without fault...
 - Not that we are perfect – but that we do not complain or argue in the church...
 - If you walked into a church - and the ‘members’ were all complaining...
 - If everyone was arguing / fighting – pride spilling out - angry looks...
 - It is not a place where you would want to stay - or learn about Jesus!
 - **Matthew 12:25** - “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.”
 - If the church is always fighting itself - it is not fighting for the lost...
 - A church divided is a church that will not last!
 - We are to be a shining light - in a crooked and perverse world...
 - We are constantly bombarded by the influence of this world...

- Friends – family – neighbors – adds – try to get us to follow the world’s example...
- **II Corinthians 6:17** – “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord.”
- We are called to live in this world – but we are not to be a part of this world...
- We are called to be a light – example – to those who are around us!
- **Matthew 5:14** – “You are the light of the world...”
- If we look and act just like the world around us – if we conform to the world...
- Then how can we be a light or example to the world of Jesus Christ...
- Therefore live in the world – but do not be a part of the world – live for Jesus!
- o The church was to ‘hand out’ the Word of life...
 - So that Paul could rejoice in the ‘Day of Christ’ – referring to the rapture of the church...
 - We are called to share the Word / Gospel – with a world that does not know Jesus...
 - Because the only thing that we can take with us to heaven is believers...
 - Can you imagine the joy – of seeing someone you shared Jesus with in heaven...
 - Knowing God used you to give them the greatest gift of all – eternal life!
- **4TH – AN EXAMPLE IN JOY... vs. 17-18**
 - o Paul was in prison – and he was not sure if he was going to die...
 - It turned out Paul was not executed when he was first put in prison – **Acts 28**
 - But when he was arrested a 2nd time – Caesar Nero had Paul beheaded...
 - **II Timothy 4:6** – “I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand.”
 - We do not know how much time God has given us here on this earth...
 - The question is what we are going to do with the time God has given us...
 - We can live for the things of this world – money / possessions – an empty life...
 - **Ecclesiastes 5:15-16** – “People who live only for wealth come to the end of their lives as naked and empty-handed as on the day they were born.... As people come into this world, so they depart. All their hard work is for nothing. They have been working for the wind, and everything will be swept away.”
 - Or we can take the time we have been given and use it serve Jesus – and find joy!
 - o He told the church – he might (2nd class) be poured out like a drink offering...
 - The drink offering was one of the offerings given to God – **Numbers 15**
 - The idea was you were pouring yourself out – emptied so God could fill you up!
 - **II Corinthians 4:7** – “We have this treasure in jars of clay...”
 - If we are full of ourselves - we will not be able to effectively serve the Lord...
 - We need to be emptied - pray that God fills us up instead with The Holy Spirit...
 - Then we will have the power of God to live our lives for Jesus!
 - o Paul was willing to die – because of the service and faith of the church...
 - Paul had joy in spite of his difficult circumstances – in prison / maybe even death...
 - Because he was focused on others – he was looking at the example of the church!
 - In the same way we find Joy in life when we seek to serve others...
 - Joy – putting Jesus first / then Others / and finally You!