

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-16
JESUS, JOY IN HUMILITY!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Philippians chapter 2 as we continue our in-depth study of Paul's letter to the church in Philippi.

Keep in mind that our focus in our study of this letter is – ***JOY!***

This joy is not based upon outward circumstances but upon Jesus Christ! Outward circumstances change and sometimes they change very quickly.

But the Lord does not change, He is the same yesterday, today and forever and we can rest in that. (Hebrews 13:8)

Because of that we can have joy in the midst of difficult situations, as we see here with Paul. He is in prison in Rome and yet, he is writing a letter of joy to the church in Philippi.

In fact, Philippians is called the “***Epistle of Joy***”, and this is a joy that is rooted deep in the heart but accessed through the mind by maintaining a proper mindset toward this life.

That means this joy that Paul had was not based in what was happening to him, even though through it all he saw the Lord working not only in his life but in the life of those believers in Philippi, but this joy he had was based in Jesus and just overflowed!

Last week we began looking at Philippians chapter 2 and as I said last week, this whole chapter deals with humility!

Again, not a popular subject, we don't like dealing with this idea of humbling ourselves before anyone.

Years ago, Dr. Harry Ironside was once convicted of his lack of humility.

A brother in the Lord and a friend of Dr. Ironside recommended as a remedy that he march through the streets of Chicago wearing a sandwich board, shouting the scripture verses on the board for all to hear.

Why, I don't know but Dr. Ironside agreed to this venture and when he returned to his study and removed the board, he said ***"I'll bet there's not another man in town who would do that."***

That is funny to me because he wanted to deal with his pride, he wanted to be humbler and, in the end, well, he missed it by that much! No one else would have done what he had done. That is pride even though he tried to be humble.

How about you?

Do you have ***humility*** like the man who wrote the best-selling books, ***"Humility and How I Attained It"*** and ***"The Ten Most Humble Men in the World and How I Chose the Other Nine."***

Sorry, but that just cracks me up but how true that is. We think we are doing so well and yet, how often we miss that mark of what humility is all about.

And let's face it, humility is tough for many of us as the late professor Irwin Edman of Columbia University tells us.

He said that he once had a chat with a monk who bemoaned the fact that his order was not as famous as the Jesuits for scholarship, or the Trappists for silence or good works.

"But" he added, ***"when it comes to humility, we're tops!"***

Obviously, you don't have to tell people you are humble, you live it!

You see, humility begins in the heart and then is manifested in our lives; it flows from us not to shine the light upon us but upon the Lord!

Last week I shared this with you about what humility is all about. This person wrote, ***“Humility does not mean thinking less of yourself than of other people, nor does it mean having a low opinion of your own gifts. It means freedom from thinking about yourself one way or the other at all.”***

I think there is more to it than that. I think that the biblical definition of humility goes way beyond this.

Humility is a critical and continuous emphasis on godliness in the Bible. We are called upon to be humble followers of Christ and trust in the wisdom and salvation of God. True humility is seeing ourselves as we truly are, fallen in sin and helpless without God. We don't focus on self!

Paul put it this way in Romans 12:3, **“For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.”**

We also need to remember that it is not saying things like, ***“I am garbage, I am nothing, I am dirt!”***

That is not humility, but it is pride masquerading as humility because you are shining light upon yourself by your actions or words!

Again, we don't focus on self!

I like the way Andrew Murray put it in regard to what humility is all about. He tells us, *“Humility is perfect quietness of heart. It is to expect nothing, to wonder at nothing that is done to me, to feel nothing done against me. It is to be at rest when I am blamed or despised. It is to have a blessed home in the Lord, where I can go in and shut the door, and kneel to my Father in secret, and am at peace as in a deep sea of calmness, when all around and above is trouble.”* You see, perspective is everything!

Now to do this, to have a proper mindset and maintain or have that joy in the midst of difficult times, or really anytime in our Christian life, we must continually deny ourselves by putting others first!

And we saw that last time as we opened up this chapter. Remember what Paul wrote in Philippians 2:1-4, **“Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”**

Again, not an easy subject but an important one. And if you are struggling with this. If you don't think this is important. Then what Paul is going to share next will hopefully change your mind and get you refocused.

You see, Paul is going to focus on Jesus and thus, I have called our study – ***JESUS, JOY IN HUMILITY!***

In other words, Paul is going to use Jesus as our example of what Almighty God has done for us and thus, as a servant of God, we should follow His example!

I have broken down the verses we will be looking at this morning into the following main points.

They are,

THE EXAMPLE – PHILIPPIANS 2:5-8

LIFTED UP – PHILIPPIANS 2:9-11

OUR RESPONSE – PHILIPPIANS 2:12-16

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in Philippians chapter 2, beginning in verse 5 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word and look at this topic –

JESUS, JOY IN HUMILITY!

PHILIPPIANS 2

VERSES 5-8

If you are struggling in this area of humility, of reaching out to others, you need to change your mindset or get refocused upon Jesus and what He did!

That is why I have called these verses – ***THE EXAMPLE!***

Make no mistake about it, Jesus is our ultimate example of what humility is all about!

In John 13:12-17 we are told, **“So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, ‘Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.’”**

The idea here is this. *“If it is true for the greater (Jesus), then it must be true for the lesser (you and me).”*

You see, we have a choice. To follow His example or to have a life that is selfish, full of vain glory, looking out for yourself, and with that there will be conflict with others, including the brethren!

But again, Paul told the Philippians, **“fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.”** Philippians 2:2.

Remember that there were some in the church there at Philippi that were not getting along and thus, they were not like-minded, they were not humble, but it was about them and what they thought was important.

Here’s the thing. If you want to be great in God’s kingdom, learn to be a servant to all, as the song goes and as the Scriptures teach us!

Thus, unity within the church will only occur as there is humility among the brethren, putting on the mind of Christ and then having His attributes, His nature flow from our lives.

Now, when Paul says, **“Let this mind [this mindset] be in you which was also in Christ Jesus”** what was this mindset of Jesus that Paul was referring to?

That is what he speaks of in Philippians 2:6-8. We will see **THE EXAMPLE** of Jesus!

Before we look at how Jesus humbled Himself, what He did, let me share these words with you from Paul Rees. He wrote,

“Don’t forget,” cries Paul, “that in all this wide universe and in all the dim reaches of history there has never been such a demonstration of self-effacing humility as when the Son of God in sheer grace descended to this errant planet!

Remember that never - never in a million aeons - would He have done it if He were the kind of Deity who looks ‘only to his own interests’ and closes His eyes to the ‘interests of others’!

You must remember, my brethren, that through your union with Him, in living, redemptive experience, this principle and passion by which He was moved must become the principle and passion by which you are moved.”

- Paul Rees The Adequate Man: Paul in Philippians, p. 43

This is not just information to file in our brains, this is the truths of God found in the Word of God that we must take into our lives and let it transform us.

This is important for us to understand what Jesus did and what we are to do.

First of all, we see that Paul is saying here, in regard to Jesus Christ, that He has existed and will always exist as God, which is unchangeable.

The word “**form**” is the Greek word **MORPHE** and it speaks of the outward manifestation of an inward reality.

In other words, the second person of the Holy Trinity, the Word has always existed, He has always been God and when He became flesh and dwelt among us, He was still God even though He took on a body of flesh.

That inward reality was manifested in the things He did even though He was covered with flesh!

Then Paul says that Jesus “**did not consider it robbery to be equal with God**”?

What is he trying to say here?

He is saying that Jesus did not try to steal His deity from God, He didn't try to take away something that was not His.

You see, Jesus is God, equal with the Father; He is not “*a god*” like some teach, but Almighty God!

Thus, he didn't have to take it because it was already His!

Satan tried to steal that, but obviously you can't steal it, but he was put down for his rebellion against God!

And this is very important, that Jesus is equal with God the Father.

The Greek word for “**equal**” is *ISOS*, (ee'-sos) and it speaks of something that is exactly the same in size, quantity, quality, character, there is no difference.

In other words, He is God and thus, He didn't steal anything, it is a title that is rightly His!

In fact, Jesus freely laid down, sacrificed all that He had for us. God became flesh and dwelt among us for the purpose of restoring fellowship with the Father, for our sins had separated us from God!

What are we holding onto with a tight grip, refusing to let go, refusing to sacrifice for the benefit of others?

You see, Jesus is our example, and we are to put on the mind of Christ, we are to walk in His shoes, and do what it takes to minister to others, to bring unity into the body of Christ, even if we have to let go of something that is ours!

And then, in Philippians 2:7 we are told that He “**made Himself of no reputation**” or that He “**emptied Himself.**”

Again, what does that mean?

Jesus Christ, God Almighty, the one who created the heavens and the earth, “**emptied himself**” of all the rights He had as being deity and took on the body of not just a man, but a servant! He emptied Himself of every advantage and privilege He had being God, and willingly submitted His life to the Father’s guidance and direction.

It was not that Jesus was 50% God and 50% man or even 75% God and 25% man. But He was 100% God, and 100% man and God alone can do that.

I may not understand that, but it is what the Scriptures teach.

Some struggle with this saying, “*How can He still be God if He emptied Himself of these things?*”

Just because He laid these things aside doesn’t make Him less than God, He was and is 100% God and, in the incarnation, He also became 100% man, which is 200% and I might not fully understand how this can be with my finite mind, but God teaches it and I believe it by faith!

If you look at these verses that is what they are teaching us, that He is fully God (verse 6) and He took on the form of a servant or He was fully a servant, a man (verse 7).

He wasn't God one minute and then man the next but fully God and fully man in the incarnation!

Warren Wiersbe gives us this perspective of what Jesus did. He wrote, ***“He, Jesus did not think of Himself; He thought of others. His outlook (or attitude) was that of unselfish concern for others. This is ‘the mind of Christ,’ an attitude that says, ‘I cannot keep my privileges for myself, I must use them for others; and to do this, I will gladly lay them aside and pay whatever price is necessary.’”***

Now, in saying that, what did Jesus specifically empty Himself of if it wasn't His deity?

There are several things which we will look at but please understand that He was human, like us, and yet He was without sin.

Paul tells us in Hebrews 4:15, **“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.”**

He understands what we are going through as He took on the body of flesh, the pain, the heartache, the temptations and-so-on, and yet, He was without sin!

Then what did Jesus empty Himself of, which that phrase **“made Himself of no reputation”** speaks of?

First of all, ***He emptied Himself of His divine glory!***

We see that in John 17:1, 5, where we are told, **“... ‘Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You . . . And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.’”**

Secondly, **He emptied Himself of His divine authority!**

We see that in John 5:30, **“I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.”**

Thirdly, *He emptied Himself of some of His divine attributes!*

Let me say this. Jesus did not stop being omniscient or all-knowing; He did not stop being omnipresent or present everywhere; He did not stop being omnipotent or all-powerful; He did not stop being immutable, but He chose not to exercise those attributes during His earthly ministry.

We see Him get up early to pray and seek direction from His Father.

In Mark 13:32 we are told, **“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”**

The fourth thing *Jesus emptied Himself of was His eternal riches that are due Him!*

We see that in II Corinthians 8:9 where we are told, **“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.”**

And in Mark 10:45 we are told, **“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”**

The fifth thing that Jesus emptied Himself of when He became flesh and blood was that *He temporarily emptied Himself of His intimate relationship with the Father as He bore the sins of the world on the cross of Calvary!*

In Matthew 27:46 we are told, “**And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’**”

I like the way that one writer summed this all up for us. He wrote,

What is the Incarnation but His humility in emptying Himself and becoming Man?

What is His life on earth but humility in taking the form of a servant?

What was the His death on the cross if not the supreme demonstration of humility - “***He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.***”

Everything about the life and ministry of Jesus spoke of humility.

What could speak of humility more than a lion becoming a lamb - the Lion of the Tribe of Judah becoming the Lamb of God - the Sovereign of the universe becoming the sacrifice for our sins?

- Source Unknown

Here in Philippians 2:8 Paul tells us that He was “**found in appearance as a man**” and the Greek word for “**appearance**” is ***SCHEMA***, (skhay’-mah), which speaks of His outward appearance.

Inwardly, His ***MORPHE*** He was 100% God and 100% man and outwardly He was flesh and blood and that form kept changing as He grew and matured.

That is our God. He is our example in how we are to live out our lives and if Almighty God could focus on the needs of others, why can’t we?

Because we don’t want to! We refuse to humble ourselves. We refuse to put on the –
MIND OF CHRIST!

Not a good answer!

Also, as we look at Philippians 2:8, Jesus was flesh and blood, not some ghost that just hovered over the ground, as the Gnostics tried to tell people.

No, He was flesh and blood, He was a man in the Incarnation!

John tells us in I John 1:1-4, **“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life - the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us - that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.”**

You could touch Him, feel Him, He was real and thus, being a man, He understood what we go through, the pain, the hurt and He could have compassion on us because He knew what we felt as I have said.

You might say that in the Incarnation that Jesus crawled into our skin!

Jesus humbled Himself in His nature, He humbled Himself in His form, and He humbled Himself in His attitude even to the point of death, the death on the cross, which was not only cruel, it was brutal, it was horrible! You died slowly of suffocation; you could no longer push yourself up to breath.

Of this Ralph Martin tells us,

His obedience is a sure token of His deity and authority, for . . . only a divine being can accept death as obedience; for ordinary men it is a necessity. He alone as the obedient Son of His Father could choose death as His destiny; and He did so because of His love, a love which was directed both to His Father's redeeming purpose and equally to the world into which He came. "*I come to do thy will*" (Heb 10:7f.) was the motto-text of His entire life.

- Ralph Martin, *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians*, p. 102

And listen to how Andrew Murray sums this up for us. He wrote,

I cannot too greatly impress upon my readers the need of realizing the lack there is today of humility within Christian circles. There is so little of the meek and lowly Lamb of God in those who are called by His name.

Let us consider how our lack of love, indifference to the needs and feelings of others, even sharp comments and hasty judgments that are often excused as being honest and straightforward, are thwarting the effect of the influence of the Holy Spirit on others.

Manifestations of temper and touchiness and irritation, feelings of bitterness and estrangement, have their root in nothing but pride.

Pride creeps in almost everywhere and the assemblies of the saints are not exceptions . . . Humility is the only soil in which virtue takes root; a lack of humility is the explanation of every defect and failure.

(We must come to admit) . . . that there is nothing so natural to man, nothing so insidious and hidden from our sight, nothing so difficult and dangerous as pride.

And acknowledge that nothing but a very determined and persevering waiting on God will reveal how lacking we are in the grace of humility and how powerless we are to obtain what we seek.

We must study the character of Christ until our souls are filled with the love and admiration of His lowliness.

We must believe that when we are broken under a sense of pride and our inability to cast it out, Jesus Christ Himself will come to impart this grace as a part of His wonderful life within us.

- Andrew Murray

That is what God wants to do in us and through us if we would humble ourselves before Him! **“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.”** Philippians 2:5.

Jesus – ***THE EXAMPLE!***

As we read on, we will be looking at this point – ***LIFTED UP!***

VERSES 9-11

This exaltation refers to His resurrection, His ascension and His glorification at the Father’s right hand, the place of power and authority.

And all that He emptied Himself of was now restored except that He still bears the marks of the crucifixion in His glorified body, demonstrating for us for eternity His great love for us!

And God the Father did not just raise Him up but ***“super-exalted”*** Him!

But, before glory there was death.

You see, as the Son humbled Himself to the point of death, being obedient to the Father, the Father “*super exalted*” Him!

What does that mean?

One writer summed this up for us like this. He wrote,

And here in Philippians Paul pulls out all the stops, using a word found nowhere else in the New Testament, as he says literally “Therefore God super-exalted him” (v. 9a) Christ received the highest exaltation. This is incomprehensible. It is in a class by itself.

The awesome retrospect is that Christ’s humiliation eventuated in his resurrection, his ascension, and now his super-exaltation and rule as he reigns forever. This is theological-historical fact.

- R. Kent Hughes, Philippians – the Fellowship of the Gospel, p. 91

Paul is telling us that He who humbled Himself, Jesus, was raised in glory and is now seated at the right hand of the Father, the place of power.

And His name is Jesus or *YAHWEH IS SALVATION* and He alone has that name for there is no other name under heaven, given among men, by which we must be saved. *NONE AT ALL!*

It is as Paul said in Ephesians 1:20-23, “**which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.**”

And in Hebrews chapter 1 we are told that God, **“has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high . . . But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: ‘Let all the angels of God worship Him.’ . . . But to the Son He says: ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.’”** Hebrews 1:2-3, 6, 8.

And there is coming a day when all will bow their knee before the Lord either willingly or out of constraint, recognizing He is Lord overall.

It is as Isaiah 45:22-23 tells us, **“Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. I have sworn by Myself; The word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, And shall not return, That to Me every knee shall bow, Every tongue shall take an oath.”**

It doesn't matter what you think of Jesus, the fact remains that He is God and one day every knee will bow before Him in honor of Him and the thing is, surrender to Him now so you can bow before Him as your Lord and Savior and not as you are departing from Him into the Lake of Fire!

This idea of falling down before the Lord is illustrated beautifully for us in this story.

We are told,

A young stranger to the Alps was making his first climb, accompanied by two stalwart guides. It was a steep, hazardous ascent.

But he felt secure with one guide ahead and one following. For hours they climbed. And now, breathless, they reached for those rocks protruding through the snow above them – the summit.

The guide ahead wished to let the stranger have the first glorious view of heaven and earth, and moved aside to let him go first.

Forgetting the gales that would blow across those summit rocks, the young man leaped to his feet.

But the chief guide dragged him down.

“On your knees, sir!” he shouted. ***“You are never safe here except on your knees.”***

- George Vandeman

May we be on our knees before Him now, humbly coming before our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ who is King of kings and Lord of lords!

Make no mistake about it, Jesus freely humbled Himself and, in the end, He was lifted up.

It is as James tells us, **“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”** James 4:10.

Thus, may we follow His example or as Paul tells us, **“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.”** Philippians 2:5.

That should be our heart’s desire.

God will one day lift us up as well as we go to be with Him!

May we be like Him as this story shows us. We are told,

On a wall near the main entrance of the Alamo in San Antonio, Texas, is a portrait with the following inscription:

“James Butler Bonham – no picture of him exists. This portrait is of his nephew, Major James Bonham, deceased, who greatly resembled his uncle. It is placed here by the family that people may know the appearance of the man who died for freedom.”

No literal portrait of Jesus exists either. But the likeness of the Son who makes us free can be seen in the lives of His true followers.

- Bill Morgan

May our lives manifest the nature of Jesus; lives lived in humility, looking out for others, to bring glory to God through our unity! And it is out of that we find that joy.

Listen to what Paul said regarding what Jesus has done and that joy it brought Him. We are told in Hebrews 12:2, **“looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”**

Why did Jesus do this?

We are told that Jesus did this for **“the joy that was set before Him.”**

What was **“the joy that was set before Him”**?

It wasn't the cross that brought Him this joy. He endured the cross because of this joy.

Then what was it?

Jesus looked past the cross to the joy that was beyond it, what a great lesson for us!

Okay, I still did not answer that question. Now what was that joy?

I believe it is being seated at that right hand of the Father, being restored to glory once again.

Jesus said in John 17:4-5, **“I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”**

All the shame, all the pain, all the mocking’s and beatings He laid aside because He saw the end results - seated in glory once again as the work He was sent to do was finished.

What was that work?

To redeem sinful man and thus, in a sense, we too are that joy that was set before Him, part of the work that He completed!

Now, how does that help us?

Because one day we will be glorified with our Lord, we will be with Him in glory.

Thus, let us look past the things we are going through because they are temporary!

May we look to Jesus, keep our eyes focused upon Him as this race heats up, so that we may finish the race, not a sprint but a marathon you might say, with joy in our hearts, looking past these things and unto Jesus!

And think about how hard that is, looking past the hard things in our life and looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith and understanding the joy of coming before Him one day. We endure these times for an eternity with Him!

So we have seen Jesus empty Himself of some of His Godly attributes, but how does this relate to us?

Listen again to what Paul said, **“Let this same attitude and purpose and [humble] mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus: [Let Him be your example in humility:]”**

Philippians 2:5. (The Amplified Bible)

And the reality is folks, as Peter tells us, **“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.”** I Peter 5:6.

We have seen – ***THE EXAMPLE!***

Jesus is our example and He laid down His life for us so that we can live with Him.

Because of what He has done we can experience that joy that is only found in Him. He emptied Himself, became flesh and died on the cross of Calvary for our sins and rose from the grave the third day.

Then He was – ***LIFTED UP!***

He returned to the glory that He had before the Incarnation!

Now you may be thinking, ***“Okay, what does this have to do with me? What am I supposed to do with this?”***

That is our next point – ***OUR RESPONSE!***

VERSES 12-16

Paul opens this verse up with the word **“Therefore.”**

And the idea here is that what Paul spoke of, the humility of Jesus, His example of how we are to live, should now be manifested in our lives.

People should see the nature of Jesus flowing from our lives and not the works of the flesh!

Now here is the problem.

As we look at ***OUR RESPONSE***, some read Philippians 2:12 and they come to the wrong conclusion. Others are very troubled by what it says.

As some read this verse they believe this is what Paul was saying, ***“See, Jesus saves us but then you must work to keep, to maintain your salvation and if you don’t, you will lose it!”***

What is wrong with that statement?

It is not Scriptural!

Listen to what Paul tells us Ephesians 2:8-9, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”**

If it was based on maintaining our salvation, then we would be able to boast on how good we were and we made it into heaven.

And in Philippians 1:6 Paul wrote that Jesus not only began the good work in our lives, our salvation, but He will finish it, our glorification!

Make no mistake about this, it is a grace gift, and I can’t add to the finished work of Christ!

So that is not right, that you have to work to maintain your salvation because, like I have said, the work was completed by Jesus on the cross of Calvary for us and we are to receive that free gift by faith.

We are saved by Grace through Faith and not by the Law through works!

Here is the key. Paul tells us that we are to **“work out”** not ***“work to get in”*** our salvation.

You see God put it in you and now you must work it out in your daily life!

And as we humble ourselves, as we surrender to the Lord, as we obey Him, just as our example Jesus did, then His nature will begin to flow from our lives because what God is doing in our lives will be manifested outwardly, in the things that we do and the things that we say!

The verb “**work out**” carries the meaning of “*work to full completion,*” such as working out a problem in mathematics.

In Paul’s day it was also used for “*working a mine,*” that is, getting out of the mine all the valuable ore possible.

As we surrender our lives unto the Lord, we will be all that God wants us to be as His will and His purposes are manifested in our lives!

Think again about what Paul is saying here. His point is simple.

Since God has worked in you, now let that flow out into your actions, the things you are doing, bear fruit in your life showing you are abiding in Him!

You see, God put it in you and now you must work it out in your daily life. You must humble yourself and surrender your life to God, be in obedience to what He has said, like Jesus demonstrated for us.

Paul is telling us that we are to reach for our full potential in all that we do for God’s glory and that is only going to be accomplished as we surrender our lives fully to His will and purposes!

James put it this way in James 2:14-18, **“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”**

It is as Calvin said, *“Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is never alone!”*

Let what God is doing in you impact your life in such a way that it is manifested in your actions as you honor, respect the Lord and as you do it brings God pleasure as you minister to the people of this world!

Then what is the problem?

Why can't I live like God wants me to live?

When we get saved God gives to us a new heart, a new nature but the problem comes because we still have that old fallen nature that we inherited from Adam. We are in these bodies of flesh and that old nature wants to rise up and control our lives, impose its will upon our lives and when that happens, we don't obey the will of God.

And this is a battle we face every single day. Paul makes that very clear when he tells us in Galatians 5:17, **“For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.”**

Listen to how The Amplified Bible puts this verse, **“For the desires of the flesh are opposed to the [Holy] Spirit, and the [desires of the] Spirit are opposed to the flesh (godless human nature); for these are antagonistic to each other [continually withstanding and in conflict with each other], so that you are not free but are prevented from doing what you desire to do.”**

Exactly, it is a battle.

And the solution to this battle, the place where we can find our victory over the flesh is given to us in Galatians 5:16, where Paul tells us, **“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”**

And if you still don't get it, or it is not clear, listen again to how The Amplified Bible puts this verse. It reads, **“But I say, walk and live [habitually] in the [Holy] Spirit [responsive to and controlled and guided by the Spirit]; then you will certainly not gratify the cravings and desires of the flesh (of human nature without God).”**

What are you filling your life with?

The things of this world?

Then you are feeding the flesh and what will come flowing from your life are the works of the flesh!

If you fill your life with the things of God, feeding on the Word of God, praying, fellowshiping, then what will flow from your life is the fruit of the Spirit, which is seen with *AGAPE* love and is manifested in several different ways, like joy, peace, longsuffering and the like.

And as we obey the Spirit of God, who is working in our lives, then we are allowing our salvation to be **“worked out”** in our daily lives!

And then Paul is reminding them what not to do in Philippians 2:14-15, where he wrote, **“Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.”**

Here is the problem. We know what to do, we know what is right, but if you remember from Deuteronomy 1:26-27 as Moses is reviewing the history of the nation of Israel, speaking of their refusal to enter into the Promise Land, we are told, **“Nevertheless you would not go up, but rebelled against the command of the LORD your God; and you complained in your tents, and said, ‘Because the LORD hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us.’”**

What did they do that was so wrong?

They complained! They did not believe the promises of God! They did not trust the Word of God to them! They did not obey the Word of God!

And, just as they complained back then, they complained in Paul’s day and Christians do the same today!

And the idea here, I believe, is complaining and disputing against God, which then leads to complaining and disputing with each other.

Keep in mind that Paul is speaking of unity through humility and thus, there is no unity with complaining and disputing with each other.

Think about this, God is working in you and thus, what flows from your life should be his attributes.

You see, as we allow God to flow through us, we are growing, we are maturing in the faith. It shows others we are believers as we are blameless, we are innocent, we are God's children because as dark as this world might be, you can still shine forth as a bright light to them, a light leading them to Jesus!

But how can we accomplish this?

Listen again to what Paul said in Philippians 2:16, "**holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.**"

Paul admonishes them to hold onto the word of life, hold onto Jesus and hold onto His Word.

Make no mistake about it, Paul's heart was for the believers in Philippi and that the work he started there would not be in vain, it would not be empty, but that they would grow in the Lord!

That is the heart of any true shepherd!

It is as John said, "**I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.**"

III John 4.

And folks, that is my joy, to see you growing and maturing in the Lord!

Hold firm to God's Word and live by all it says because the darkness of this world doesn't want you to be a light and will actively try to extinguish your light through ridicule, peer pressure, worldly temptations and even persecution.

But we can let pride get in our way and think we know better, and yes, even better than God!

Let me show you what I mean.

Roger Staubach, who led the Dallas Cowboys to the Super Bowl victory in 1971, admitted that his position as a quarterback who didn't call his own signals was a source of trial for him.

Coach Landry sent in every play. He told Roger when to pass, when to run, and only in emergency situations could he change the play.

Even though Roger considered Coach Landry to have a *“genius mind”* when it came to football strategy, pride said that he should be able to run his own team.

Roger had a decision to make. Would he allow pride to rule his life and ignore his coach, making himself the star?

Or would he listen to the coach and do what he wanted?

Staubach later said, *“I faced up to the issue of obedience. Once I learned to obey there was harmony, fulfillment, and victory.”*

How true that is. We need to understand who is the One guiding us and it needs to be the Lord. It truly is about obedience to Him and His Word.

And, like Roger Staubach found out, *“Once I learned to obey there was harmony, fulfillment, and victory.”*

Exactly!

And there is really no reason not to obey Almighty God.

Jesus gave us – ***THE EXAMPLE!***

And He showed us that yes, in this life there will be suffering, it will not be easy, but in the end, we will be – ***LIFTED UP!***

So – ***OUR RESPONSE*** should be to follow the Lord, listen to Him if we want to shine for Jesus.

In other words, “**holding fast the word of life . . .**”

If you want to be a Joy-Full person, follow Jesus’ example of humility!