

Phil ch 2 Vs 14-18

Stop your whining and shine

A man was placed in a monastery and was only given the opportunity to say 2 words, once every 5 yrs. After the 1st 5 years had passed, he was called in and allowed to say his 2 words. He said, "Food bad." 5yrs later his 2 words were "Bed hard." After a total of 15 yrs, he said, "I quit." The bishops responded, "We're not surprised. You've been complaining ever since you got here." Notice with me our text this morning beginning with vs 14.

Vs14-18

The Holy Spirit through Paul the apostle says, "Do all things with out complaining or disputing", it's been said that he who throws mud, loses ground. and You know that's true, complaining and disputing, biting and devouring one another, consuming one another does nothing for you of eternal significance accept to hinder God's usability of your life. It just causes you to lose ground in the kingdom. Jude spoke of those who were grumblers and complainers, and he said that they are those who walk after their own lusts and cause divisions in the body. In Rom 16:17 Paul wrote, "*Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.*" What's the doctrine that we're learning? Do all things with out complaining and disputing.

If you're around someone who is constantly causing divisions through complaints and disputes, note that person and avoid them. The bible says, "*Make no friendship with an angry man, And with a furious man do not go, Lest you learn his ways And set a snare for your soul.*" You say, "set a snare for your soul? Preacher that's pretty serious talk." Listen to this, James 5:9 "*Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!*" Wednesday evening Bill spoke about learning God's ways and the wisdom is that, well to parallel that the bible warns of the snare in learning the ways of an angry man, the one who's operating in the flesh, complaining, and grumbling, and disputing. The mention was also made Wed that if you're found in the middle of anything that doesn't lead you or assist in the conforming of you as a person into the express image of Christ, that you're already off the line.

Let me tell you something, you find yourself complaining and disputing about things, you're off the line. Search the scriptures, examine them closely and you will find that it's all in vain when seeking to find a portion of scripture whereby Christ was murmuring or complaining concerning what He was doing or His lot in life. Now if there was ever anyone who had the right to complain about a few things in how He was either treated or received or misunderstood, or was subjected to endure it was Christ, and yet we read that for the joy that was set before Him though despising the shame He endured the cross. and The author of Heb calls us for that reason to look to Him, the author and finisher of our faith. Remember the context of which these vs find themselves attached to, the example of Christ and the working out of our own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

We're to be working out, those Christ like attributes that God, by the power of the Holy Spirit is working into our lives for His good pleasure. and We spent some time in our last gathering a couple of weeks ago concerning those things that give God pleasure, one of those things being to give you the kingdom, let that blow your mind, chew on that for just a little bit. As wretched and loathsome, and sinful as I am, out of the love and grace and mercy of God, it isn't just God feeling sorry for us to give us the kingdom, no, it's God's good pleasure (Jesus said) to give me, to give you the kingdom.

You know what else gives God pleasure? That you do all things with out complaining and disputing, why? Because in not complaining, in not disputing or arguing, debating the issue, you are exuding or displaying Christ like qualities, again Wednesday evening the mention was made of how the world needs Christ, how are they to see Him? Through our lives, and it gives God pleasure when we reflect Him accurately. You see Paul has given us the exhortation to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, he's informed of us the fact that it's God who is at work in us, bringing His plans for our lives into fruition, and now the principal gets practical. These are some of those practical qualities that should be developing in the lives of the children of God.

Now the word that I would draw your attention to at this time concerning this vs and the word that I personally have a problem with and don't like very much is that little 3 lettered word, "all". Because man, you can just look into all the Greek helps that you want and when you're finished that word "all" still means "all." and I've got to tell you that's a tall order, in fact an impossible order to the flesh, (*all things?*) But here's the good news, how many things does the bible say that you can do through Christ Jesus who strengthens you? All, with out Him I can do nothing, but with God nothing will be impossible, and mans impossibilities are simply God's opportunities, remember that. Now there's debate between the commentators as to the context of this, is he speaking here in relationship to one another, or in regards to our relationship with God and the things God either brings or allows to come into our lives. Now personally due to the context speaking of working out our own salvation, God working in us and all, and the language being reminiscent of the children of Israel's complaining to God in the wilderness (which we'll touch on in a minute) I'm inclined to believe that the latter is correct. But I would quickly concur that the principal is applicable either way you choose to look at it.

Lev 19:18 says, "*You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.*" We're not to be grudging or complaining against one another, but rather we're to love one another, Gal 5:26 "*Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.*" and Again James 4:11 "Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law (or the word of God) and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge." and He goes on to say, "*There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy.* (Which is to say that it's not you, and it's not me) *Who are you to judge another?*"

Again Gal tells us that when we bite and devour one another the end result is to be consumed by one another, and there's nothing that the enemy enjoys more (I would imagine) than to get the body of Christ introverted.

Focused on the faults of one another so as to begin to sin against one another, and slander one another, be apart of the gossip chain and like cancer, destroys whatever life may be struggling to survive in the body. Why, because then we've done his bidding. He didn't have to do anything, except for to maybe stand back and laugh as God's people destroy God's work through complaining against one another, disputing amongst ourselves and sucking the life right out of the work. How many church's split, and divide, grow weak and anemic due to the gripes, generally of a minority of people who've driven the wedge deep enough to render the work officially in effective because people are so focused on the issue in front of them that they lose sight of the lost, they lose sight of the Lord and like a dog chasing it's tail they spin in circles never going anywhere and the enemy wins. Yet the bible says, "*cast out the scoffer, and contention will leave; Yes, strife and reproach will cease.*" Prov 22:10 and So if the church would've dealt with the issue according to the biblical order; they'd have salvaged the work. But how much better if the people in the church would have simply followed what the bible says, if they'd have simply submitted themselves to the scriptures and done all things with out complaining and disputing in the 1st place?

Or maybe your bible says, do all things with out murmurings and disputings, which reminds us of the children of Israel and how they were always complaining about those things that God was leading them through for their own spiritual health and well being. Or they were complaining about Moses or Aaron their spiritual leaders, which is in reality the same thing as complaining against God because it's saying that you don't like who He put over you. That you deserve better, and let me tell you something, God doesn't appreciate being challenged concerning His decisions for our lives. Why, because that's to take the antithesis in position against the Lord concerning His choices for us, it's saying that God doesn't know what He's doing, and quite frankly it's arrogance and pride in the face of God. Again Israel found themselves often complaining about their circumstances, complaining about Moses or Aaron, at one time Aaron himself got sucked into the whole deal turn with me to Num ch 12

Vs1-2

In other words hey, we're taken over, we don't like the way you're driving this bus, besides God uses us to. How many times people come against you and they qualify themselves by saying something like, hey, God speaks to me to man, you're not the only one He can use. and Really they've in a statement like that, just exalted themselves, and God hates pride, but the one who humbles himself, God will use, notice.

Vs3-5

You know I think that I would be terrified at this point, you talk about busted.

Vs6-13

You begin to see a little bit of why God chose Moses, look at his heart, even though she'd totally come against him, he's praying for her, asking God to spare her of His judgment. She's come against him, he's loving her, Jesus did the same thing. All the disciples forsook Him, betrayed Him, or denied Him, those to whom He was the closest, and I'm sure that you all to some degree or another know what it feels like to be betrayed, or in effect denied, or forsaken and the tendency is to write those people or that person off. If that's the way they want it fine, they'll get what they have coming, but concerning Jesus we read, and demonstrated here in Moses that having loved His own, He loved them to the end.

God comes against those who come against His, and He can't stand it when people complain, again in Num 21:5-6 we read where, "*the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.*"

On and on we could go, you remember when Korah rose up against Moses and Aaron along with 250 men who represented the congregation of Israel and wanted themselves to be the leaders and accused Moses of making it a family business and keeping others out who were just as qualified. God said Moses separate yourself from the people I'm going to wipe them all out, again Moses interceded and God said fine, but as for Korah and all the men who came out against you their going down. and Literally that's what happened, the earth opened up and took Korah and those near him alive down into the pit. and As for the 250 men who came with him fire came out from the Lord and consumed them all. and Then the next day all the people started complaining against Moses that he'd killed all those guys, it's like don't you guys ever learn, so God started wiping them out until Aaron stood between the living and the dead making intercession for them, but over 14,000 more got wiped out, why, because they were complaining against the Lord and against His leaders.

So whether it be against one another, or our leaders, our circumstances, or even God Himself. A lot of people and even Christians have the audacity to complain against God Himself, and they blame God for putting them through some misery, listen that is dangerous ground to tread on. and I'm not saying that I'm exempt from it all and we thank God for His grace and mercy, but God hates it when we wane and complain and dispute either with Him or one another or our circumstances. How many times have I been doing something with a bad attitude and God will speak to my heart, "why are you doing that?" and I think, "well, it's for you Lord" maybe I'm picking up foam cups in the parking lot after service, and I'm thinking didn't we just have a bible study, didn't we just talk about servant hood or integrity. (As if I'm really displaying a servant's heart at that time or something) but the Lord busts me, if you can't do it with out griping about it, don't do it at all. God would just rather us not do something that we attach His name to, than to do it and complain and dispute about it, just don't do it, be it in serving or giving or whatever.

Do all things with out murmuring and disputing, again being reminiscent of the events of Israel's past in the wilderness wanderings. and So it's as if Paul is quickening them and saying hey, be careful lest you fall into the same chastening as did the children of Israel in the wilderness having entered to their same sin of murmuring and complaining against God in those things that have come into your life in order that your salvation might be worked out according to God's sovereign glory (in keeping with the context). Why, well not only because God hates that, that's the negative, but on the positive.

Vs15

You see these are a couple of attributes that God is working out of His children, complaining and disputing, so that in turn you may become blameless and harmless. It's an aspect of that sanctifying work of Christ in our lives. We read in Eph 5:26-27 regarding the sanctifying work of Christ in His bride, the church through the, "*washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*" with out spot or wrinkle, blameless and with out fault, 2 Peter 3:14 states, "*Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless.*"¹ more 1 Thess 5:23 "*Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

You see it's God who works these Christ like attributes in us, the word "blameless" speaks of "faultless" not sinless but not placing intentional stumbling blocks before others. The word "harmless" here speaks of innocence and purity, it's speaks of sincerity, not phony, not diluted it would be used in the since of pure metals or undiluted wine, that you might be pure, and blameless. It's the same word that Jesus used when He said, be wise as serpents and harmless or innocent, or pure as doves. Unmingled in your motives, or conversations with complaining or disputing.

Notice that God wants to work these things into our lives in the "midst" of a crooked and perverse generation. Again taking us back to the song of Moses, Deut 32:5 "*They have corrupted themselves; They are not His children, Because of their blemish: A perverse and crooked generation.*" Things haven't changed much have they, Moses ascribed perversity and crookedness to his generation, Paul a millennium plus later does the same thing and now over 2 millenniums later where do you live, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. You see that's why it's so easy to refute the lame argument that the bible isn't relevant today because it was written so long ago. and I'm not going to debate the fact that times and cultural distinctions change, but people don't. Human nature remains constant throughout the ages, crooked and perverse and the bible addresses that issue and finds it's remedy in Christ; therefore the bible is completely relevant because it doesn't deal with the times and cultural distinctives, but rather human nature and our need for Christ.

This generation in which you live is crooked, or another way to understand it is “warped” they’re not going down the “straight and narrow” path that Jesus spoke of, they’ve veered off onto the broad path way of destruction, they’re way is crooked. Bill spoke Wed of learning God’s ways, which is to say to learn Christ, Christ is God’s way, Jesus exhorts us to “learn of Him” why, because He is the “way” and the truth and the life and no man comes to the Father but by Him.

If the way you’re learning isn’t of Christ, then it’s crooked, it’s off the path, the word “perverse” means “twisted” or “distorted” it’s not true to reality. This generation has a distorted view of reality that’s leading them to hell and Paul says that we’re those who are shining as lights in the midst of it, exposing it for what it is and revealing Christ to those around us. Jesus said that He was the light of the world, and then He said you are the light of the world, how so? By Him living in you dispelling the darkness and illuminating the path way of righteousness, the pathway that leads to everlasting life which is again to say the pathway of Christ, He’s done it all, all we do is receive it and rest in it, He takes care of the rest. and Notice that it doesn’t among whom you should shine as lights or sometimes shine as lights, no, as a child of God you are a light to the world. I guess the only question in how bright are you shining, a dim bulb doesn’t do a whole lot of good. and It often amazes me the lengths that we will sometimes go to cover up the light with in us, due to maybe embarrassment or shame. and Jesus exposes the folly of that in Luke 11:33 when He said, *“No one, when he has lit a lamp, puts it in a secret place or under a basket, but on a lampstand, that those who come in may see the light.”* Yet how often when it comes to Christ we do just that and yet Jesus said that if we’re ashamed of Him and His words, He’ll be ashamed of us when He returns, and I don’t know about you but I don’t want the Lord to be ashamed of me when He sees me.

So may God grant us boldness in our testimonies of Jesus Christ and His love and grace and mercy. But I wanted to draw your attention to the word “midst”. Nowhere in the bible are we called to a spiritual isolation ward as it pertains to people’s need for Christ. We’re to be in the world, just not of the world in 1 Cor 5:9-11 Paul wrote and said, *“I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner--not even to eat with such a person.”* We’re not going to deal with church discipline right now, the point is, is that people in the world need Christ, and how are they going to see the light of the world (Jesus Christ) if you’re never around them reflecting Him to them?

Now I'm not saying that you're to have intimate relationships with worldly people, because bad company corrupts good morals and light has no fellowship with darkness. But light will dispel darkness and so we're not to avoid those who don't know Christ, or not be their friend at all. But there's no need to run around to the bars with them on the weekends in your endeavors to be a witness, because that's just a blown witness, so let's use wisdom in our dealings with the world and how we reflect to them the love of Christ. Be a light to them not a partaker with them in their deeds of darkness. The bible says that the spirit of a man is the lamp of the Lord and we're to let the light of Christ shine through us.

Vs16

Holding fast the word of life, light and life go together even as darkness and death goes together. John 1:4 speaking of Christ says that, "*In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.*" This also could've been translated "holding forth" it's the word of God by the Spirit of God that brings forth life and Paul is saying you declare it, you hold it out there and stick to it so that when it's all said and done my labor toward you won't have been in vain. Not because he's worried about how he's going to look, but for God's glory, Moses was the same way. (Concerned for God's glory)

Vs17-18

Now, notice something here, the vs that Paul speaks of the offering of his life, his life being poured out as unto the Lord, the vs that brings about what we would consider suffering and demise, is the vs that he correlates gladness and joy, and then he repeats it in vs 18. What's going on here, listen Paul's not being morbid here and even though most of us would associate sadness and sorrow with sacrifice and suffering Paul sees them as a doorway into deeper joy in Christ. It all stems from the foundation of His life, and it's a revelation or a manifestation of that which he stated back in vs 21 of ch 1. When you can say to live is Christ, then to die is gain, and it's not that anybody looks forward to the experience of death, but Paul is saying hey, I'm on trial for my life for the work of the gospel. For running the race well and you are a living testimony to that fact and if it's for being faithful to Jesus Christ that I'm going to meet my end, I can't think of any better way to meet my maker. Because he knows that he'll hear well done good and faithful servant and so in this, he says, I rejoice and I want you to rejoice with me.

Hey if you're living for Christ, if you're light is shining bright in this dark world then you have reason to rejoice as well. Because as you allow the Holy Spirit to work in you and dispel that notion of complaint and disputing and He places in that place integrity and purity, then you become faultless children of God reflecting the light of Jesus Christ accurately to a hurt and dying world in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

Maybe you're here this morning and you're not reflecting Jesus Christ to those around you because you don't know Jesus Christ Well, this morning all that can change as you respond in obedience to the call of the Holy Spirit to come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty." That's God's promise to you He wants to receive you but right now you're unclean because of sin in your life. But through the blood of Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection all that can change, you can be made clean before God this morning by simply receiving the finished work of the cross and allow Jesus to robe you in His righteousness by simply receiving Him by faith as your Lord, having saved you from the penalty of your sin.