



## *Shine Like Stars*

- I. Introduction. The Philippians had two major issues as a church. First, they needed advice on how to live out their faith in a pagan world that persecuted them. Second, they needed help with a division within the church. In Philippians 2:1-11, Paul addresses the dissention within the church; in 2:12-18 Paul discusses the church's witness in the world.
  
- II. Live What You Believe
  - A. Put your salvation to work- 2:12-13.
    1. Therefore... In light of Jesus' saving work (2:5-11), you take that salvation and put it to work in your life.
    2. Salvation literally means "wholeness." We think of salvation as the event when we gave our lives to Christ. Ephesians 2:5 says that "it is by grace you have been saved." The phrase in Ephesians 2:5 is past tense and points to that experience when we first gave our lives to Christ. However, Peter states in 1 Peter 1:5 That "through faith we are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time." In this context, salvation is the final seal of salvation we receive at the second coming of Christ. Everything in our lives between the time we gave our lives to Christ and when we see Jesus face to face falls under the "work out your salvation" phrase in Philippians 2. In God's eyes salvation is a journey toward wholeness that has a specific beginning and completion with a whole lot work in between. Therefore, this phrase doesn't suggest that we must earn our salvation, it suggests that we take our salvation and put it to work (apply it) to our day to day lives. You are saved, now put that salvation to work until you see Jesus and your salvation is completed.
    3. It is easy to be saved; it is much harder to act saved. Go act like you are saved because you are! Put your salvation to work with "fear and trembling." Paul's use of the phrase "fear and trembling" communicates the importance of this issue. This "living out your salvation" is the most important thing you will ever do in life. Take it seriously! Give it the time and attention it deserves.
    4. God will work in you to empower you to pull it off. God empowers you through the Holy Spirit to walk out your salvation. You can walk in the purposes of God; they are always good for you. God's purposes are in your best interest. Live out his purposes even when it doesn't make sense or when it isn't easy to do so. Trust that God is working in you for your best interest and his sovereign will.
    5. In what ways do we "put our salvation to work" on a daily basis? What do you think Paul means when he says we should walk out our salvation with "fear and trembling?" In what ways does God work in us so that we can successfully walk out our salvation? What is the result of walking out our salvation?

B. Put your witness to work- 2:14-18.

1. This world is described as spiritual darkness. Paul calls it a “crooked and depraved generation.” Paul probably borrowed this phrase from Deuteronomy 32:5 when God described the pagan nations living around the Israelites.
2. As believers, we stand out like stars on a black night sky. We live blameless and pure lives in the midst of darkness and depravity. Blameless doesn’t mean perfection; it refers to a lifestyle of devotion to God. As we live blameless and pure lives in a culture full of corruption and depravity, our witness will stand out like beautiful stars in the night sky.
3. Why do we shine like stars? Because we are holding out the word of life. God’s Word is truth that brings light into darkness and breathes life into death. However, when we hold the word of life but act like the world, our stars grow dim and we lose our witness. That is what was happening at Philippi. Their lives didn’t match the truth of the Word, so they lost their witness and the church stopped growing.
4. In what area did they lose their witness? They were complaining and arguing with one another, and it undermined their testimony to culture. When believers are negative, critical, judgmental, and full of gossip and backbiting; it ruins their ability to shine like stars in a dark world. No one is attracted to negativity and hurtful conversation.
5. Paul used a strong verbal tactic to bring his point home.
  - a. Correct this problem so that in the end I will know I have won the race and didn’t labor among you for nothing. Don’t allow my ministry to you to be in vain. Don’t let me face Jesus with the failure of the Philippian church on my record!
  - b. Correct this problem because I am pouring myself out like a sacrificial offering on an altar. Don’t let me sacrifice my whole life for the gospel, yet you refuse to correct your issues because you are unwilling to make any sacrifices for each other! When you fix these problems in the church, we can rejoice together!
6. In what ways is our culture crooked and depraved? What are some practical things we can do as Christ followers to shine like stars in our culture? What are some moral and ethical areas where we as Christians have lost our witness? What are some practical steps you can take to be a shining star in your workplace and home? What is your takeaway from this study?

