CAPITOL® COMMISSION
Gospel Hope & Spiritual Strength for Government Leaders

Got A Light?

March 5, 2024

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Weekly Bible Study Schedule
Tuesday, March 5, 7:00-7:45 AM
House Hearing Room 3
All Welcome!
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Introduction
On my cell phone is a health application called Vigoroom. Every day I open the application to a set of questions: "Did you complete a high intensity exercise? Did you take your vitamins?" At end of day, the questions shift to: "Did you have an attitude of gratitude? Did you give a handwritten thank you note to someone you appreciate? Did you complain or express negative thoughts today? Reflection on each question is a "gut check" to measure how well I am doing in these areas. Not as well as I want to do. Health and attitude operate in a symbiotic system.

Cortisol is a hormone that serves organs in the human body. Its function is to help regulate stress level in the body. An abundance of cortisol released in one's body can have negative impact on your health. If I consistently answer no to the question, "Did you complain or express negative thoughts today?", the risk for illnesses elevate. Complaining changes one's view to a negative perspective about life and relationships. It dampens our mood. It clouds our judgment.

The Apostle Paul had justifiable reasons to complain and murmur. He was rejected, beaten, jailed, maligned by some in the church and those outside the faith. Jesus was minimized by His brothers while growing up, rejected by religious leaders, betrayed by a close friend, and hung on a cross for no fault of His own. Not in His worst three-hours on earth did He speak against people, actually He forgave and promised a murderer, hanging on an adjacent cross, who deserved a criminal's death, a place in heaven. Jesus did not complain; He did declare salvation for all who would believe in Him.

This morning's Bible study is from the book of Philippians 2:12-18. We will focus on working out your salvation and not complaining.

1. Work Out Your Salvation

2:12 – Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important.

Philippi was the first Jesus community Paul established in eastern Europe around 51 AD. The Jesus community begin in Lydia's home and met in house churches throughout the city. Paul taught the new community of faith the gospel of Jesus and the purposes of God. He instructed them to stand firm in opposition, and to defend the faith, which is the Good News of Jesus, in unity of spirit, mind, and purpose (1:27-28). Persecution, resistance, and threat against one intimidates the best of persons. The belief and teaching that Jesus was King resulted in persecution and threats against the church. The Roman government populated Philippi with army veterans who were committed to nationalism – a people group fully devoted to the king and his governing rule.

Paul, preached the King of the world is Jesus. Paul's intent was not to bring a revolution against the Roman government, rather a revelation of Jesus to the heart and mind of people and culture. Thus ensued persecution against the community of Jesus followers in Philippi. The proclamation of Jesus as Lord was interpreted by the Romans as a threat to the Roman religious system of Emperor worship, specifically, king Caesar's lordship.

To stand resolved, unintimidated in the face of opposition, signals that our hope in Jesus as King and Lord transcends all persecution and threats. The perseverance of the Church will ultimately lead to salvation. We call that place heaven.

2:13 – Work hard [out] to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.

In humility, Jesus came from heaven to earth in the form of a human, lived in our likeness, and went to the cross as the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of humankind. Christ is our example of obedience by which we live our faith with awareness of our accountability to God. Paul and the Philippian's shared a common salvation. Followers of Jesus throughout the world share a common salvation. Salvation from sin and death through Jesus is the individual responsibility to all who say yes to the Spirit's

call, at the same time, followers of Jesus believe corporately as they journey together to ultimate salvation.

Be sure Paul is not saying that the Philippian's worked hard for salvation. He is not teaching the way to faith is through personal merit. If it were, how hard would someone have to work? How much good is good enough for someone to earn their seat in heaven?

> *God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God.* Eph. 2:8

Paul is saying, the Philippian's should "work out" their salvation. The process of spiritual formation is the Spirit forming us into the image of Jesus, more every day. The "work out" is active, it is a process, with a destination.

> *And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns*. Phil 1.6

Participating in God's work in unity of mind and the spirit of love is what will make Paul's heart full of joy.

2. Don't Complain or Argue

2:14 – Do everything without complaining and arguing, so that no one can criticize you.

So as you live out your faith do it in unity without murmuring and grumbling. I'm not talking about expressing disappointment, hurt, frustration, "I do not like this, I do not agree with that". Calling out to God for help, understanding, telling Him your concerns, is a part of our raw humanity.

Paul draws a parallel to Israel's rebellion against God and Moses when in the wilderness. Murmuring and grumbling come from place of rebellion. It's the attitude of arrogance thinking you know better than God. That is exactly what the community of Israel did one month after crossing the Red Sea and entering into the wilderness. The people began to complain against Moses and Aaron because they were tired and hungry. Their complaints distorted present reality. They started saying they were better off in Egypt where they were slaves. Their grumbling against Moses was a perpetual problem. Moses told them their complaints were against God not him. (Exodus 16:7-8; Numbers 17:5, 10; 1 Cor. 10:9-10)

2:15 – Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people.

Not only did Paul call out the community of Israel, he called out the pagan's in Philippi. A faithless and rebellious culture who minimized God and elevated the gods. In this context, Paul says to live blameless or harmless. The idea is not perfection rather progress. Spiritual progress is to become more like Jesus in word and deed; our light becomes brighter in a dark world. To not form more like Christ in a crooked and perverse world disfigures our witness. Children of God should stand out in darkness like stars in the sky at midnight. Followers of Jesus are called to be light-givers.

> *"You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden.* Matt 5:14

What's one action you can take to give light to someone this week? What's one activity you can stop doing that is misshaping your witness in the world?

> *Those who are wise will shine as bright as the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness will shine like the stars forever.* Dan. 12:3

2:16 – Hold firmly to the word of life; then, on the day of Christ's return, I will be proud that I did not run the race in vain and that my work was not useless.

The word of life is the good news of Jesus. Start well and finish well. Follow Christ faithfully, walk in unity with believers, and shine your light into a dark world. Every day: grow in your faith in Jesus, in your love for all people, in your witness in the world.

2:17-18 - But I will rejoice even if I lose my life, pouring it out like a liquid offering to God, just like your faithful service is an offering to God. And I want all of you to share that joy. Yes, you should rejoice, and I will share your joy.

Paul gave himself to the Lord and to people. He left nothing in the glass. His life was a true sacrifice of faith.

> *Therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance to his name. And don't forget to do good and to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God.* Heb. 13:15-16

Unity of Mind, Spirit, and Purpose