

1. **Introduction**: As seen in the last lesson, Paul is anxious for the Philippians to have a mindset like that of Christ. Jesus was humble, yet put His whole being into doing the task for which He was made incarnate. His attitude was always consistent with that mission.
 - Paul’s instruction to the Philippians is to do the work of the gospel consistent with who they are “in Christ” even though they are amid disbelieving, obstructive, and sometimes violent people.
2. **Philippians 2:14-16a**: *Do all things without grumbling or disputing,¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,¹⁶ holding fast to the word of life.*
 - In verses 2:12-13 Paul said, “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.”
 - Now he reminds them that “working out their own salvation” requires thoughtful action on their part. If they want to appear blameless and innocent before God, they must “**Do all things without grumbling or disputing.**” The “all things” means all things God requires and approves of. One of the “all things” they are to do without grumbling is to avoid sinning.
 - Believers can “work out” (make external) salvation the Holy Spirit works within them.
 - As we submit ourselves to the Spirit’s work, He provides both the desire and the power to follow His guidance. His invisible work within believers, applying to them the salvation Jesus earned for them, is an example of God’s love in action through His grace.
 - Paul in no way is suggesting that it is possible for a person to “work out their own salvation” in the sense of earning salvation by their effort.
 - What Paul means is that the Holy Spirit plants salvation inwardly in each believer’s heart. The believer’s part is to make that inward “heart-salvation” manifest in their outward life.
 - Working out the salvation the Holy Spirit implants in our hearts involves having both a right attitude (2:14) and right actions (2:15).
 - Paul says, don’t grumble, don’t dispute, and even if people around us do those things ignoring God’s commands, believers are to simply do what God says needs to be done. Don’t get caught up in false ungodly attitudes and actions of unbelievers.
 - Hold fast to the word of life so that like brilliant lights that shine in a dark world, or like strong straight pillars in a crooked culture, your obedient behavior will enable you to be a witnesses of the truth as you labor in the world.
3. **Philippians 2:16b-18**: *So that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.¹⁸ Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.*

- In the Day of Christ, Paul will hear of the Philippians' faithfulness and be glad his labor among them led to good fruit, proving his race ran for God has not been run in vain.
 - Paul is willing and would even rejoice to be poured out like a drink offering if it is spiritually beneficial to the Philippians. If that is what it takes, they too should rejoice when it happens.
 - Making externally manifest the salvation that the Holy Spirit works into a believer's heart will encounter much opposition, some external, but also some internal.
 - The most prominent internal opposition comes from "SELF." "SELF" will repeatedly urge us to take credit for the inward changes wrought by salvation. "SELF" will also press to be "in charge" of the necessary changes as we are sanctified.
 - Our residual sin nature makes that categorically dangerous. Exalt Christ, give Him credit, and put Him in charge of the transformation process.
 - That is the only safe thing to do. It will require constant watching and examining self.
4. **Philippians 2:19-24**: *I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you.* ²⁰ *For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare.* ²¹ *For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.* ²² *But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel.* ²³ *I hope therefore to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me,* ²⁴ *and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also.*
- In Philippians 2:19-30, Paul focuses on close friends who were especially dear to him during his time under house-arrest in Rome. Both men brought Paul needed encouragement, strength, and joy. One, Paul regards as a "son," the other as a "brother." Both were faithful.
 - If all of Paul's writings in the NT are examined, Timothy is mentioned more than anyone else as friend and ministry companion.
 - Timothy, like Paul, has true concern for Philippi. He will faithfully carry them news from the situation in Rome and bring back to Paul personal news about them that he yearns for.
 - In the more than 10 years they had ministered together, Paul had ample time and circumstances to judge Timothy's response to a great variety of challenges.
 - Timothy joined the missionary effort in 50 AD and has proven of "like mind" with Paul.
 - Gradually, Paul has come to see in Timothy a reflection of his own ministry priorities and methods. He is sending Timothy to Philippi as a true & reliable replacement for himself.
 - It is Paul's hope that he will soon be freed and able to come to visit them himself.
5. **Philippians 2:25-30**: *I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need,* ²⁶ *for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill.* ²⁷ *Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.* ²⁸ *I am the more eager to send him,*

therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious. ²⁹ *So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and honor such men,* ³⁰ *for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me.*

- Paul considers Epaphroditus to be his brother in the Lord, a fellow worker, a fellow soldier, a messenger, and a minister. While visiting Paul in Rome to deliver a financial gift on behalf of the church at Philippi, Epaphroditus became deathly ill, near to death. God had mercy on him.
- He was restored to health and relieving Paul and the Philippians of deep concern and fear.
- Though having Epaphroditus in Rome benefits Paul, he decided to send him home.
- There was no doubt in Paul's mind that the Philippians would rejoice at Epaphroditus' return.
- But he had concern that some might view the return as indicating Epaphroditus had failed in his mission to help Paul. To guard against such error, Paul lauds Epaphroditus and encourages the church to receive him with the joy and honor due such men as willingly risk their lives for Christ.

6. **Philippians 3:1-3**: *Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.* ² *Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh.* ³ *For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.*

- In the ESV, the word that begins this chapter is “finally.” That conveys the notion that Paul is about to end his comments. However, he is only about half-way through the letter.
- The phrase translated can also mean “further or furthermore,” either of which appears to fit the context better than “finally.” The NIV renders it “further.” The sentence then reads “Further (or furthermore), my brothers, rejoice in the Lord.”
- “Rejoice in the Lord” sums up Paul's present discussion and moves to the safeguarding of his readers. There is a constant threat from the legalistic Judaizers that press Gentile believers to live by their man-made religious codes.
- Legalistic “joy killers” substituted their code of worship in place of rejoicing in Lord and His grace of salvation made possible through the life, work, and death of Jesus. The legalistic perspective was to accomplish salvation by their own accomplishment in obeying the Law.
- This was such a serious threat that Paul uses three descriptions to discourage following it.
- *Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh.* (Phil 3:2).
- Paul compares the legalists to dogs. He means feral dogs who roamed in packs. They were not pets. They were uncontrolled and dangerous to anyone who got too close.
- Paul says “legalists” are like such dogs. He warns the Philippians to keep stay away.

- Second, Paul calls legalists “evildoers or evil workers.” Legalists claimed to be producing “good works.” In fact, works so good they merited a right standing before God.
- But Paul says they are in fact workers of evil, misleading people about what God desires and approves. Their version of the gospel was corrupt and twisted, teaching that people could only be saved by faith plus works.
- The good news of Jesus Christ is that salvation is a gift of God’s grace through faith alone. It depends only on the person and salvation work of Jesus. Rejoice in the Lord!
- Third, the false teachers are the “false circumcision,” saying that men must be circumcised to be saved. This is another attack on Christ-centered joy!
- True believers are the true circumcision who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus, putting no confidence in anything concerning the flesh. They rejoice in the Lord and what He has done to bring sinners into the family of God.
- Human works, personal piety, nor anything but only the person and salvation work of Jesus matters. Place no confidence in flesh or works of the flesh.
- Paul then gives personal information to expose the absurdity of those whose confidence is in their own achievement, things done in their own power whose purpose is to earn merit and approval with God.

7. ***Philippians 3:4-6: Though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.***

- If anyone could legitimately boast about their fleshly achievements, it is Paul.
- If anyone could have merited favor from God because of who they were and what they had achieved, surely Paul would have been included. He was an exceptional Jew.
- (1.) Circumcised on the eighth day as a son of the covenant, (2.) not a converted Gentile, but born into the nation Israel. (3.) a member of the tribe of Benjamin (an honorable people), (4.) a true Hebrew among Hebrews, the best of the best, (5.) a Pharisee with respect to the observance of the Law (recognized as outstandingly obedient), (6.) a zealous persecutor of Christian who were considered Law offenders, (7.) blameless in obedience to external righteousness as found in the Law.
- To the first century Jews, this pedigree was most impressive. This record exceeded the high bar Pharisee’s usually set for themselves.
- If obedience to the Law was the proper standard for judging right standing with God, Paul would have been near the top.

8. **Next:** Philippians 3:7-8