

Shine Like Stars

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Date: 06 October 2024

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning. Thank you again for worshipping with us today.

! I'm so excited to have you here. And we are going to be in Philippians chapter 2, verses 12 through 18. And if you don't have a Bible with you, that's okay. We have the text on the screen. And we also have a few Bibles. And it will be on page 999 on the Pew Bible there if you want to use that. Feel free. I'm going to read the word for us. So if you would, please stand to honor the reading of God's word.

Therefore, my dear friends, just as you have always obeyed, so now, not only in my presence, but even more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

For it is God who is working in you both to will and to work according to his good purpose. Do everything without grumbling and arguing, so that you may be blameless and pure children of God who are faultless in a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine like stars in the world by holding firm to the word of life.

[1 : 17] Then I can boast in the day of Christ that I didn't run or labor for nothing. But even if I am poured out as a drink offering on the sacrificial service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you in the same way.

You should also be glad and rejoice with me. All right, would you pray with me? God, thank you for your word. Thank you, oh God, for the opportunity to gather in your name, to study your scripture, to understand your heart, and to live more like Jesus Christ.

God, we love you and praise you. We pray your blessings over this time, and it's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. All right. I'd like everybody to go back in their mind for just a moment to when you were a young kid.

If we still have all the kids in here, this would have been really helpful. But go back in your mind for a second. When you were a young kid, you know, let's say eight years old, right, and you're at home with your siblings or you're at school with your friends, and at home or in the classroom, mom has rules at home, teacher has rules in the classroom, or if you're a homeschooled like me, that's one and the same.

And, okay, that was funny. Okay, anyways. So, all right. It's like, oh, I don't want to laugh at the homeschooler. It's okay. You can laugh. I'm just kidding. Please don't.

[2 : 34] All right. So, imagine you're at home, you're at school, whatever it is, and you have the rules. You know what you're supposed to follow. You know what you're supposed to do. And when mom is in the room or the teacher's in the room, generally, you had some people like me that it wasn't always the easiest to follow the rules regardless, but for most people, it's pretty easy to follow the rules when the teacher's in the room, right?

You're not going to get up and act completely like a fool when your teacher's in the room. Or the same way, when your mom's right there in the room with you, you're not going to take that cheap shot at your sibling that you want to take, right? But continue imagining here.

What happened when mom left the room? She went to the store to get groceries for a minute.

You're at home alone with your siblings. Suddenly, the inmates are running the asylum, right? Or the classroom. The teacher has a quick meeting out in the hallway with the principal.

They've got to talk about something. And then the teacher walks back in, and it's like they're trying to take over the classroom entirely, right? It's this craziness that unfolds as soon as somebody leaves the room. And why is it so hard for us as people, as human beings, to follow the rules that we're supposed to follow or obey the way we're supposed to obey when the person who is the rule giver isn't present?

I remember one time when I was homeschooled, but I went to a tutorial. So a couple days a week, we went to a tutorial, which was with a lot of other homeschoolers. So can you imagine just all of, you know, hundreds of homeschoolers running around?

[3 : 52] It was terrifying. And so we were at, it actually was hosted at my church, too. The church my dad was a pastor at, church I grew up in, which was good and bad. It was good because I didn't have to ask where anything was, where any class was.

I was good. But it was bad because I was very, very comfortable in that building. And I thought I could get away with whatever I wanted. You know what I mean? You know how pastor's kids are. Watch out for Jack, okay?

And they're like that from what I hear. I've heard a stigma. But anyways, I thought I could get away with whatever. Well, one year, I think it was my freshman year of high school, I think.

They brought in somebody and they called her, I don't know if they called her or if she called herself the enforcer. She was going to enforce the rules. And, you know, she made a point to meet me and tell me, I'm going to keep you in line, Mr. Duggar.

Okay. Okay. So, I remember I was in study hall in between classes because you had to go to study hall. You couldn't just wander the hall. So, I was in study hall in between classes one morning and she was in the room.

[4 : 47] Well, she had to leave the room for a minute and I saw my opportunity. It was time to climb into the ceiling and, you know, hide or you do what I don't know what I was trying to do.

I was mostly just investigate. I want to get up in the ceiling, though. So I got up on the back of a pew, and I was standing there. I moved the tile out of the way, and I have my head up in there. And my friend's like, Joe, Joe, she's coming.

She's coming quick. So I got down really quick, put the tile back in place, and acted like I was counting the dots on the ceiling tile. That was the best I could come up with. She came in, and she was like, you're Joseph Duggar, aren't you?

I said, yes. She's like, you're going to make life tough on me, aren't you? I said, yes. So I don't know why. She left the room, and I decided it was time to go crazy.

It was time to not follow the rules. I knew what I was supposed to do in study hall. I was supposed to be quiet and not make a ruckus. But instead, I saw an opportunity to make some people laugh, and so I took it. And I think that we do that kind of often, right?

[5 : 43] It's the same thing as an adult. I've seen people at work, the boss isn't around, and so suddenly they're not working as hard, right? You see it all the time. The boss isn't around, so I can scroll social media for 15 minutes and then get back and make it look.

Or when March Madness is going on, I had friends, too. They'd have their screen on, and March Madness, they came out with this thing a few years ago. I don't know if you remember this. I'm talking about the college basketball tournament. They came out with this thing a few years ago where you could click a button while you were watching March Madness, and it would hide the screen completely and mute it so that your boss couldn't tell that you were watching basketball while you were at work.

It was unbelievable. I'm not saying I used it or anything. That would be insane. But we look for opportunities to not obey what we know we're supposed to obey, right?

That's what we do. And so as we look at this passage here, Paul kind of starts this conversation. He's continuing the same idea about unity in the church, but he moves on from that picture of the example of Jesus in his life and the exaltation of Jesus because of his crucifixion to now discussing directly with the church, and he says to them, just as you've always obeyed in my presence, so now even in my absence, keep on obeying.

It's kind of like when mom leaves the house to run to the grocery store and she says, if I come back in this house, it doesn't look exactly how I left it. You guys are in trouble, right? He's telling them, obey even though I'm not here.

[7 : 10] Have the integrity and the character necessary to be obedient Christ followers, whether or not the teacher is in the room, right? That's kind of the idea. And so as we look through this passage, I hope that what we see is that by obeying Christ, by obeying God's word, he enables us to be lights in this world, to shine like lights in this world.

And I just realized I have the wrong presentation up somehow. I'm not sure what's going on here. Hey, could you guys on that proclaim presentation, go exit out of this one and open the other one

that says October 6th?

Because I think that I made a mistake. That is on me, by the way. That is not on them. I apologize about that. But anyways, I hope to convey that living obediently to God's word enables us to radiate like beacons of light in this world.

And so to see that, we're going to study three things that we have to do to shine like stars for Christ. Number one, we're going to see the need to work out and not in the gym.

Two, we're going to see the need to stand out. And three, to shout out. Okay, so working out. If you look with me at Philippians 2, 12 through 13, it says, So Philippians 2, 12 has been a verse that has caused a lot of questions.

[8 : 52] It's brought up a lot of questions and speculation over the years. What in the world does it mean to work out your own salvation? To work out your own salvation? Because it doesn't sound like something we hear from Paul very often.

When he talks about salvation, or when the New Testament talks about salvation, it's very clear that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone. Ephesians 2, 8, 9 says, For you are saved by grace through faith.

And this is not from yourselves. It is God's gift. Not from works so that no one can boast. So we know that we're saved by grace through faith.

Right? We're not saved by works. So how can we work out our own salvation? This verse has led to a lot of questions about this idea. And the way that I would describe this is that Paul is telling the Philippians to take ownership of their faith.

And I'm not saying that they own their faith, like they're the ones who bought it, and they did it themselves, they earned their salvation in some way. No, I'm saying more that they have the opportunity to step into a role of being active in their faith.

[9 : 58] Right? Live out your salvation is the idea here. Take ownership. Take ownership of your salvation. Basically, he's telling them that they need to live like they're saved.

And how would they do that? Well, through humble submission and reverence for the one who saved them. Like us, the Philippians needed this reminder that they have to take individual responsibility for the way they live in Christ.

And I have a quote on the screen. I'm not sure if it's up, if I messed up too bad, but I'll read the quote. This is from a guy named Jock Mueller. And he says, To work out one's own eternal welfare or salvation does not mean that man can or must work and accomplish it himself.

For God does that. But that the believer must finish, must carry to conclusion, must apply to its fullest consequences what is already given by God in principle, he must work out what God in his grace has worked in.

So we have a responsibility to work out our salvation. And I like the way he said that. Work out what God in his grace has worked in. God has accomplished salvation. Right? God is the one who saved us.

[11 : 18] Through Christ Jesus, through his atoning sacrifice, his death on the cross, his resurrection. God is the one who saves us. But now we have the responsibility to work out what God has worked in. God has given us salvation.

Now we live it out. And it's important to remember that someone can't take ownership of their faith unless they submit to the fact that God is the one who is at work entirely in salvation.

Right? God is the one who saves. And so that's why he says in verse 13, for it is God who is working in you both to will and to work according to his good purpose. And that sounds a lot like Philippians 1.6, which we studied, you know, a couple months ago now, which says, I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Remember, God has started the work in us, and God will continue the work in us to the day of Christ Jesus. Right? The salvation is only from the Lord, but we have a responsibility to live that salvation out, to walk in salvation, to grow in our faith in Christ.

The church in Philippi received a reminder that we need today, which is to work out our salvation with fear and trembling and trust that God is the one at work in it all. We don't save ourselves and we don't make ourselves more saved or less saved by the amount of work we put in.

[12 : 37] Salvation is salvation. We're saved from our sins in God's grace. We don't make ourselves any better or any worse, but we have a responsibility to do more than just get by as a work in progress.

We have a responsibility. And so I want to talk about three different ways that we work out our salvation. Number one, we develop integrity and endurance.

Develop integrity and endurance. This comes from an idea that Paul talks about frequently in his writings. He uses the illustration of running a race quite frequently. In 1 Corinthians 9, 24, he says, Don't you know that runners in a stadium all race, but only one receives the prize?

Run in such a way to win the prize. We have to run hard, right? We have to run hard as Christ followers. We have to put in effort as Christ followers. That sounds weird because I'm not preaching a workspace salvation, but it's true.

We have to put in effort. We have to actively grow in our faith through studying scripture, through fellowshiping together at the saints, right? Through spending time in deep prayer, through growing, through studying God's word with other believers.

[13:47] We have to put in work. We have to develop this integrity and work ethic to do that regardless of if somebody is around watching us. All right? I used to tell the youth group all the time at Matthew Road where I came from that your faith is your faith.

It's not your mom's faith. It's not your dad's faith. You have to take ownership. You have to put in the effort. You have to grow in your walk with Jesus. The same way that when you have a boyfriend or girlfriend, that's not somebody else's relationship that you get to piggyback off of.

You have to get to know the person, right? Well, in Christ, we have to get to know him, right? We have to take ownership of our faith. So develop integrity to do that on your own and endurance to continue on.

That's what we have to do. That'll help us as we work out our salvation. The second thing is be more than a work in progress. Man, one of my biggest pet peeves, if I can just be honest with you all, is when somebody who claims to be a Christian or I think probably in a lot of cases are Christians, they like something more than they like being a Christian in a moment, right?

We all do this sometimes, but let's say it's a sports fan who's watching a game. They get all heated at the sports game and they turn around and they scream at opposing fans, you know, their enemies during that moment, and they scream things that they would never say on a Sunday morning.

[15:06] They wouldn't say at their mama's house, but they say it at the sporting event. And then when you confront them, man, why'd you talk like that to that person? How could you say that to somebody? Well, you know, I'm just a work in progress. Okay?

That's your excuse, right? We have to be more than works in progress. It's true that on this side of heaven, we're not going to be perfect. That's a fact. We're not going to be perfect. So in that sense, we are always works in progress.

That is true, but we can't use that as an excuse to not live like Christ. How lazy is that? It's amazing because the same people who always call themselves works in progress tend to have no issue being the best at the things that they really, really enjoy, right?

Be the best follower of their favorite team. Be the best commentator on, you know, the world around us on social media. The best employee because they love their job.

They do things in all three of those areas of life that don't reflect Christ, but they get by with the, I'm just a work in progress mentality. We have to do better than that. We have to do better than that.

[16:13] So work out your salvation with fear and trembling. I put this quote on Facebook this week, but it's from a guy named A.T. Robertson. He said, God's grace is not an excuse for doing nothing.

It is rather the reason for doing all. God has saved you in his grace, and his salvation is motivation to live for Christ.

It's not an excuse. It's not a get out of hell free card. You get a play every time you get called out for sin. I'm just a work in progress. Here's my get out of hell free card. I'm just a work in progress.

I guess I'll try to be better. That's not who we're called to be. That's not how we're called to live. God's grace is not something to take advantage of.

God's grace is the greatest motivator of our lives. And the third thing that I'd say is to legitimately trust God.

[17:12] Verse 13, It is God who is working in you, both to will and to work, according to his good purpose. You know, the thing about this, I'm just a work in progress mentality, is that people who live in that often see them changing their behavior as the goal.

Right? Like behavior modification is the goal for the Christian life. But we don't serve a God of behavior modification. We serve a God of complete life transformation.

And we have to accept that, and we have to trust the fact that God is the one at work in us, that there's nothing that we bring to the table that makes us look any better to him. The only thing that we bring to the table is our sin, and he wiped that away.

He is the one who transforms us. He's at work in our hearts, in our lives. He's the one who makes us look like Christ as we put in this effort and grow in our walk with him.

So work out your salvation by seeking Christ always, living for Christ daily, and trusting the work of God in your life completely. Now the second thing that we're going to talk about is the need to stand out.

[18:23] So we have to work out, all right, get in the gym, the Christian gym, right? We have to work out our faith. We have to work out our faith with fear and trembling. Now we're going to stand out. Verses 14 through 16 say, do everything without grumbling and arguing.

We got to do a pause right there because that's kind of hard for us to read sometimes, right? We all like to, you know, complain. We all like to argue. Everybody does. It's because we like to be right. So we have to pause.

Do everything without grumbling and arguing so that you may be blameless and pure children of God who are faultless in a crooked and perverted generation among whom you shine like stars in the world by holding firm to the word of life.

Then I can boast in the day of Christ that I didn't work or labor for nothing. So to stand out as Christ followers, we have to remember this section here is still connected back to the start of chapter 1, verse 27, where he talks about living as citizens of heaven, this idea of unity in the church.

So as we work out our faith individually, we have to do that with the corporate church in mind, that as we work out our faith, the church benefits and there's unity in the church, right?

[19:32] That's the goal here. So here are some ways we stand out as Christ followers. We stand out by being peaceful and unified. Shine like stars.

We stand out by being peaceful and unified. So this connection here in verse 14, do everything without grumbling and arguing, it's pretty clear that Paul's making a reference back to the Israelites. When they were walking out of the wilderness and they were walking out of Egypt in the wilderness, if you remember this, what were they known for? Were they known for how much praise they offered to God for saving them and delivering them?

Were they known for how spectacularly they loved and made offerings and sacrifices? No, they were known for grumbling and arguing. And that was always directed towards Moses, which in effect was directed towards God.

They were unsatisfied. They were angry. They were grumbling and arguing. So there's a pretty clear connection here. Paul's telling these people in Philippi, don't be like them who were saved and then lived in this place of grumbling and complaining and arguing.

[20:33] Instead, be different. Be different. Be peaceful and be unified. Be justified. And I know it's tempting to find something or someone to complain about, but I gotta be honest with you, church.

I gotta be honest. There are few things that get overlooked and ignored in the church more than divisive attitudes of complaining and arguing. We always pass these things off as, well, that's just the way they are.

Well, you'll never please so-and-so. Yeah, you don't have, don't listen to them. They're just angry about something. And that's not good enough. I'm not trying to be harsh.

I'm trying to encourage us with what I read right here in the text, that we're supposed to be people who are not marked by our complaining and argumentative spirits, but instead are supposed to be marked by our love, our peacefulness amongst the body of Christ, the unity that we can experience. So we have to do a better job of holding people accountable, holding each other accountable.

When there's a spirit of disunity that's brewing in somebody's constant complaints, there's always looking for something to complain about or something to argue about, can never be pleased.

[21:46] When there's disunity brewing there, we have to be careful and hold that person accountable in love with the hope of restoring them to this place of peace and unity in the church. So we need to stand out.

The church is called to stand out by being peaceful and unified. Next, let's stand out by looking like Christ, by looking like Jesus. A lot of people will skip over that part that says we shouldn't grumble

and argue.

And they'll jump right ahead to verse 15 that says, so that you may be blameless and pure children of God who are faultless in a crooked and perverted generation. And they're like, oh yeah, this generation is crooked and perverted.

Yeah, oh, this generation's so bad. And it's like, yeah, but we have to check ourselves first, right?

We have to check ourselves first before we go try to solve the problems of the world. It is true.

The world is perverse. It is crooked. I'm not denying that. Tomorrow is October 7th, which will mark one year since the attacks Hamas levied against Israel, killing hundreds of people and taking people away as prisoners.

[22 : 52] That's crooked. That's messed up. That's wrong, right? That's sin. We live in a world where, unfortunately, both political parties are campaigning for the right to end life.

That's a devastating reality. Campaigning for the right to take innocent life through abortion. That's perverse. That's devastating.

So the world is messed up. It's been messed up. It was messed up then. It's messed up now. We know that. Our goal as Christ followers isn't to fix those problems, but it's to shine like stars so that people who see those problems can look to us and find hope in the fact that Jesus Christ is on his throne.

So we need to stand out by looking like Christ. Be blameless and pure. Children of God. Faultless. That's how we should stand out as Christ followers.

And then finally, we should stand out by holding firm to God's word. Stand out by holding firm to God's word. The beginning of verse 16, I love the way he puts a bow on this.

[24 : 06] Among whom you shine like stars by holding firm to the word of life. Holding firm to the word of life. Holding firm to God's word.

Not being swayed by convincing arguments or not being swayed by the crooked generation we find ourselves in. Holding firm to God's word.

By holding firm to God's word. By holding fast. By clinging to God's word. We will shine like stars in a crooked and perverse world. Right?

And I'm not saying the parts of God's word that sound really, really good to us or help us with our other arguments that we have in life. I'm saying the entirety of God's word. That's what we're seeing here. We need to cling to God's word.

Be transformed by his word. Hold firm to the word of life. And why is it that we hold fast to God's word? Because it's the word that gives life. It's the source of eternal life.

[25 : 04] We have the answers to the world's problem and his name is Jesus and we get to read about him right here. This is the answer. We don't need to solve any problems. We need to look like Christ.

And the way that we look like Christ is by holding fast, by holding firm, by clinging to his word. So stand out in this world by living your life according to God's word.

Shine bright and stand out for Jesus. That's the challenge for today. Shine bright and stand out for Jesus. Work out your own salvation and as you do, shine bright.

Jesus said in Matthew chapter 5 that we're the salt of the earth. His followers, the salt of the earth, the light of the world. So be the light of the world. Point people to Christ.

And the last thing that I want to mention is verses, the last part of verse 16 and the rest of verse 17 is this idea of shouting out. So we have work out, stand out, and I like the out thing so I said shout out because he said rejoice.

[26 : 07] I love this. Paul said, then I can boast in the day of Christ that I didn't run or labor for nothing. And by the way, I'll just tell you this right now. This that Paul's mentioning here, this is the heart of a pastor.

All right? His heart was that his effort, his ministry work, his teaching to the church in Philippi was sufficient to help train them in godliness, to grow them in their faith so that when he stood before Jesus and they stood before Jesus, he would see that they were ready to go meet Jesus.

and that would be joyful for him. It would be joyful for him regardless of if he lives on earth to see it happen or if he gets poured out as a drink offering, if he gets martyred before that time comes.

It would be a joyful thing for Paul to see his friends that he led to Christ, that he taught about Jesus be prepared to stand before him on that day. And that's the heart of the pastor.

That's my heart for y'all is that as I teach and preach God's word, my hope is that each person who comes to this church, who sits under this teaching would understand and be prepared on that day. [27 : 16] And that's a heavy burden to bear, by the way. And I'm not complaining. I welcome it. I'm excited that God has called me to this, but I'm just telling you that's a heavy burden. That's why James says that not many should be teachers because judge with a greater strictness.

Because teachers have to present the church, right? That's the idea. You present the church to Christ on that day. And so that's the heart of a pastor. That's the heart of a pastor.

So if you don't go to church here, you go to another church you're visiting today, go easy on your pastor. Like Stephen said, go easy on your pastor because his heart is to see you grow in your faith, to see you be prepared for that day.

And the word rejoice shows back up here. He says, even if I am poured out as a drink offering on the sacrificial service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you in the same way you should also be glad and rejoice with me.

This is not arrogance that Paul is preaching to them or teaching them. He's not saying, I need to feel really good about myself so you guys get in line. Instead, he's saying, you guys need to be prepared to see Jesus and whether I live and see that happen here on earth or I'm in his presence and I see you stand there, I'm excited for that day.

[28 : 26] I'm excited to see you stand before Jesus. And that idea of being poured out as a drink offering, he's talking about his potential martyrdom. And the reason we know this is because in Philippians, I'm sorry, in 2 Timothy chapter 4, Paul says to Timothy right before he dies, I am already being poured out as a drink offering and the time for my departure is close.

He knew that he was about to be martyred for his faith when he wrote this letter to Timothy. So this idea of being poured out as a drink offering, of a libation, is this message of if I'm martyred for my faith, rejoice.

If I'm martyred for my faith, rejoice. I'm going to rejoice so you rejoice too. So he's ready to shout out and excitement and rejoicing for the church in Philippi growing in their faith regardless of if he faced martyrdom.

And that's the way that we all need to live. We all need to live so that regardless of what comes, we should be able to rejoice and celebrate the work of Christ. And remember, this passage comes on the heels of this Christ hymn that we've spent the past two weeks looking at.

So it's because of who Jesus is that we should seek to be obedient and to work out our salvation. We should shine like stars. We should stand out in this world and we should rejoice that God is at work and God is changing lives and that God is preparing people to see him face to face.

[29 : 53] And that's because of who Jesus is. And as we do these things, this is the beautiful thing, as we work out our salvation and we're obedient and we shine like stars, the church is unified.

The church is unified. So this is not a lesson for every person in the world. This is a particularly and exclusively true message for those who have put faith in Jesus Christ.

If you haven't received Christ, then you won't work out your own salvation. The only hope that you have for salvation is to humble yourself and believe in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. You cannot work out your own salvation. You cannot shine like stars unless you know Jesus Christ first. So let today be the day that you receive Christ Jesus. We're going to have the Lord's Supper this morning.

We're going to celebrate the work of Christ, his life, his death, his burial, his resurrection. And so, as we enter this time now into invitation, I will sing just as I am.

[30 : 58] And as we stand here, contemplate and think about and pray about the work of Christ. If you are a Christ follower, then thank him. And I hope you're challenged by the words in this passage, Lord knows I am, that we would live in such a way that we reflect Christ, that we shine like stars.

And if you don't know Christ, I'd ask that you take this time to consider your relationship with him and specifically your relationship with him as it pertains to eternity. So would you stand with us and sing as we share together in the praise of our Lord Jesus.

Amen.