

# Is Christ Working Out His Mind In You?

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 24 November 2024

Preacher: J.D. Edwards

[ 0 : 00 ] Well, we continue this morning in Philippians chapter 2. Our sermon text is verses 14 through 18.

I'm going to begin our reading in verse 12. So Philippians chapter 2, starting at verse 12. This is God's inspired, inerrant, infallible, clear, authoritative, and trustworthy word.

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

For it is God who works in you, both to will and to do, for his good pleasure. Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.

Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you.

[ 1 : 46 ] with me.

Thank you.

Let's pray. Father, we trust your providence.

And that's your sovereign, powerful hand placing your own children in a crooked, broken, dark world. We confess like the psalmist, it's hard, Father.

And oftentimes we don't have answers. And we groan and we feel the pain.

[ 3 : 38 ] Your work truly is light. Your burden is easy because you have borne it for us. And you walk with your children as you work out the mind of Christ in us. We pray, Lord, that as you minister this passage through the preaching of your word today, that you will do that, that you will strengthen your people.

You'll give hope to your children. And you'll continue to sustain us. For your glory we ask. Amen. Amen. I had the opportunity of visiting Washington, D.C., seeing all the memorials with a Tier 1 Army Ranger.

One of our stops was the United States Army Museum. This gentleman said that it's only been in the last five years or so that he's felt ready to start talking about some of the experiences he's had in serving our country in the Army.

And for you children, you've heard of the Navy SEALs. That's the elite of the elite in the Navy. Well, that's what the Rangers are in the Army. You have to come in the top of the class with honors during boot camp.

You have to try out and be at the top of the class to make it and to become a Ranger. And then from among these elite, I mean, picture the best athletes in the world instead of going into professional sports serving in the Army.

[ 4 : 56 ] And then to be a Tier 1 Ranger, it means you get the toughest missions. You go in without dog tags. You serve. You fulfill the mission that was given to you. If you survive, you come back.

If you don't survive, your family won't even know that you died. That's what it means to be a Tier 1 Army Ranger. And as I was watching this dad with his eighth grade daughter, I could just see it from a distance.

He wants his mind and all of his experience, all that he's gone through, he wants to pass that on to his daughter in some degree to help her understand all that he's been through, especially at the Army Museum.

And he's as tough as they get. This man, he also fought in the MMA for five years professionally. He is as tough as they get. But when it was just he and I walking around, he said, I'm afraid I'm

going to choke up a little bit.

This man, it meant so much to him. Well, at the end of one of those days, it started to snow a little bit. And so everybody's complaining and grumbling about feeling cold, even though they're from Colorado and have no excuse.

[ 6 : 05 ] The next day, he was laughing about this and smiling. He said, I just looked at my daughter and said, well, see, now you've learned your lesson. Complaining didn't make you any warmer. So, beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, my question for us today from this passage is, God, being your father, is he working out his mind into you?

Is God working out the mind of Christ in you, his children? That's what he desires to do and that's what he promises to do. So, we've got six observations as we work through these verses.

As I mentioned, our sermon text is starting at verse 14. But to understand our text, we need the context. So, my first question for us is this. What does the mind of Christ include?

What does the mind of Christ include? Because verse 14 says, do all things. What all does that include? All things.

And to understand what doing the mind of Christ or doing all things means, we need to get these verses leading up to that. So, look in your Bible back at Philippians chapter 2, verse 1.

[ 7 : 25 ] Who is it that acts according to God's good pleasure? Who is it that does all things according to the mind of Christ? It's those who enjoy any consolation in Christ.

Any comfort of love. Any fellowship of the Spirit. Any affection and mercy. Look at Philippians 2, verse 12. It's for you who are working out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Verse 13. Knowing all the while that it is God who works in you. Both to will and to do according to his good pleasure. So, now we get to verse 14.

To do all things is controlled by the verse right before it. By verse 13. All things that align with God's good pleasure. How do we know what is God's good pleasure?

Well, he's given his nature, his attributes, his character, his holiness, and revealed it to his people in the Bible. So, we know the good pleasure of God according to the word of God.

[ 8 : 26 ] But I want to emphasize that to do all things included here are in the mind of Christ.

It's action. The Christian life is not passive. And to have a high view of God's sovereign grace. It does not in any way diminish the action, the energy, the power of God in his people.

In fact, I think we could make a strong argument that that's the only source to energize it. If you have a high view of God's sovereign grace in saving you and adopting you, which you should, that's biblical.

Then you will have a high view of God's power and sovereignty and ongoing continual grace to energize you and propel you and push you forward into action. Do all things.

What does the mind of Christ include? We don't want to be trapped by a fear of committing sins so much that we then err on the other side of omitting.

[ 9 : 31 ] Sins of omission. We're not doing all these things that God has commanded. To give you a sampling, and this is how we should read our Bibles. What is God's instruction, his good pleasure for my life in Christ?

Take Matthew 28, for example. Make disciples. Baptize them. Teaching them to obey all that I command. Luke 22, 19 says, Do this, this Lord's Supper, breaking the bread, pouring out the cup. Do this in remembrance of me. The Christian life is a life of action. And us together as a church, Mark 16, we're told, Go into all the world.

Proclaim the gospel. To the whole creation. Do all these things for the glory of God. And it's both what we are doing, the mission of the church, but it's also the way that we work and serve and act as the family of God right here.

When we gather weekly, midweek, one-on-one, throughout the days. This is also how we are to do all those things. It controls our interactions with one another. James 5, 16.

[ 10 : 44 ] James 5, 16. Pray for each other. This is what it includes to work out the mind of Christ.

1 Thessalonians 3, 12. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Hebrews 10, 24.

Spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Hebrews 10, 25. Encourage one another. Colossians 3, 16. Admonish one another.

1 Thessalonians 5, 11. Build each other up. Finally, make your love increase and overflow for each other.

Do all things. Having the mind of Christ includes all of this. Is Christ working out His mind in you? Does this describe the way you treat His people?

[11:47] The way you conduct yourself in this world? That's what the mind of Christ includes. All things. A life of action and obedience. Now what does the mind of Christ exclude?

That's what Paul sets up next in this text. Verse 14 says, do all things. And now here comes the exclusion. Without complaining and disputing.

What does the mind of Christ exclude? Some translations will say complaining and disputing. Others will say grumbling and bickering. Maybe murmuring and arguing.

So let's look at those two words. Grumbling. This was a fun word for me to learn about. It's an onomatopoeia. You know what that is?

It's a word that, the word itself sounds like the thing it's describing. So an example is murmuring. That's an onomatopoeia as well. You hear people murmuring.

[12:48] Murmur, murmur, murmur, murmur. It just sounds like a low grumbling among those people. In Hebrew, it's gugasman. Gugasman, gugasman, gugasman, gugasman, gugasman.

Murmur, murmur, murmur. It's an onomatopoeia. It means dissatisfied complaining against others. And it's a reference, this phrase together, grumbling and bickering.

It's a reference to the Old Testament that's brought up often, as we saw in Sunday school, throughout the Bible. I'll give you a quick sampling would be Numbers 14, 27. Moses hears the grumbling of the people, and he responds properly like a psalmist.

So what Moses does is not necessarily grumbling to God. It's prayer. God wants us to pray. Take it to him. And Moses asks God, how long? There's the how long, O Lord, like the Psalms.

How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who are grumbling against me? I have heard their complaints, says God.

[13:50] And in Exodus 16, 8, listen to this. Yahweh hears your grumbings. And Moses tells the people, your grumbings are not against me or Yahweh's appointed servants.

Your grumbings are against Yahweh himself. That's what God taught Moses as he prayed to him. So at the root of grumbling is the doubt.

It's a proud doubting of God. It's when Satan, using your own flesh and your own remaining sin, he allows your thoughts to accuse God to you.

Now, bickering, it's similar. The root word for bickering is dialogism. So it's where we get the English word for dialogue. So it's not a good type of dialogue where we're working toward truth.

It's the opposite. In English, it's sometimes translated reasonings. But in the negative. So it means petty disputes, questioning, and inward doubting of God once again.

[15:03] So these two are related. Grumbling and bickering. Listen to a couple examples of where this same word is used in the New Testament. For bickering or arguing. In Luke 9, 26, An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest.

See, they're dialoguing about which of them is the greatest. They're feeding their flesh and their pride. It's that type of dialoguing that is excluded from the mind of Christ.

And it says that Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, he knew what their hearts were telling them. It was the pride of their flesh puffing them up.

And then Romans 21, 121, We read that although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God nor give thanks, but became futile in their minds, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

It's the same idea for an inward reasoning that leads to bickering and arguing. Why is it that we bicker and argue?

[16:08] It's because we don't trust God and because we think we want what we think we deserve. So I think I deserve something better than what God in his providence is making me endure.

We need to return to the scripture and see what is it that I deserve. If I feel like God is being unjust, what is justice for me? Lamentations 3 says it so clearly.

Lamentations 3, 21, It is the Lord's mercies alone that we are not consumed because of the compassions of God that do not fail.

See, if God were to treat us the way we really deserve, his wrath would burst out like flames and consume people who don't trust him and who are doubting him and who are accusing God in our own minds and in our own hearts.

So the mind of Christ, it excludes this unreasonable arrogance against God. Words against others, disputing, petty questioning of God.

[ 17 : 21 ] These things are a waste of time. They rob the church of energy, of focus, and of power. Why is it unreasonable to grumble against God?

It's unreasonable because we're out of touch with reality. We have a low view of God and a high view of ourself. And that's the most unreasonable way to think.

So if we're grumbling, it's because we need to be humbled. We need to be reasonable once again with what we deserve.

Philippians 4, 5 says, let your reasonableness be known to all. Would you please turn there? Flip your page just one over. Philippians 4, look at verse 5.

Let your reasonableness be known to all. Christians ought to be the most reasonable people around.

[ 18 : 28 ] We have a walk with the Lord that requires faith. It's not by sight, but it's not contrary to reason. It's the only right response to a rational mind.

If you're like me, you're stuck. Okay, I'm very clear that the mind of Christ has to exclude a spirit in my heart of grumbling and arguing and accusing God and thinking I deserve something better.

It has to exclude that, but how? Can I just tell those thoughts to go away, or how do I do that? So right after this instruction, Philippians 4, 5, let your reasonableness be known to all.

Skip down to verse 8. Look at how we do this. Paul says to this same audience in Philippi, Philippians 4, 8, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

That's how we have the mind of Christ. It's again an action, an active fighting against our own flesh and our pride, an active reminder of my position before the Holy God Creator, only through Christ.

[ 19 : 51 ] And that's what the mind of Christ excludes. Number three, what works, I'm sorry, Christ works out His mind in you for several reasons.

And the first one is, it's for your own good. So how does this happen and for what purpose? Christ is working out the mind of Christ in you who belong to Him for your own good.

That's the first reason. It's for your own good. Turn back to Philippians 2. Let's look at verse 15.

Verse 15. Do all things.

Work out the mind of Christ. Verse 15. That you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault.

When He uses this word blameless, what comes to mind for this congregation is the sacrifice that God has deemed acceptable. blameless and harmless or maybe a better translation is pure.

[ 20 : 56 ] Now if you look at verse 17, He paints this metaphor even more descriptively. In verse 17, He says how He is being poured out. But look at verse 17.

What is Paul being poured out upon? It's the sacrifice and service of your faith. So the picture is a faith that's more and more acceptable to God.

It's thoughts, doctrines, a faith that God can see as more and more in alignment with the mind of Christ. More and more blameless of a faith that works itself out in every aspect of our lives.

So it's our faith that is the instrument of our sanctification. sanctification. Sanctification means we're growing in Christ-likeness. In terms of being brought into the family of God, we know that it's Christ alone.

He's the only blameless sacrifice. None of us can stand before God on our own terms and say, look at my life. I present it to you. It's perfect. Accept me on my own righteousness.

[ 22 : 05 ] None can do that. Christ is the blameless sacrifice of God. But because Christ has accomplished this perfect, blameless sacrifice that God demands and God requires because He's just and holy, then Christ turns around in the covenant of grace and He says, receive me by faith and you share in all the blessings that I've acquired for you.

And so through faith, God is making you now more and more like Christ. Your union to Christ transforms you. The next word is harmless.

So blameless and harmless. Other translations will have pure or innocent. It means that you're unmixed, pure. Your service to God is not corrupted by your own sins or by your own bad intentions.

That word is used in Mark 10, 16 where Jesus says, be pure or innocent as doves. And in Romans 16, 9, Paul writes to the church, I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil.

So Christ works out His mind in you for your own good so that your thoughts can be in a line with Christ. You don't have to be bound by these evil tendencies and these thoughts overwhelming and dominating you any longer.

[ 23 : 34 ] He's ransomed you, rescued you out of darkness. You belong to Him and it's for your good that He's washing your mind. Every believer who stands before God is united to God and is called a child of God without fault.

in 2 Corinthians 5, 21, we read that for our sake the Father made Him to be sin who knew no sin so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

you stand in Christ you stand in Christ righteous because Christ became sin for you and for me. So now you stand as His child faultless but He's still for your own good sanctifying you working out His mind in you as a child of God.

A helpful illustration for me of this was a brother and a sister inside their bedroom. The door is closed but it's a very thin door and there's one of the parents standing right at the door and you can hear everything that they are saying.

So our standing is as children of God and our standing before Him it should exclude grumbling and complaining like a parent doesn't want to hear the children talking bad about mom or dad or what they made us do or what they're not letting us do this weekend or something like that.

[ 24 : 55 ] The parents they know the good pleasure of their home and their will for their children and so for the children the right posture is to know God is right here. He's with His children.

We belong to Him. We're pure and He wants us to have His own mind. Number four Christ works out His mind in you not only for your good but for the good of unbelievers as well.

It's for the good of unbelievers of the world that Christ is working out His mind in the church. He says in this same verse that you're children of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation among whom you shine as lights in the world.

The world is described as crooked. The Greek word is skolios. Those of you in the medical field you know that sounds familiar skolios.

Skoliosis is a chronic condition where your backbone is different than what God designed. Skoliosis is a disease you can inherit from a crooked ancestor we could say.

[ 26 : 08 ] It's really the perfect word to describe our condition. One of the symptoms of having a crooked backbone is that your head is off-center. Isn't that a perfect word to describe this world outside of Christ?

your head is off-center your backbone is not what God designed it to be and you inherit this condition from Adam's fall. The world's also described as perverse.

Perverse means distorted disposed to be contrary stubborn obstinate in the wrong. Well outside of Christ every generation since Adam is crooked and perverse.

That's the world Jew and Gentile alike. That's why Christ had to come from a virgin not inheriting this fallen state the only righteous man being truly God.

And we're told as Christians now united to Christ in the midst of this crooked and perverse generation we will shine. so we don't get taken out of this generation.

[ 27 : 23 ] We're not removed from the dark world we're in the midst of it. Just as the Lord prepares a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.

Psalms 23. Psalm 57 4 is the prayer my soul is in the midst of lions. I lie down amid fiery beasts the children of man whose teeth are spears and arrows whose tongues are sharp swords.

And there's the Lord Jesus Christ with his church in the midst of those enemies those lions and those fiery beasts commanding us as his church in Matthew 5 44 love your enemies pray for those who persecute you so that you may be sons of your father who is in heaven.

So what this means is that as the church is left in the world the world will hate the church because it hated Christ first. We're in a spiritual warfare. We are treated as ones who don't belong here because we don't.

And God uses that very persecution to shine reflect the glory of his holy nature and of his son the kingdom of heaven off of the people of God who he's left in this world.

[ 28 : 43 ] And that's how this thought closes is that you're in the world that's dark but you among them shine as light. This reference to a shining light in the darkness it's a messianic prophecy it's how Christ's work will be described.

We get this in many places to give you a sampling. We have Isaiah 42:6 where the father promises of the son I will give you as a covenant for the people a light for the nations like we read today. That's also opened up a bit more in Isaiah 49. So when our Lord Jesus comes to accomplish the mission the father gave him he declares in John 8:12 I am the light of the world whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.

And then we're told as the church in 1 Thessalonians 5:4 and 5 you are not in darkness we are not of the light. Brothers you are all children of light and children of the day.

Jesus commands all who have eyes to see him he says in John 12:36 believe in the light so that you may become sons of light. It's through faith in Christ that you are adopted as a son of God and you become a light reflecting his glory.

[30:07] Matthew 5:14 Jesus says you are the light of the world speaking to his people who follow him. Let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to God your father who is in heaven.

See if man lives in a way that's different than the world and brings glory back to man mission failed. If man lives in such a way that's different than the world and it brings glory to God the father Christ's mission is accomplished.

The church is the means God intended and God uses to draw those who are lost and in darkness to himself. So we don't want to be a church of do gooders that are bringing glory back to the church or back to ourselves.

That's robbing God of the mission for which Christ came. But instead we follow Christ. We accept persecution. We endure the suffering.

And we do it with joy instead of grumbling. And the world says I got nothing to make of that. There's no answer for that kind of living. And it gives glory to God the father.

[31:21] So that's how Christ working out his mind in you is also for the good of unbelievers to draw them to God. And the third reason is that Christ works out his mind in you is for the good of the church.

It's for your good, for the good of unbelievers and for the good of the church. Look at verse 16. Paul writes, holding fast the word of life so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ.

Paul's asking them to obey God so that he may rejoice on the day of Christ. Paul, as an apostle who God is sending out to call together churches and guide them in appointing elders and deacons and setting themselves up under the ministry of the word.

He says, when Christ and I are face to face, I want to be able to rejoice at the work that he's doing through you, that your obedience is being worked out. It's for the good of the church that we need to have the mind of Christ and grow in this together.

When he says, hold fast the word of life, that means this word of life, this gospel, this truth that God has revealed of Jesus Christ. Possess it.

[32:34] Grip that for your assurance. It also means hold it fast and hold it forth. Hold it out to others. In Homer's Odyssey, I'm told that the word, the same word, was used to hold forth wine as a gift.

Propose to the world. Offer it up, this word of life. Put it out for other people to hear and accept. And do this with your eyes of faith set on the day of Christ.

The day of Christ. We've seen in going through Philippians, the day of the Lord is a reference to his second coming. The glorious return of King Jesus. So there's the day of the Lord with that emphasis.

And then the day of Christ, I think it's a good insight from many who have studied this question. It's often used less about the second coming of Christ and rather about the day when a soul will encounter Christ, which means you die.

So at Paul's death, that's the day of Christ for Paul. That's when his body is left behind and he is with the Lord in glory in his soul. Although the Lord, the day of the Lord is yet to come.

[33:50] So the day of Christ, Paul has that day of Christ, the day when Paul will come before the Lord and give account for all that God's entrusted to him. And he doesn't want to be a worker who's ashamed.

He wants to be a worker who has labored and who is presenting back to Christ these souls that the Lord drew to himself through Paul's ministry using a saved sinner like himself.

This is a strong teaching. Paul was concerned that the quality of his life in ministry would be evaluated by Christ himself.

Paul's not questioning his salvation. He's holding fast the word of life. But he has his eyes set on the day of Christ, the day when he will give account for what he was told to do by the Lord himself. Hebrews 13 tells elders to shepherd the flock among you as ones who will give account to the Lord himself. Jesus said not many should become teachers and be very careful if you cause one of these little ones to stumble.

[ 35 : 05 ] It would be better that a millstone be tied around you and drag you to the depths of the ocean. Because each one has a day of Christ. And we want this day to be a day of rejoicing.

Not something that anyone should take lightly. But that we should find the energy and anticipation and fear and trembling of that great day of the Lord. And it stirs up in us not an anxiety, but instead it's a joy.

Rejoicing that that day is coming. He says in verse 16, that I have not run in vain or labored in vain. He's pressing home in the strongest language possible.

Not that it depends on him. He's made that very clear. It's God who works in you to will and to do for his good pleasure. He's not stealing glory away from God. But he's saying I want to be able to stand before Christ with the energy he did give me to go and do and the will he gave me to go and do and to work out the mind of Christ in me.

Knowing that I was not irresponsible with my part. that it truly had the intended effect on you that God wanted. And only God can produce that, but he'll do it to the extent that I'm being faithful and submissive to what he's called me to.

[ 36 : 25 ] That I have not run in vain or labored in vain. What would it be like to run in vain? Well, this audience at Philippi, they're Greek trained and they know the great tales and the great myths of the ancient Greek civilization.

And they would have, many of them at least been familiar with what Herodotus, the Greek historian wrote about the Greco-Persian wars of 490 B.C.

Especially the famous account of a runner. His name was Pheidippides. And he was a messenger who had to run from Athens to Sparta and asked for help because the great Persian empire was invading.

And the Greeks were vastly outnumbered. And who could come and help us? So a runner runs all the way, gets there exhausted, and calls for help. Now he would have run in vain if this stronger army couldn't have come to the help of their friends.

He would have run in vain if they heard this message. There's a day of death and destruction coming. We need reinforcements. We need action. And no one takes up the spear.

[ 37 : 40 ] No one puts on the sandals to march. They stay passive behind. He would have run in vain. And Paul says, I know I'm giving you this message. The day of Christ is coming for me soon.

Stand up. Work it out. Do all these things in a way that pleases God. Ephesians 5, 8, and 10 says, walk as children of light.

The fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true. And try to discern what is pleasing to God. Work it out together.

Discern together as a congregation what is pleasing to God. Walk together as a church, as light in the world. But it's hard. What about this situation and that one?

Work it out together. Bring those questions to one another. Father, don't let my running be in vain. The day of Christ is coming for you, church. For you, congregation.

[ 38 : 41 ] Wake up. Don't fall asleep. We need to work out what Christ has already accomplished for us. There's a sense of urgency to the Christian life. It's for the good of the church that he's putting the mind of Christ in each one of his believers.

And when one of us is down and weak, the other one is there to build up and encourage and give strength. When one is erring, going the wrong path, the other one is there to bring them back to the truth, back to the word of God and follow Christ together.

Christ works out his mind in you for the good of the church. Well, the last verse is a personal statement Paul makes in verses 17 and 18. And I think it's for me a perfect way to pull this thought together because I'm left at the end of this seeing the example of Christ in Philippians 2.

God the Son who humbled himself. And we're told to have the mind of Christ and look at Christ. Amen. But I'm left with the question, is it even possible for a saved sinner like me to live out the

mind of Christ?

Is this even possible? So Paul gives us three examples. We'll only see one for today. We'll see the next two next week, Lord willing. The example he gives for today is not Christ himself.

[ 40 : 03 ] It's an apostle. And it's Paul, his own life. But whereas we saw in Philippians 2, seven verses about Jesus Christ and have the mind of Christ, here we only get one verse about Paul.

Another example. Verse 17, if I am being poured out as a drink offering and the sacrifices and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.

One sentence. He's using a reference to being poured out as a drink offering on a sacrifice. The name for this is a libation.

A libation. It could be done with oil or wine that was poured over a burning sacrifice in both Jewish and Greek worship. The purpose of a libation was to compliment and complete the sacrifice and the ceremony.

So Paul says, your faith is the object that's being offered up to God. It's your faith and service as a church. I'm just here to compliment and complete it.

[ 41 : 16 ] That's what he's saying. We have an example of a libation in the Old Testament. I'll give you one. It's Numbers 15, 5. Where God instructs the Old Testament people to offer with the burnt offering or the sacrifice wine for the drink offering for each lamb.

So there's a lamb and the Jewish people gathering around offering this lamb as a sacrifice to God and then the priest takes what would be about a liter of four cups of wine and pours it out over it. And the pleasing aroma ascends to the Lord. The sacrifice is completed. It's been sealed. Paul uses the same reference in 2 Timothy 4, 5, and 7.

He says, and this is the last book he wrote in prison in 2 Timothy. He says, I am already being poured out as a drink offering. And the time of departure has come.

I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. And I have kept the faith. One commentator pointed out that Paul sees himself as an addition to the service and the faith of the church, not the other way around.

[ 42 : 31 ] And he observed after decades in church ministry that this perspective probably needs to be held to and taken to heart by every single pastor.

It's the faith and the service of God's people, the local congregation that is offered up to God. And any minister, including Paul himself, is simply there to supplement and compliment and lift up the faith and the service of a church body to the Lord.

Not the other way around. Paul says, I am glad and rejoice with you all for the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me.

Is it even possible for a saved sinner to live out the mind of Christ? Paul says, I'm one witness. I'm a saved sinner.

And it's a joy. I rejoice at it. And as I'm being poured out to complete what God's doing in the congregation, I hope you'll rejoice with me. It's not only possible, it's God's beautiful design for his church.

[ 43 : 41 ] David Strain commented, your holiness, Christian, is about the good pleasure of God. There is a profound connection between godliness and joyfulness.

It's so true. He begins by saying it's do all these things for God's good pleasure. It's the good pleasure of God. And then he ends this thought by saying, I rejoice with God. Strain goes on to say, there is a deep marriage between true holiness and true happiness.

As we work out our salvation with fear and trembling, there is a sweet note of joy at every step.

There is joy in partnership with those with whom God has called us to minister. There is joy in our life together as a local church.

There is joy in our witness together to this crooked and perverse generation. The life in Christ is marked by joy at every step. I know that some of you are in suffering and pain and uncertainty. And if you're like me, the Holy Spirit is helping me now like wrestle with what is the difference between praying how long, oh Lord, like we're supposed to do in the Psalms and grumbling.

[ 44 : 55 ] So I just want to remind us of God's providence. He invites you to pray. Take it to him. He can handle it. And don't cause one of these little ones or another brother or sister to stumble.

Confess our sins to one another and go to the Lord in prayer. Remind one another of God's providence, of his care, of his compassion. We don't want what we deserve.

We don't want justice. Christ poured out his justice on Christ. God poured out his justice on the cross. Christ. I read of Gregory, ancient church leader, hundreds of years ago.

He had just a biting headache, like a migraine headache all the time. And then he reflected years later how he had prayed for so long that God would remove this headache. And he thought in his own mind how much more I could serve God if only God would remove this.

Well, one day the Lord did give him a good spell without having this headache. For a long time it was removed. And then he reflected. He said, when that headache was removed, I found myself, my flesh, falling into lust like I never had before.

[ 46 : 06 ] And it tormented my soul. And I asked the Lord, would you please bring back that headache? Because that was better for me. I don't know what's better for me. You know what's better for me, Lord. The mind of Christ in you will give you all you need to sustain that obedient, patient, joyful walk with God.

That's really what this passage is about. Patiently do all things with rejoicing. James 5, 7 through 9 says, Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord.

See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it until it receives the early and late rains. You also be patient. Establish your hearts for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged. Behold, the judge is standing at the door. Let's pray.

Lord, you're our good Father. You're so close to your people. Please teach us to be patient. Please give us your strength. Please establish our hearts on your second coming.

[ 47 : 27 ] We praise you, Father, that you took on flesh. You made yourself so low. And you invite us into this joy, this self-giving love for others that can only come from you.

Please work that into us. Please help us as a church to do all things according to your good pleasure. And for your glory we ask. Amen.