

Empowered and Transformed (Philippians 2:12-18)

How are we supposed to respond to the breath-taking rescue accomplished through Jesus' humility and obedience? Philippians 2:12-18 challenges us to be empowered and completely transformed by it. The temptation will be to compartmentalize it, to push it into some "religious" corner of our lives. Instead, we're told to work it out (walk it out, live it out), here and now. To allow the truth of who Jesus is and what he accomplished to shape us through and through. The result? We'll shine like stars.

1. Work out (walk it out; live it out) this salvation you share in. (Philippians 2:12-13)

A loving challenge to live a life of obedience to Jesus. There is a responsibility that should be felt here. Jesus has transformed our lives – forgiven our sin – reconciled us to himself and placed us within a community of believers to walk in love and unity and on mission...now what? Romans 12:1-2

"with fear and trembling" = live each day "Coram Deo" (before the face of God)

"...for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."

There's promise here. There's power here.

2. Do all things without grumbling or disputing. (Philippians 2:14-15)

God faithfully puts his finger on areas of our lives that threaten our well-being and jeopardize our witness. It's easy to complain. Easy to murmur; become caught up in arguments.

"No, enough of that! This attitude is counter-productive in every way! It's dishonoring to the Lord, it's destructive to the community you're called to. It's inconsistent with the love and grace you've received."

That you may be blameless and innocent. Not perfect but free from accusation.

When you live this way you'll be living out your identity = "children of God"! A people who reflect the character of God. Ephesians 5:1-2, 8-17

"you will shine as lights (stars) in the world" = imagery from Daniel 12:2-3. John 8:12; Matthew 5:14-16

3. Hold out this message of life you've been given. (Philippians 2:16-18)

Hold out this message of life and light in the midst of darkness and death.

The strength of our witness depends on whether our lives are being empowered and transformed by the message we carry.

QUESTIONS (Pray, read the passage and pick 4-5 questions to discuss. Trust the Holy Spirit to guide.)

1. Read Philippians 2:5-11. Now read Philippians 2:12-18. What stands out to you in VV12-18? Paul is concerned with how are the Philippians *respond* to the breath-taking rescue accomplished through Jesus' humility and obedience. It's easy to push what Jesus did into a "religious" corner of your life. What is Paul saying we should do instead?
2. When Paul says, *"work out your salvation..."* he isn't saying *"work for your salvation"* or *"you must do something to earn salvation."* What is he saying?
3. Paul says, *"...for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."* What is the promise? Where is the power? How does this motivate you?
4. Paul gets specific. Grumbling (complaining), arguing (disputing) was a problem within their community. It's easy to fall into sinful patterns of grumbling and disputing. It was what the nation of Israel gave into again and again. Why is it so dangerous and how do we avoid it?
5. Followers of Jesus are never called to hide out or huddle up, instead we're called to live out our faith in the midst of the darkness. Our lives are to shine like stars, and will do just that, when we do what? Read Philippians 2:14-16; Ephesians 5:1-2, 8-17.
6. Maybe you've become indifferent and callous. Maybe it's hard to believe God is "on your side." Maybe you've lost sight of God's unwavering love and commitment to you. Read Philippians 2:5-11. Pray for renewed faith to live a life that reflects the humility and obedience you see there.

The idea behind "holding fast to the word of life" is to "hold forth" the message of the gospel with our lives and our lips. It's the news about Jesus, who he is and what he's done that brings life.

Pray we will be a church increasingly empowered and transformed by that message.