

Philippians 2.12-18 / Church of the Open Bible / 11.13.16

2.12-13. The first word in this passage is translated “therefore” or “_____ then,” telling us that what Paul is about to say is dependent on what he just said in 2.5-11: Christ, the Son of God, was willing to be selfless and humble, to sacrifice and suffer for the sake of the gospel mission in obedience to the will of God the Father. *So then [or therefore]...*

So then [or therefore]... they are to “continue _____ out” their salvation with awe and reverence. They can do that by being obedient like they were when Paul was with them.

They were to obey God’s will, because _____ obeyed God the Father’s will even to the point of sacrificing himself for us. Christ is our hero, our example of perfect humanity, so we adopt his attitudes and actions.

When we come to faith in Christ, we are completely and forever saved from _____ to Hell. We are born again, written in God’s book of life, adopted into God’s family, justified [declared righteous in God’s sight], and we have received the seal [the assurance] of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

The problem is that we are not yet _____ salvation from sin and evil, because we still have a corrupted human nature, decades of wrong thought development, and thus a tendency to keep sinning. We are *legally* righteous in God’s sight, but we are not yet *living* righteously.

We need _____ of our mind, leading to transformation of our character, leading to change of our way of life. This is a lifelong process called progressive sanctification, which is only completed by the glorification of our soul when we go to Heaven and the glorification of our body when Christ returns to resurrect and judge the dead.

So we are “working out” our salvation in the sense that we are working with God to become as _____ *experientially* as he already has declared us to be *legally*. Justification is complete, glorification is assured, but the process of progressive sanctification in between is what Paul is discussing here.

Our goal is to _____ spiritually, to become progressively more like Christ, who is our hero and example of perfect humanity. We grow as we live by faith and obedience, on what we call the top-line, walking with God in his light. We grow to be more like Christ by learning to follow the example of Christ. He obeyed, so we obey; obedience led him to live a certain way – with certain priorities, values, and actions – so we adopt those priorities, values, and actions.

It is _____ who produces the growth in us. He renews our mind and transforms our character, so that we *desire* to do what is right, and thus he changes our way of life so that we *do* what is right. So we are not changing in our own power, rather God is doing a miracle in us.

God does this work in us for his good _____. He is forming the image-bearing people he always wanted, a people who will reflect his character, represent him in daily life, reproduce his image into others, and rule as his stewards on the Earth.

Though God does the miraculous work in us, Paul’s command implies some _____ on our part. We must avail ourselves of this grace; we must yield to the Holy Spirit, to allow the changes in our hearts and minds; we must pursue spiritual disciplines and immerse ourselves in biblical community so we learn the truth of God’s Word and become spiritually discerning; we must desire this change and be willing to obey.

To submit to Christ and follow Christ, we have to become humble enough to have awe and _____ for Christ and God the Father.

In the Greek text, it says we have to have _____ and trembling: we have to be impressed with our own humble limitations and with God’s great power and supreme authority.

As we become more sanctified, more like Christ, our growing humility will do away with _____ ambition and vain conceit, allowing us to have better relationships with God and each other.

2.14-16. The church is to sacrifice and suffer for Christ, in unity, without _____ or arguing. We are not to resent God for letting us suffer and asking us to sacrifice.

Earlier in the letter, Paul said we should be humble enough to sacrifice so as to get along with _____ and stand *unified* for the true faith, the gospel, and the gospel mission.

The emphasis in the Greek text is on doing _____ without grumbling and arguing. If we are somewhat spiritually mature [or sanctified], if we are obedient, then we will find ways to work through our problems and disagreements, rather than grumble or argue among ourselves. Part of obeying and following Christ is to have unity in the church and a positive attitude about the work of the ministry.

Learning to live peacefully in unity is part of living like _____ of God, *blameless* and *pure*. Despite being in a crooked and perverse society, we can be blameless and pure, because we have our spiritual rebirth from Christ, we have scripture to teach us how to live, we have the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to resist sin, and we have the Holy Spirit working the miracle of renewal in our minds, transformation in our characters, and thus change in our lives, as part of the process we call progressive sanctification.

If we learn to live this way, we can be God's _____ in the world! We are not to grumble and dispute, and thus we will show ourselves blameless children of God above reproach [living up the righteousness we have been given, living up to the gospel], which will make us appear as lights in a corrupt and dark world.

It is the miracle of our transformation – it is the _____ we can give about how Christ has changed us – that proves the gospel is real and true! When people see our thinking, our ethics, and our life have changed, they want to know why, and they begin to wonder about Christ, and sometimes they decide they want him too.

If we are not _____, if we complain and argue just like people in the world, then we are as crooked and perverse as the world, and we cannot shine God's light effectively.

If the Philippians did as he asked, they would prove when Christ returns that Paul has not worked in _____. His boast when Christ returned would not be based on selfish ambition or vanity, it would be about the fruit Christ brought through his ministry done in Christ's name.

2.17-18. In Israel, Jews poured out an offering of _____ on top of a sacrifice or at the base of the altar on which the sacrifice lay. The drink offering symbolized full dedication to God.

Just as Christ poured himself out for us, so had _____ poured himself out as he followed Christ and shared in his sufferings.

Showing his faith was genuine, Paul rejoiced – not just *despite* his suffering, but – _____ he was allowed to suffer for the cause of Christ. He rejoiced at his own identification with Christ in suffering for the gospel, and he rejoiced with the Philippians at their identification with Christ in suffering for the gospel.

Like Paul, the Philippians were to _____ regardless of their difficult circumstances. They were to rejoice in their own suffering, their own sacrificial service for Christ, and rejoice with Paul as he suffered for Christ. For those who were concerned that their suffering and Paul's imprisonment might indicate God's displeasure, in this letter Paul is offering a completely contrary view: that the Christian life is one of sacrifice and service, even suffering if that is what it takes, to live like Christ and pursue the gospel mission of making disciples.