

LSB Philippians 2:12 - 18 *work out your salvation.*

14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing, 15 so that you will be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, 16 holding fast the word of life,

Psalm 95:

*1 Oh come, let us sing for joy to Yahweh,
Let us make a loud shout to the rock of our salvation.*

*2 Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving,
Let us make a loud shout to Him with songs of praise.*

*3 For Yahweh is a great God
And a great King above all gods,*

*4 In whose hand are the depths of the earth,
The peaks of the mountains are His also.*

*5 The sea is His, for it was He who made it,
And His hands formed the dry land.*

*6 Come, let us worship and bow down,
Let us kneel before Yahweh our Maker.*

*7 For He is our God,
And we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.
Today, if you hear His voice,*

*8 Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah,
As in the day of Massah in the wilderness,*

*9 "When your fathers tried Me,
They tested Me, though they had seen My work.*

*10 For forty years I loathed that generation,
And said they are a people who wander in their heart,
And they do not know My ways.*

*11 Therefore I swore in My anger,
They shall never enter into My rest."*

I changed things up a little bit this morning by reading a psalm that is a parallel to the words we are going to work through in our passage in Philippians. But for sake of jogging your memories from last week let me read to you Paul's words that we want to study together this morning.

14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing, 15 so that you will be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, 16 holding fast the word of life, Ppn 2:14 - 16a

We are working through a section about living the christian life. And our context that Paul's discussion is built upon, Paul's premise which he is telling us we need to copy and emulate, is none other than Jesus Himself, who left the comforts and pleasures of heaven behind and in obedience to His Father's will, came to dwell with men on earth.

At a cost we can never fathom, He did not clutch or grasp onto equality with the Father in the splendor of heaven, but came to earth where He tells us, in Mt. 8:20 *"Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."*

That humility of obedience and sacrifice now for glory that it will purchase later is the model for the christian life.

The world is in a panic to gain everything it can get, NOW, because this life is all there is. Go for the gusto. Whatever it is that blows your particular hair back, break all the moral rules to get it. Sex and drugs and rock and roll baby. Or for others it's money. Still others it's power. For some it's recognition. Lots of different avenues that the world goes down seeking fulfillment at any cost, because this is all there is.

Paul states the premise perfectly to the Corinthians. Do we live with Godly restraint now because our wealth awaits in a different life in a different place? Paul's answer is yes. We live with restraints now, waiting for a future world. Here is Paul's conditional argument;

*If the dead are **not** raised, then “let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”*
1 Cor. 15:32

Paul makes the world's "grab-for-the-gusto-in-the-moment-because-this-is-all-there-is" argument for us. Again 1 Cor. 15:

16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

Paul just comes right out and admits the obvious. If we got sold a bill of goods, if we believed nonsense that isn't true, if we missed out on all the gusto and pleasures of sin that the world goes headlong after, and this religion that restrains us is baloney, we are of all men, most pathetically pitiable. Idiots. This little five minute long life, this little twinkle in eternity was it, and I restrained myself with a holy life, for nothing!!! ieeee

He gives the world's point of view, we are utter ridiculous fools, but then he says, *20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.*

Paul makes that argument the way the world would make it, blindness and darkness stumbling around looking for fulfillment and never finding it in all the insanity, but ultimately, Paul tells Timothy, *6 Of course, godliness with contentment is great gain.* 1 Tim 6:6

The world goes insanely off the rails to destruction in their mad search for wellness, and Paul tells Timothy, we didn't actually miss anything. Contentment was actually a package deal with Godliness. The world is frantic looking for contentment, and the christians are at peace in Christ.

I don't know about you, but I have certainly enjoyed being content in the midst of a world gone mad looking for it.

Jesus gave up heaven, to gain many brethren, to give to His Father, who gives us back to Jesus. We give up worldliness and sin in order to live Godly restrained lives, and it turns out we've found what the world has gone mad searching for. Inner peace and deep set joy. Wellness here in this world, and a future inheritance that we really can't even imagine.

That's our example and our premise for what Paul will tell his christians at Philippi. He calls us to live counterintuitively. Different from the world around us. We are to be godly. Holy lives patterned after Jesus.

14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing,

Where did that come from?? Have you flipped on the news lately? The world could be singularly best defined by a single word. Whining. Complaining. Sulking and angry about what someone else got that you didn't get your fair share.

Marxism is based on this. Whining. I was reading an interesting article, probably 50 years ago, in the Restorer magazine which is the publication of the Model A Ford Club of America.

A guy had written a scholarly history of Ford's investment in the Soviet Union. Henry Ford thought those communists were pretty smart, pretty savvy, so he built a giant Ford factory in communist Russia in 1929. The middle of the Model A era. Gazillions of dollars building a Ford factory in Russia.

But it didn't work out so well because the communists spend all their time arguing and fighting and holding meetings about who has to do what. Nothing gets done. No time to build cars because of non stop whining about who has to actually work.

It's all based on the truth revealed in the 10th commandment. You shall not covet. Coveting what someone else got that you didn't get is the most

crippling thing in this world. It brings the whole world to a stall. Whining.

Paul singled that out as the most blatantly obvious contrast between how christians are to live and how the world lives. And that's the point of Paul's entire argument.

When the world looks at the church, what do they see? Are we a bunch of whining squabblers who crab and complain about everything? There should be a stark contrast, a real difference.

Again, our model that we are to emulate is Jesus who left wealth in heaven that our brains can't even begin to understand and in obedience emptied Himself and lived in utter poverty. No home. No pillow for His glorious head. No comfort. Much of the time, no rest. No sleep.

The fallen world whines. The followers of Jesus who are supposed to be emulating Him, had best not complain. Anything you've given up for the kingdom is laughable compared to what He gave up in order to purchase your place in His kingdom.

The starkest contrast that the world should be able to immediately see between the lost world and the christians is our contentment. If we are discontent, then we're just like the world. No difference.

The big dust up in evangelicalism over social justice and race based separations from each other flies in the face of what Paul so clearly and beautifully lays down for us here. You're a christian and you're whining about how the world has treated you unfairly? Lord give us grace!

Christians who whine are walking arm in arm with the ruler of this world. He is the father of all whining. His initial argument that caused the fall into sin is based in whining. God cheated you! He's holding back what you deserve. You have a right to eat that fruit. God is treating you . . . unfairly! God could have given you more, but He's holding back what you deserve to have. Take it.

The world absolutely revolves around coveting. 52,000 dead in Gaza because of covetousness. 810,000 dead and wounded in Ukraine because of covetousness. It's Satan's number one killer. 60 million babies snuffed out since 1973 because of covetousness. I can't have the life I deserve if this baby is born.

Complaining is right out of the pit of hell. From the murder of Able by Cain to all of the murders that will happen before the sun sets today, all of them are based in anger about what you didn't get that you should have gotten. *14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing,*

This is the single greatest separation of the church from the world. The world is owned by the Complainer in chief. The devil was not satisfied with his created status as the most brilliant and glorious angelic being, he wanted to be like God. He coveted God's godness.

Pinch yourselves. Here we are. In a world that is about to implode with greed and covetousness and wars and murders and sin. Covetousness is the root cause of all evil.

We look at verse 14 and we're sort of dismissive. Really Paul? All the lofty things you could have exhorted for us to emulate about Christ, and you begin with covetousness? Yes. Because that's what started the mess the entire world is in. That's what makes Satan's murderous kingdom on earth revolve. The war on God is based in dissatisfaction.

Before I move on, very quickly, you'll enjoy the greek word for grumbling. It's onomatopoeic both in the greek and in the anglicised version. That means the word sounds like the thing it describes. grumbling is from the greek word goggusmos. You can just picture people who are disgruntled standing around going goggusmosgoggusmos. Our word is likewise. grumble grumble grumble.

OK, I better keep going or you guys are going to be disgruntled with the

preacher and find one that's easier to listen to.

14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing, 15 so that you will be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, 16 holding fast the word of life,

I'm going to jump to the end phrase because it is the reason for the exhortation. Do this . . . live in such a manor . . . so that you will be able to hold fast the word of life.

That's the end goal. Holding fast the word of life. Paul is calling us to unity of mind and soul as regards the simplicity of the gospel. We talked about that a few weeks back. How Satan never ends the effort to mess up the simple gospel.

We will return to verse 15 presently but first let's look at the end game. Paul's exhorting us to a circumscribed and restrained lifestyle different from how the world around us lives and he has a reason. A purpose. An end game.

Holding fast the word of life. We, the church, corporately and individually, hold a treasure in our hands. The word of life.

We have the gospel. *I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God unto salvation.* Rom 1:16. That gospel. The word of life, the gospel has within it the power to quicken dead lost people back to life. Spiritually dead people can be quickened to new life in Christ by the treasure we hold.

Paul is calling for unity of all believers in the purpose of protecting that treasure. Satan wants to do anything he can to change the gospel and empty it of its power. Add to it. Subtract from it. Limit it. Infect it with added hocus pocus nonsense. Drain out the power.

Paul says; *"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the*

surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves;"

2 Cor. 4:7

Holding fast the word of life We are to hold onto the treasure, the word that has the power to unleash new life from deadness, tightly. Hold it fast. That means we unite together in mind and spirit to protect it.

Many translations say holding forth the word of life. And that is implied, of course. The whole reason we unite to protect the purity of that treasure is so that it remains potent is so we can sound it forth. But the idea here is keeping it pure so the power remains within it.

We love to buy sourdough bread from a family in town here that bakes it. And that bread has a starter, a vibrant living organism that reproduces itself again and again so that if it is protected and not allowed to die out, theoretically you could be using a starter that has a reproducing organism that has been making the same bread for 150 years. 1500 years.

As long as it is protected and kept pure, it would reproduce itself forever. 4 generations of family could be making identical bread from the same living organism as their great great great grandmother did 150 years ago. Whatever happens, you can't allow that starter that has that living reproducing organism, to be modified, changed, infected, or simply it just dies. No more bread.

We hold fast the treasure. The word of life. So that Christ's church has the life giving power of reproducing more christians for His glory and His kingdom until He comes. We work hard at keeping the simple gospel unchanged.

That's why we exposit and teach this book week in week out. How often have you listened to someone speaking and said to yourself, "that doesn't sound right." Something's rotten in Denmark. Something that that guy just said has a foul odor to it. It isn't the pure gospel.

You may not be able to pinpoint chapter and verse, but the reason we do line upon line precept upon precept is so that your vomit reflex will eject the rotten stuff, almost automatically. When your reflex is; "that doesn't sound right" it's usually worth investigating. Talk to us. Ask those questions.

We are corporately and individually holding fast the word of life so that when we share it with our neighbors and our families, it is the pure powerful life giving, reproducing gospel.

OK, now that we're motivated, let's consider again what Paul exhorts of us in this passage.

14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing, 15 so that you will be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, 16 holding fast the word of life,

Paul has two goals. Unity and clarity. Unity protects the treasure. Clarity is necessary so that we infect the world we're left in with God's truth.

There has to be a difference. Christians are different from the world around them. That contrast, black and white, polar opposites, hot and cold, whichever metaphor you choose, there has to be a clarity of contrast.

Notice that *blameless and innocent, children of God* is the polar contrast to the world's *grumbling and complaining*, because they are children of Satan.

Paul's got a metaphor for you. Dress someone up in starched white pristine linen and take them down to the 4rth level in a coal mine. Would the rest of those miners be able to see a distinct difference?

Christians are to be distinctively different from the world around us. Radically, noticeably different. It used to be harder to see the distinction. In our world the polarity of the contrast has gotten much more distinct.

Like the starched white linen guy down in the 4rth level of a coal mine, we are to be *blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation*,

That word generation is interesting. We could substitute our currently often used word, culture, and be very close to the idea.

A culture is a group of organisms that grow together in a petri dish that have things in common that cause repeatable similarities. We humans have that same thing going on in a giant scale. We're all together in this petri dish world where Satan is ruler, sharing common ideas and influences.

Every generation from the fall has been a crooked and perverse generation. Sin accomplishes that. Always. But like the petri dish, each one has characteristics that are almost something like contagious. They rub off.

The germans in the late 1930's had a stange phenomenon where somehow it seemed OK to want to wipe out a particular people group. That whole generation was somehow blindsided. Later on they look back and gaze in wonder that that was able to take place.

A particularly telling and interesting case study for us to understand the biblical idea of a generation are the children of Israel that Moses was leading out of Egypt to their promised land.

Then the whining and complaining began. And ultimately, God reacted to that generation in it's entirety. He says for 40 years I loathed that generation.

They made God so angry with their whining grumbling complaining hard hearts that He caused that whole generation to wander in the wilderness until they all died. It was their children that inherited the land.

Each generation is in a way it's own petri dish. Our current generation is

not satisfied with ordinary wickedness, we have gone way beyond hard hearted complaining. We have challenged creation order itself.

The total LGBTQ++ agenda is this generation raging in hatred at a God who set gender and marriage and family in place in the creation itself. And it's also interesting to me that within my lifetime, the whole world has become a sort of common petri dish with things like Facebook and Twitter and all of the social media.

Never before in history has the statement in Psalms 2 meant what it suddenly means in our current wicked and perverse generation; *Why did the nations rage*. We are for the first moment in history, part of a global petri dish. A global generation exchanging ideas and wicked perversities.

If you're a student of end time prophecies, that's pretty exciting to think about. A wicked and perverse generation used to have logical borders. People groups infected with a common ideological disease that remained sort of local. Now, the nations are raging together in commonality of wicked perversions.

Very well then, as Francis Schaeffer famously said in the title of his book in the 1970's as he was a seer just beginning to see the beginnings of a global generational wickedness and perversions, he wrote a book with the title; *How should we then live*. 1976.

The title of his prophetic book comes from something Peter said. 2 Peter 3: *10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be found out. 11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, **what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness**, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God,*

Paul answers that question, and isn't it amazing that generation after generation of perversity and wickedness have come and gone for 2000

years and Paul's command is just as relevant in 2025 as it was in 65 AD.

14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing, 15 so that you will be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,

We are to be distinctively different than the generation we dwell with. Jesus said it perfectly.

13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out to be trampled under foot by men. 14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;

We can't let the petri dish influences make us into the same slurry as the rest of the generation in the same dish. If we join in with the crookedness and become twisted like the generation we dwell within, or if we become perverted in our thinking because of the influences of the generation we dwell with, we become worthless.

In that world if their salt lost its saltiness they would make pavement out of it. Cover their walking paths with salt that was no longer salty. Jesus is quite literal and the people He was speaking to would understand. Salt has to have its distinctive flavor or it's worthless. Good only to be walked upon.

In the late 1890's when electricity could flow through wires to a lightbulb the modern world got too smart for the Bible. No one sitting in the glow of modernness from a light bulb would believe in miracles any more. And so a group of scholars went to work to de-mythologize the Bible.

The only way to save christianity for a modern world was to update it. Get rid of the miracles. Lose all the non modern nonsense. And the only way to do that is to undo the authority of divine plenary inspiration. God didn't

use men to breathe out His revelation.

They did that to save christianity from itself. Only keep the stuff that a modern dignified world could believe now that they had science and knowledge. And the baby went right out with that bath water. The power went right out the window with the miracles.

That was 120 years ago and eventually all of the mainline denominations were affected. The salt had no flavor. Most have vanished.

In our petri dish the influences are different. Same issue of the authority of a God breathed book with stuff in it the culture can't tolerate. The pressures in this petri dish to lose scripture in order to accomodate the sinfulness of human sexuality outside the Biblical boundaries of one man one woman in marriage recognised by God, which results in creation order family units is huge.

And the accusations, fast and furious, that anyone who believes the literal ancient book as God breathed authority over men is both loveless and an enemy of liberty.

We laugh at those "You had one job" fail jokes. Satan has one job. Make the salt unsalty. And beloved, he's brilliant at what he does. He's been at it a long time. The church is a city with lights, set upon a hill, which can be seen for miles in the darkness, unless Satan can make all the lights go out.

Listen again to what Paul is saying to the christians at Philippi. It is a warning and a formula. A warning that if Satan can overcome the christians with his pressures and his influences, the distinctiveness can be compromised and the light can go out. It's a formula to not let that happen.

14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing, 15 so that you will be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, 16 holding fast the word of life,

Satan's method is always to compromise the Word. Change it. Add to it. Subtract from it. Compromise the God breathed power of the written word.

I was sharing with an old friend who had left Tonopah 30 years ago about my windfall of becoming your pastor here. This morning begins my 14th year. And I was telling him I'm not much good at the shepherding part, but I've made it my goal to hold fast this book during my watch.

In Revelation chapters 1 - 3, Jesus walks among the lampstands which are the seven churches, and five of the seven are at different stages of being compromised with the world around them. And Jesus threatens to turn the light out if they don't repent and return.

Compromise with the influences of whatever particular petri dish you happen to be dwelling with in this world always results in the light going out. We see it far too often. Of the sampling in Revelation the ratio was 2 in 7 that were not in some stage of the lights being removed.

It's a tough battle against a fierce opponent but once in a while we win. And when we do, it's worthy of celebration. Nobody remembers the churches that have had their plugs pulled and their lights go out. We celebrate the winners, because our hearts overflow when Jesus is glorified by His saints who endure to the end.

My daughter Tina lives two doors down from an intersection in the Dalles. And on the corner facing the other street is a gorgeous old stone church building. 1880's style of church architecture in local quarried stone. Just beautiful. It's a coffee shop restaurant. I can't tell you what the denomination was when it was built. No name for it exists. Whatever it once was that raised the capitol to build a beautiful edifice for the glory of their God, is not only lost, it's completely forgotten.

That's Satan's agenda for each and every congregation. If the world is looking at us, and they can't tell from how we live and speak that we are

radically different from the generation we live amongst, then it's just a matter of time until our light goes out.

That's Satan's one job, and he's very clever at it.