

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

Stop Complaining Philippians 2:14-16 Part 3

Last week I told you a story about my twin four year old grandsons. I would actually like to finish that story this weekend. Hopefully you remember that one of my grandsons had become frustrated in not being able to accomplish the same effect with his rope and racquet ball racquet as his brother had accomplished with his rope and plastic bat. In response to his failure he began to whine. My response to his whining was to say, “If you stop whining I will be glad to help you.” His very sincere response to me, with tears running down his cheeks, was to say, “But I don’t know how to stop whining.”……. That is where I ended the story last week.

This morning I would like to finish the story. After he said what he did, I took his head and held it very gently between my hands and said to him, “Look at me” (I wanted to make sure that I had his attention) And after I had his attention I said to him, “Think about Christmas. Tell me all the things that you want for Christmas.” I knew that he had a list because he and his brother had been sharing their lists with me earlier. So he said, “I want a scooter. I want a remote control car, I want a remote control airplane etc. As he continued sharing these things. I stopped him. and said, “Look, you’re not whining. Why aren’t you whining?” Then he said, “Because I am talking about Christmas.” In effect what had happened? My grandson had replaced the thoughts that were producing his whining with new thoughts. His change of thinking had changed his behavior.

For us to stop whining about the circumstances of our lives, for us to stop grumbling about the circumstances of our lives we have to do the same thing that my grandson did. We have to replace the thoughts that are producing our whining and complaining with new thoughts.

The world can attempt to do this but they will be very limited. They might be able to say something like this, “Well things could be a lot worse.” They might be able to say, “Others in the world are far worse off than me.” And these attempts can actually be helpful in quieting their discontented spirit and reducing their level of complaining. But when the circumstances of life truly become horrific, which can happen, their attempts to change their thinking, will typically be washed away in a tidal wave of anxiety, grief or heartache. But for the Christian this is not so. Whereas the world is limited in respect to their resources available to them. We are not limited. We as Christians, in the power of the Holy Spirit, can lower the 16 inch guns of the Word of God.

When a Christian loses their job and wonders how they are going to provide for their family they can go to a passage such as **Matthew 6:31-33**, “**Do not be anxious then, saying, “What shall we eat?” or “What shall we drink?” or “With what shall we clothe ourselves?” (32) “For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. (33) But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.”** A Spirit-filled Christian who has lost their job armed with this promise will find themselves filled with the peace of God that passes all comprehension. With this kind of peace there will be no room for negative thinking and if there is no negative thinking then there will be no grumbling and if there is no grumbling there will be no disputing.

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Are there difficult circumstances in your lives? If there are then you can very easily be tempted to complain and grumble. But hopefully recognizing the seriousness of this sin we will choose by the strength that the Spirit of God gives to entrust ourselves to the promises of God's Word.

So let us go back to the second chapter of Philippians. Paul in his final appeal to the Philippians to walk in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ in Philippians 2:12-18 introduces three concerns..... What was Paul's first concern that we considered several weeks ago? Paul's first concern was that they work out their salvation (Philippians 2:12-13). Let us read **Philippians 2:12-13** **“So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; (13) for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”** The command to work out their salvation does not mean that they were to work for their salvation. Rather it means that they were to exert the necessary effort to live out a life of obedience consistent with the gift of salvation that they had already received by grace through faith.

Having introduced his first concern Paul then becomes much more specific by explaining how he wants them to do this. This leads to a second command and therefore to the second concern. Paul's second concern was that they do all things without grumbling and disputing (Philippians 2:14-16). This second command is found in **Philippians 2:14.**

Apparently there were certain Philippian Christians who were upsetting the peace and unity of the church at Philippi. Paul therefore follows up the more general command in **Philippians 2:12-13** to **“work out your salvation”** with the more specific command in **Philippians 2:14** to **“Do all things without grumbling and disputing.”**

“Grumbling” (GONGYSMON) involves quiet verbal expressions of discontent or displeasure accompanied by feelings of annoyance or anger. This sin is particularly troubling because it is in truth an outward verbal expression of an inner rebellion that shakes it's fist in the face of God and repudiates His right to rule and which questions His love and His wisdom.

If people continue to sow seeds of discontent through their quiet verbal expressions of annoyance and anger certainly it won't be long before arguments break out. This leads us to the second part of the command that we find in **Philippians 2:14**, **“Do all things without grumbling and..... disputing.”**

What are Paul's stated reasons for the command to “Do all things without grumbling and disputing?” There are a number of good reasons why we should not be involved in grumbling and disputing, but what are the reasons that Paul shares with the Philippians? The first reason for the church to do all things without grumbling and disputing is that it might function as a beacon of light to a faithless world (Philippians 2:15-16). Let us read **Philippians 2:15** and the first part of **verse 16.....** **“that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life**”

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If we do not work at seeking “to do all things without grumbling and disputing” we are diminishing our light as the disciples of Christ and in essence begin to invalidate the power of the gospel to save people from their sins in the eyes of the world. But beyond this stated reason there is an implied urgency in the words that Paul chooses which can also be found in **Deuteronomy 32**. The implied urgency is that if we fail to function as a beacon of light we could very easily be questioned whether we are in the “midst” of a crooked and perverse generation or “a part of” a crooked and perverse generation. In other words if we do not function as a beacon of light we may not be a beacon of light at all. I believe that this implied urgency leads Paul to give us a second stated reason for doing all things without grumbling and disputing.

Again I would hope that as we consider Paul’s second stated reason for being obedient to the command to “Do all things without grumbling and disputing” that we will be energized. I would hope that we will be energized not to complain in the midst of any circumstance no matter how significant or insignificant that circumstance might be..... What is Paul’s second reason for the church to do all things without grumbling and disputing?

The second reason for the church to do all things without grumbling and disputing is that those who have spiritually labored in our lives might have cause to glory in the day of Christ (Philippians 2:16). Let us read **Philippians 2:14-16** **“Do all things without grumbling and disputing; (15) that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as light in the world, (16) holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.”**

In order to understand what Paul is saying let us look at one phrase at a time. He begins with the phrase, **“so that in the day of Christ.....”** The term “Day of Christ” or its equivalent is found in 1 Corinthians 1:8, 5:5; 2 Corinthians 1:14; Philippians 1:6,10 and here in Philippians 2:14. What is the “day of Christ?” The “day of Christ” refers to the moment when believers meet the Lord and the church is given their glorified bodies and eternal rewards. This is what theologians call the “rapture.” It is an event that could happen at any time with these accompanying blessings.

It is important to understand that the “Day of Christ” is not the same thing as the “Day of the Lord.” The day of the Lord is a term used most frequently in the Old Testament and is related to events surrounding and including Christ’s millennial kingdom and focuses on judgment. The “day of Christ” is exclusively a new testament term and focuses on reward. I believe that we can establish this from 1 Corinthians.

In 1 Corinthians 1:4-8 it says “I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, (5) that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, (7) so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ (which is the rapture, the coming of Christ for His Church) (8) Who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

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Why should the church be waiting so eagerly for Christ? Let us again look at 1 Corinthians but this time let us look at **1 Corinthians 3:10-15** “**according to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it. (11) For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. (12) Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, (13) each man’s work will become evident; FOR THE DAY (What day? The day of Christ) will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work. (14) If any man’s work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. (15) If any man’s work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.**” The church should be eagerly awaiting the return of Christ for many reasons but one of those reasons, is the examination of their works.

Are you eagerly awaiting this event? You should be? You have everything to gain and nothing to lose. If we are present on the “Day of Christ” for the examination of our works the very worst thing that could happen to us would be entering into eternal bliss (1 Corinthians 3:10-15). What does it say, “**If any man’s work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.**”

But there is also a possibility that professing Christians at Philippi may not be there on the Day of Christ because their faith has been a sham (Matthew 7:21-23). People may say that Christ is their Lord but they are not striving to do the things that He has told them to do. They are not working out their salvation. They are not exerting the necessary effort to live out a life of obedience consistent with the gift of salvation that they say they had received by grace through faith. They are not exerting the effort to do all things without grumbling and disputing. They are not a beacon of light in a faithless world. They are not holding fast the word of life. And this is a terrible thing. What does **Matthew 7:21-23** tell us “**Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. (22) Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lords, did we not prophesy in your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ (23) And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’** I am sure that all of us when we have read this passage have considered the incredible pain which will be experienced by the one who is turned away by Christ. But have you considered the impact of this rejection on the life of others who have spiritually poured their lives into the person who might be rejected..... It would be horrible! They would be looking forward to seeing us there. There would look around but we would be no where to be found. For us to discover that our faith was a sham is a problem for us but it is also a problem for others as well.

We need to work out our salvation. We need to do all things without grumbling and disputing. Not only for the world’s sake but also for the sake of those who have ministered in our lives as well.

Hopefully when my wife, who has sought to spiritually encourage me, gets to heaven on the Day of Christ she will be able to find me. Hopefully when my children who have sought to spiritually encourage me gets to heaven they will be able to find me. Hopefully everyone in this fellowship who has sought to spiritually encourage me, gets to heaven on the Day of Christ, you will be able to find me.

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Paul invested his life in the Philippian church and he hoped to see that investment pay off when he would find them present and accounted for on the Day of Christ. Hopefully the people that are making an investment in your life will also find that their investment has paid off when they find you present and accounted for on the Day of Christ. Hopefully your Christian spouse will find you there, hopefully your Christian parents will find you there, hopefully your Christian children will find you find, hopefully your brother and sisters in Christ at Valley Bible Church will find you there.

How do we know that Paul hoped that his investment in the Philippians would pay off? Read the passage, **“so that in the day of Christ I may glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.”** It says that he would “glory” in their presence. What does this mean? Does this mean that Paul will be saying “Look at me and the wonderful work I have done in these people’s lives.” Is this what it means? Absolutely Not!

This “glorying” or “boasting” or “rejoicing” in Philippians 2:16 has nothing to do with what Paul has done but with what Christ has done through him (Romans 15:18). Listen to **Romans 15:18** **“For I will not presume to speak of anything, except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed.”** Paul is hoping to see the Philippians. He is hoping that he will have a cause to glory. But it is not about him it is all about Christ. Hopefully the same thing is true of us as well.

What will you feel if all those that you have spiritually invested your life in our present and accounted for on the “day of Christ.” You will “glory” in their presence. You will be thinking something like this, “Lord I know that I am a frail and weak sinner saved by grace through faith but you have been faithful to work through my inadequacies and my deficiencies to bring about this mighty work and I give you all the praise, honor and the glory.”

CONCLUSION

I shared with you at the beginning of this message that I hoped that after we finished considering the reasons for the command to “Do all things without grumbling and disputing” that you would be reenergized to apply yourself to obedience in this area of your lives. I hope that this has happened. I hope that you are prepared to work out your salvation in such a way that you will do all things without grumbling and disputing. That you will set aside those thoughts that produce your whining and replace them with thoughts generated when we let the word of Christ richly dwell within us. And that you will encourage your professing brothers and sisters in Christ to do the same!!

Grumbling is a common sin in the world but it needs to be an uncommon sin amongst Christians. Why? So that we might be a beacon of light to a faithless world and so that those who have spiritually invested their lives in us might have a cause to glory in the Day of Christ when we are present and accounted for.