

Philippians 2:14-18

This morning, the Word of God is going to give us our marching orders as citizens of God's kingdom in this present evil world. So let's turn together to Philippians 2, verses 14-18:

The Scripture tells us that our great God and our Savior Jesus Christ gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people (His own special people), zealous of good works (Titus 2:14). Zealous means enthusiastic.

And this relates to what's written here: *Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless (pure, innocent), the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world*

As the sons and daughters of God, adopted by grace and saved by His Son Jesus once-for-all sacrifice for our sins, we have a distinct identity in this present evil world.

In John 9:5, the Lord Jesus says: *As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*
In Matthew 5:14, Jesus says to His disciples: *Ye are the light of the world.*

In fact, the Lord Jesus prayed to the Father in John 17, verse 11: *And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are.*

What does Jesus mean when He says: *And now I am no more in the world?* Well, right beforehand in John 16:28, Jesus says: *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.*

Is Jesus contradicting Himself? No because, right now, Jesus is not in the world. The Lord Jesus departed out of this world unto the Father.

Risen from the dead, the Lord Jesus ascended up to heaven, to where He was before. Having been raised from the dead by God the Father, Jesus Christ *is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him* (1 Peter 3:22).

And in acknowledging of His departure of the world unto the Father, we read in John 17 that Jesus says to the Father about His disciples— *And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee.*—He's not only physically leaving the world and going to the Father, at this point Jesus is coming to the Father with intercessory prayer for His disciples that He would continue to guard and protect them as they remain in the world.

And since Jesus said at that point—*And now I am no more in the world*—that meant His disciples were now the light of the world because, once again, Jesus said: *As long as I am in the*

world, I am the light of the world. And since Jesus Christ is now no more in the world, this means His disciples are the light of the world.

But what on earth does this have to do with us? Well, in the same prayer for His disciples around Him right there and then, the Lord Jesus went on to pray in verses 20-21:

Neither pray I for these alone (I do not pray for these alone), but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

If you believe Jesus Christ is the Lord your God Who saves you from your sins because He died and rose from the dead, then Jesus is praying for you given the fact that the Lord Jesus told His then and there disciples to go and teach all nations, meaning make disciples of all nations, *teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*

And when Jesus Christ told His disciples in Matthew 5:14—*Ye are the light of the world.*—that isn't just a fact, it's a command. A command to do what? Shine. Light shines. That's its nature and its purpose.

In fact, soon after the Lord Jesus says to His disciples—*Ye are the light of the world.*—He says in verse 16: *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

And since the Lord Jesus told His disciples to go and teach all nations, *teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you*, this means that all the disciples of Jesus Christ in all nations and in all generations are the light of the world.

We know this because Paul writes to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi: *Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom **ye shine as lights in the world***

And in case we're tempted to think that we're just bystanders of a letter written by a man we've haven't met to people we've haven't met and think this is not applicable to us, let's not forget that we're told in Romans 15, verse 4:

For whatsoever things were written aforetime (before) were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

If you believe the Lord Jesus is your Lord and your God, then you must be a hearer and doer of the word written here because these words that Paul writes here by the guidance of the Holy Spirit are from God since Paul says at the beginning of this letter that he is writing as a servant of Jesus Christ.

So what are to learn from this portion of Scripture? By God's grace, we are a distinct people because we strive to do all things for the glory of God.

In 1 Corinthians 10:31, although he is primarily discussing the seriousness of how we observe the Lord's Supper, the apostle Paul extends the following principle to everything we do:

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

Now, comparing Scripture with Scripture, meaning connecting one Scripture with another Scripture because that's how the Holy Spirit organized the Bible where everything relates to everything, Paul says here in Philippians 2: *Do all things without murmurings and disputings* (Do everything without grumbling or arguing)

I don't know about you this first verse stings. I feel guilty when I read this because I am guilty of not doing all things *without murmurings* (grumbling).

There's a reason why Paul says this. For Paul to say—*Do all things without murmurings and disputing* (Do everything without grumbling or arguing)—this means we don't naturally do so.

What's even more stunning is that Paul is say this to saints in Christ Jesus, meaning these are Christian people who are set apart by God at the moment that believe in His Son Jesus to be saved. And why are they set apart by God? To be holy and live godly in this present evil world.

Now, again, since *all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine* (teaching), *for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*, this means that the instructions written here are for us as well.

With that said, if you're thinking to yourself or if I'm thinking to myself—"I hope so and so pays attention to what's written here."—then we're thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to think and we're casting stones as if we are without sin.

So to be not only a hearer but a doer of God's Word, how can we rightly apply in our lives the instruction: *Do all things without murmurings and disputing* (Do everything without grumbling or arguing).

We know that we're doing all things without murmurings and disputings when, whatever we do, we do all to the glory of God. But what does it mean to do all to the glory of God?

It means, in whatever we do, we strive to give others a favorable view of God. If our life is filled with murmurings and disputings, then we're not attracting people to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Instead, whenever we murmur and dispute, we're encouraging unbelievers to view God with disfavor and even inciting them to blaspheme and riot against Him in their heart where they look at us and say: "If that's what it's like to be a son/daughter of God, then I don't want to belong to Him."

Now, just to be clear, murmuring means complaining or griping. Whenever you do something with murmuring, you're acting as if the good you're doing for the Lord and others is annoying, inconvenient, or bothersome.

You see the opportunity as a hassle, a disturbance, a disruption, an interruption. Even though you do what is good, you do so reluctantly or grudgingly. And we do something reluctantly or grudgingly, we typically do it with a rotten attitude.

But that flies in the face of *the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works* (Titus 2:13-14). Once again, zealous means enthusiastic, passionate, and cheerful.

I say—*cheerful*—because when the apostle Paul wrote his 2ND letter to the church of God in Corinth about giving money, he said in 2 Corinthians 9, verse 7:

*Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give
(let each one give as he purposes in his heart);
not grudgingly, or of necessity (not reluctantly or under compulsion):
for God loveth a cheerful giver.*

This is a principle we should follow not with just giving but with doing anything.

A main reason we do something with murmuring is because we're acting under compulsion. We do it because we see it as something we got to do instead of something we get to do. In other words, we see it as chore not a privilege.

Yes, as we saw last week, the Scripture says: *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.* However, since the Scripture also says that God loves a **cheerful** giver, how we go about doing things is vital as well.

Not only are we to do things without murmurings but also without disputings or arguings. As the body of Jesus Christ Who is our Head, it's very shameful for us to ever be divisive.

Proverbs 6:19 says one of things that the LORD hates is *he that soweth discord among brethren* (one who sows discord among brethren, person who stirs up conflict in the community).

That's why Psalm 133, verse 1, says:

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

If we serve the Lord Jesus Christ with disputings, then as unintentional we may be, we are an accessory to an unbeliever's blasphemy by aiding and abetting their unbelief in Jesus Christ.

As the servants of Jesus Christ, whenever we murmur or dispute in the presence of an unbeliever, we inadvertently participate in their blasphemy because our murmurings and disputings are contributions to their unbelief in Jesus Christ.

How so? Because our murmurings and disputings do not draw them to Jesus but draw them further away from Him where they say: "Why should I confess Jesus Christ is the Lord when His servants bicker with each other?"

As lights in the world, we must do all things to make God shine and glow in unbelievers' eyes where they will glorify our Father in heaven and believe in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to be saved.

All in all, since our Lord Jesus Christ is the Vine and we are the branches where without Him we can do nothing, you and I must do two things.

First, humbly confess your sin of not doing all things without murmurings and disputings. Then, humbly acknowledge that you need the Lord Jesus Christ for forgiveness that is only yours because He shed His shed blood, died on the cross, and rose from the dead.

Then, *do all things without murmurings and disputings* by saying before everything the words of Philippians 4, verse 13: *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*