**PHILIPPIANS**

Leader Notes - 2:12-30

1. 2:12 In the NT, especially in Paul’s writings, the term “obedience” is sometimes used as a synonym for faith. Here no doubt it includes both faith and living the kind of lives that result from faith. How does faith show itself in our lives? **Faith shows itself by helpful deeds done to and with others. The class members may want to list some.**

**Since they had become Christians, and especially when the apostle had been personally present with them, the Philippians had shown real obedience to the gospel. They had eagerly accepted the apostle’s instruction and put it into practice in their lives. Now, in a very positive way Paul urges them to continue to live in that way now and even more in his absence.**

1. 2:12 Work out your salvation. At first glance that seems to contradict what we know about salvation by grace alone. Read Hebrews 3:14. How does this verse help not to be misled into believing we need to save ourselves? **Answers should reflect remaining faithful in our God-given faith to the end of our life.**

**This means to work it out to the finish. It is not a reference to the attempt to earn one’s salvation by works, but to show the expression of one’s salvation in spiritual growth and development. Salvation is not merely a gift received once for all; it expresses itself in an ongoing process in which the believer is strenuously involved.**

1. 2:13 God is at work in believers for His good purpose. What is that purpose that God has for each Christian including us? **God brings us into His kingdom so that we may be saved for eternity. However, we are also to share that good news so that others may be saved. 1 Timothy 2:4 tells that God wants all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. We are His instruments to get this done.**

1. 2:14 Being discontented with God’s will is an expression of unbelief that prevents one from doing what pleases God. How does that show itself in our lives? Some of their responses might include: **Giving time or money grudgingly and doing only the minimum.**

**Willing and acting according to God’s good purpose requires the correct attitude of the heart. Grudging obedience is not really obedience at all. In the course of our lives as Christian we are often called on to do things that do not come naturally to us, things against which our selfish natures angrily rebels. We are often asked to do things which we know will bring scorn and ridicule from out non-Christian friends and associates. We are to do all these things, Paul says, without murmuring and complaint. There is to be no second-guessing of God, no grumbling about what God expects of us, no rationalizing or calculating about how we might escape our responsibilities or by doing less.**

1. 2:15 “blameless and pure…without fault” does not mean absolute, sinless perfection, but wholehearted, unmixed devotion to doing God’s will. How can we get that done? **Everything that is wrong with us has been forgiven by the Lord Jesus. According to our new nature, there is nothing wrong. Our continual use of Word and Sacraments continues to cleanse us and make us right in God’s sight.**
2. 2:15 The people in Paul’s world and those in ours are “a crooked and depraved generation.” What are examples of depravity in our world? **There are many possibilities. Don’t spend too much time on them.**
3. 2:15 To “shine like stars” means to contrast, like light in darkness, that Christians are to be in contrast to the world around them. How can we do what is asked?

**By God’s grace the bright light of the gospel has dispelled the spiritual darkness that was by nature in a Christian’s heart. Now God wants Christians, who have the light of life through Jesus, to be both light-reflectors and light-bearers in the sin-darkened world. As light-reflectors Christian should stand out from their worldly contemporaries as light shines in darkness. Their words and actions should cause people to see that believers belong to Christ. It should lead those who see these actions them to glorify God.**

1. 2:16 What is Paul asking to be done by the Philippians and us? **Paul is asking them to share the Word of God as a part of their everyday life. Paul was in prison and was seeking some feedback that his work with them had been effective. Each pastor will be asked to give an accounting of his ministry. Read Hebrews 13:17.**
2. 2:17-18 *I am being poured out.* The reference may be to his entire ministry as one large thanksgiving sacrifice. However, it is more probable that Paul refers to his present imprisonment, which may end in a martyr’s death. His life would then be poured out as a drink offering accompanying the sacrificial service of the Philippians.

In the OT rituals the drink offering was poured out next to the altar on which the burnt offering was sacrificed. Paul regarded believers’ lives of obedience to the gospel as living sacrifices to the Lord. His own martyrdom, should it occur, would be a willing sacrifice on his part, a sacrifice poured out next to the sacrifices of the Christian lives of the Philippians.

What is Paul telling the Philippians about his ministry and their response? What are some lessons for us in our daily living? **He is telling them that his ministry has been worth it because they are living a life of faith. We do this when we “pour ourselves” that is we help our family and friends.**

**Paul had been instrumental in bringing the Philippians to faith and to encourage and strengthen this constancy in the same faith. That is a savory offering and acceptable to God. To help others to believe is the best service anyone can render. Therefore Paul is also willing to seal his offering and service with his blood.**

1. Read 2:19-23 – Why is Timothy so helpful to him? Have you someone like that in your life? If yes, how does that benefit you? Are you or could you be a helper like that to someone else? In what ways might you fill that role? **There can be many responses. Accept them with thanks.**

**All the co-workers of the Apostle pursued their own interests. The Apostle had but one co-worker that was different, and that was Timothy. That is how matters stood in the Church, even in the Apostle’s time. A certain interpreter at this point remarks that an investigation of these matters in the Church at any time would reveal that conditions, sad to say, have remained the same.**

1. 2:24 Why does Paul have confidence that he may one day again be with the Philippians? How can we follow that example? **Paul anticipates his release in the near future. Paul is certain in the Lord that even he himself will come to the Philippians. It is through the Lord that he has this assurance. We, too, can depend on the Lord for all the uncertainty of the future.**
2. 2:25-30
3. Why was Paul so eager to send Epaphroditus back to the Philippians.? **The Apostle sent Epaphroditus back more speedily than he had ordinarily planned. That would allow the Philippians to be relieved of their anxiety and be gladdened.** **But he was doing this also for his own sake, so that he, the Apostle, might be spared further anxiety. Very likely the Apostle feared Epaphroditus might suffer a relapse of his illness.**
4. Even though he didn’t have any great status, how had Epaphroditus proved himself useful? **We don’t need any great power or status to be helpful to others. We just need to do what needs to be done.**
5. In what ways may Epaphroditus have made himself vulnerable to sickness because of his ministry activities? **He probably worked long and very tiresome hours and thus made himself susceptible to whatever illnesses that might have been going around at that time.**
6. What can we learn from this? **While it is good to selflessly give of ourselves and it is also important that we take care of our health so that we can serve longer and more effectively.**