

Study Group 3 (Philippians 2:12 – 2:30)

“HOLDING FORTH THE WORD OF LIFE”

- 2:12** Works are an essential part of the Christ-life because faith is seen in works, and works are the fulfilment of faith (James 2:20-23). It will be on the basis of how our love for the truth has been demonstrated in works, that we will be judged (2 Cor 5:10; Matt 16:27; Rev 22:12).
- 2:13** The Judaiser thought that he could save himself by his own works. Paul says it is God that works through us. Similarly, he writes to the Corinthians to tell them that we are co-labourers with God (1 Cor 3:9). “Except Yahweh build the house, they labour in vain that build it” (Psa 127:1). Our response is seen in activity that transcends what fleshly motives could ever achieve (Phil 4:13), and gives pleasure to God in the greatest sense.
- 2:14** The first is criticism of our brethren which destroys love and the unity of the ecclesia in the progress of the truth. The second is criticism of the work of the ecclesia, which indicates that we are not motivated by the will of God. Concerning Israel, Psa 106:25. When brethren and sisters start publicly questioning the doctrines of truth, or the way the ecclesia is run (ecclesial standards for example), the unity of the ecclesia can be destroyed by constant debate.
- 2:15** Paul in ch 2:15-16 is drawing his ideas from Isa 49, particularly in this verse from Isa 49:6 of Christ (in Paul) as “the light to the Gentiles”. ‘God is light’, says John (1 John 1:5) and his true sons must shine forth the light of the Word in word and action (cp Matt 5:16 “good works”). As Jesus said, it is impossible to believe the truth and not manifest it (Matt 5:14-15).
- 2:16** The example we show to those in the world is a witness to the hope we hold, but it cannot benefit them unless we tell them of that hope. It is the responsibility of every brother and sister to be ready to give an answer of the hope within them (cp 1 Pet 3:15).
- 2:22** In 1 Cor 4:7 Paul calls Timothy “his beloved son” and holds this out as an example to his other “beloved sons” (v14) in Corinth. The way Timothy followed Paul’s example showed the way they should follow the will of their Heavenly Father. Although Timothy was like a son to Paul, both were slaves of Jesus Christ following Christ’s example in v7.
- 2:25** Companion in labour – expression used of many in Philippi, in ch 4:3 “fellow labourers”. Fellow soldier – Paul in prison is exhorted by the soldiers around him; he and Epaphroditus were fighting a different warfare Eph 6:11-18.
- 2:26** Note the genuine and earnest desire that Epaphroditus had for his brethren at Philippi. It is obvious that he was constantly thinking of them and their well being, and had even been prepared to give his life to supply their service to the Apostle. Here, truly, is an example who fits the description of v3-5, and is worthy of emulation.
- 2:30** Epaphroditus was an example of the mind of Christ in that he neglected his own interests (“own things” v3) and was totally concerned about Paul. His sacrifice was so great that he did not regard his own life as more important than the opportunity to serve his master. (Luke 9:24).



SHINING AS LIGHTS

Study Group 4 (Philippians 3:1 – 3:16)

“COUNT ALL THINGS LOSS FOR CHRIST”

- 3:3** Paul in Romans 2:26 says that the uncircumcised Gentile walking in the truth was truly circumcised and the Jew boasting in the works of the Law was not. Jesus had told the woman at the well of Samaria that Gentiles could worship God on the condition that it was “in spirit and truth” (John 4:24). Jesus was quoting from Joshua 24:14 where Joshua used the words “sincerity and truth”. Paul’s idea is that we should worship God with our whole being, not the hypocrisy and half-heartedness of the Judaiser. Rejoice (Gk 2744) means “to boast” or “glory” not rejoice. The Judaisers boasted that their own works would earn them salvation. (Jer 9:23-24, also 1 Cor 1:29-31).
- 3:5** The tribe of Benjamin was of importance from its inception, Benjamin being the second son of Jacob’s beloved wife Rachel. Benjamin’s territory in the land took in Jerusalem (Josh 18:16) and Benjamin became associated with the other more faithful tribe Judah from whom “Jews” had derived their name. Paul had good reason to be proud of his tribe, which he had also mentioned when writing to the Romans (Rom 11:1). Paul told Agrippa that he lived “after the most straitest (strictest) sect of our religion ... a Pharisee” (Acts 26:5). He was educated by Gamaliel, (Acts 22:3).
- 3:6** Although many Jews could have laid claim to the qualities of verse 5, nobody could match Paul in the two characteristics of verse 6. In these attributes he stood head and shoulders above everyone else. Nothing in Paul’s life was done half-heartedly.
- 3:8** Not only was Paul prepared to leave the benefits of Judaism behind him, but to count all things which personally benefited him in life as loss that he might win Christ. Few of us have given up anything like what Paul gave up for Christ. Knowing Christ involves both the intellectual understanding and knowledge gained by experience in life, a knowledge which surpasses anything in this life (Rom 3:20-28; Eph 2:8-10).
- 3:9** Paul often uses the expression “in Christ” to explain the state of those who have been constituted saints, covered by the sacrifice of Christ. The Judaiser had forgotten the reality of his own flesh and blood nature and his real need to be covered by God’s righteousness.
- 3:10** Knowing Christ is the only way to eternal life (John 17:3). This “knowing” is not just an intellectual comprehension of the atonement but a knowledge of Christ’s character and the motivating principles of his life. This knowledge is such that it will be openly manifested in action (1 John 2:3 5; Eph 4:21-24). Christ was raised because as a sinless person it was not possible that the grave should hold him (Acts 2:24).
- 3:14** In 1 Cor 9:23-25, Paul uses the figure of the race to highlight the following points: v24, many run in the race – only one receives the prize – “many are called but few are chosen”. If we want to win we can’t be half-hearted. v25, the athlete must be “temperate” or show self-constraint. In Heb 12:1 when Paul instructs us “to lay aside every weight” 3. v25, the athletes devoted their lives to attain such a puny reward as a crown of leaves – we are promised a crown of eternal life. perfect (5046) – “mature”



SHINING AS LIGHTS