

Shining As Lights In A Darkened World **Philippians 2:12-16**

Introduction:

1. **Illustration:** Your loved one is very sick and in desperate need of medicine from the drug store. You are sent to get it and bring it back home. When you enter the store, do you look over the sale flyer, browse through the aisles, look for bargains, etc.? No! You are on a mission. Your goal is to get that medicine and get it to your loved one in record time.
2. Christian, we are on a life-saving mission. There are people that are sick with the disease of sin. They are ensnared in Satan's bondage. We have the antidote. We have the prescription – Jesus Christ!
3. Notice what Paul wrote to the church in Philippians 2:15-16. Satan's darkness threatens to swallow people up, but we hold the "*word of life*." We have the light of the world, and the resurrection and the life living inside of us. We can make a difference. We can rescue souls.
4. Not only this, there are people within the church that are willing to take the antidote of Jesus to other nations and people groups if others will get behind them and help them. We call these people missionaries.
5. There are people all over this world that have been blinded by Satan's darkness. We have light and life to offer them. We have a moral and spiritual obligation to offer the help they need.
6. Church, we must shine the light of Christ in a wicked world. How can we accomplish this?

First, by possessing an obedient spirit – vs. 12

1. There was a tremendous bond of love between Paul and the Philippians. He led many of these people to Jesus Christ and watched them grow in Christ. He was like a spiritual father to so many of them.
2. The tendency would be for them to obey when Paul was there, but then let things slip when Paul was gone. In this verse, Paul reminds them that their obedience was not tied to his presence with them. Whether he was present or absent made no difference.
3. "*Salvation*" in this verse simply means "deliverance." He is not talking about deliverance from the penalty of their sin. They already had that because they were in Christ (1:1).
4. In the context, he is speaking of deliverance (salvation) from wrong and sinful attitudes that would cause them to be unfaithful in their responsibility to shine as a light.
5. We, too, need this deliverance. In America, it is so easy to get preoccupied with our agenda, our desires, our needs, and our material "wants." It is so easy to allow the mindset of materialism to grab ahold of us, and then we forget our mission to rescue souls from Satan's darkness.
 - **Go back to the illustration about the medicine:** We can be like the guy who forgets the importance of the mission he is on. We get distracted by things that really don't matter when compared with the life-and-death mission we are on.

6. We must be obedient to the mission. Christ came “to seek and to save that which was lost,” and that mission is now ours.

Second, by allowing God to work through you – vs. 13

1. If you are saved, God is at work **in you**. Colossians 1:27, 29
2. In verse 13, the word “*worketh*” is the Greek word from which we get our English word “energy,” and it means “to be active; efficient.”
 - **Illustration:** Have you ever seen a kid who is always bouncing off the walls, and we say, “He sure has a lot of energy.”
3. God is actively, efficiently, and energetically at work in you! The purpose is so that God can accomplish **through you** His “*good pleasure*” (delight; satisfaction).
4. What is His “*good pleasure*?” In context, it is to shine His marvelous light through you in a sin-darkened, crooked, perverse world. God works through people to shine His light.
5. How does God work through believers? By your active participation in missions. As you pray fervently for missionaries, give to missions, go on a missions trip to help a missionary, encourage missionaries, etc., you are allowing God to work through you.
6. But did you know that you can quench God’s working in your life? 1 Thessalonians 5:19; Ephesians 4:30
7. How can you do this? Through self-will, self-centeredness, selfishness, being self-consumed, etc. When Christ is at work in and through us, our focus is on God and others.
8. When we quench God’s working, our focus is on ourselves. Philippians 2:2-5
9. If we are going to shine the light of Christ to this world, as believers, we must get our eyes off of ourselves and allow God to work through us.

Third, by taking advantage of the darkness – vs. 15

1. This point may sound very strange to you. What do I mean by taking advantage of the darkness?
2. Notice the adjectives that Paul uses to describe this world system we live in? He calls it “*crooked*” (warped) and “*perverse*” (corrupt).
3. But then he says that these believers were shining as lights in the midst of it. Think about it – the darker a room gets, the brighter and more noticeable the light shines.
4. It is easy for believers to look at this wicked world and get a very cynical, negative, pessimistic, and grumbling attitude. I think this is what Paul is talking about in verse 14.
5. Paul says, “Don’t grumble and gripe. Look at the wickedness of the world as a great opportunity for you to shine for Jesus.”
 - I’ve heard believers say, “I don’t know why we’re spending all this money on sending these missionaries to these wicked countries with a bunch of pagan people.”
 - Christ didn’t come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.
 - These missionaries have a chance to go into pagan, heathen nations and shine for Jesus. Do you think America is less heathen than other countries?
6. Wherever you go in the world, do you know how lost people act? They act like lost people! They act like people who need Jesus! Why would we expect otherwise?

7. God's plan is for us to live out who God has made us in Christ. God desires that we live out our faith and shine as lights in the darkness! Take advantage of the darkness. vs. 15
 - This is God's desire for every believer. Missionaries are simply doing it on foreign soil to people groups that you and I will probably never rub shoulders with.
8. We shine as a light, and we demonstrate the difference that Christ makes so that we can, in turn, hold forth the "*word of life*" (vs. 16). We hold forth the written Word of life (the Bible), and we hold forth the incarnate Word of Life (Jesus Christ).
9. We must point this world to the answer. When the day of Christ comes, we will rejoice that we had a part in shining the light of Christ to this world as we see the changed lives.