

## **PHILIPPIANS: DIVISION II**

### **THE STEPS TO UNITY, [Philippians 2:1-18](#)**

#### **A. Christ—The Traits of His Life in Us, [Philippians 2:1-4](#)**

**([Philippians 2:1-4](#)) Introduction:** the Philippian church was a strong church—a very strong church. When a church is strong, it is always full of vision and planning, and it is always working out a strategy to carry forth the gospel. A strong church launches ministry after ministry and program after program. It is never still and never complacent—neither the minds of the people nor the hands of the people. Because of this, there is always the danger of differences of opinion: differences in vision, desires, concern, emphasis, and interest. There are always different ideas as to which ministry or project should be undertaken and supported and a host of other differences.

**The point is this:** the more strength and activity a church has, the more attention it must give to unity. Why? Because a strong church has more minds and bodies working, and where more people are working more differences are bound to arise. Consequently, the members must give more attention to unity.

Paul knew this; he knew that he had to put the Philippian church on guard. The church had to protect itself against disunity and division. This is the subject of **[Phil. 2: The Steps to Unity \(Phil. 2:1-18\)](#)**.

The first step to unity is Christ—allowing His life to be lived out in us. In particular there are seven traits that will hold the church together and keep it unified.

1. **[The trait of consolation \(v.1\)](#)**.
2. **[The trait of love \(v.1\)](#)**.
3. **[The trait of fellowship in the Spirit \(v.1\)](#)**.
4. **[The trait of compassion \(v.1\)](#)**.
5. **[The trait of concern for one another's joy \(v.2\)](#)**.
6. **[The trait of humility or lowliness of mind \(v.3\)](#)**.
7. **[The trait of controlling self-interest or concentration upon oneself \(v.4\)](#)**.

#### **1. ([Philippians 2:1](#)) Consolation—Encouragement: there is the trait of consolation (*paraklēsis*).**

The word means many things throughout Scripture; but in the present context it means encouragement, comfort, solace, exhortation, and strengthening. Note that this trait is a characteristic of Christ Himself. The very beat of His Spirit is to encourage, comfort, and strengthen believers to be one in spirit and busy about the ministry of His church. Christ wants no murmuring, no grumbling, disturbance, or weakening of the unity within the church.

**The Spirit of Christ is to take the disturbed or upset person and.....**

- a) console him
- b) comfort him
- c) encourage him
- d) strengthen him

**Now glance at the charge of [Phil. 2:2](#):**

⇒ **"Be likeminded"**—be just like Christ: **console, comfort, encourage, exhort, and strengthen** each other.

Let absolutely nothing interfere with the spirit of unity in the church. But note, we are not only to help those who are disturbed, we are to let the comfort and encouragement of Christ flow in us when we are disturbed. When disturbed, we are to let Christ comfort us; and when others are disturbed, we are to comfort them. Just imagine the spirit of unity that would flow through a church if all the members would let the consolation of Christ flow through them. There would be no murmuring, grumbling, disturbance—no disunity whatsoever.

**"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" ([John 14:18](#)).**

**"Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do" ([1 Thes. 5:11](#)).**

**"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God" ([Isaiah 40:1](#)).**

## **2. ([Philippians 2:1](#)) Love: there is the trait of love.**

There is a comfort (*paramuthion*) of love that is in Christ. The love of Christ stirs a person to keep the unity with other believers. The word "love" is *agapē love*, the love that is selfless and sacrificial. *Agapē love* is the love of the mind, of the reason, and of the will.

**It is the love that goes so far.....**

- a) that it loves a person even if he does not deserve to be loved.
- b) that actually loves the person who is utterly unworthy of being loved.

*Agapē love* is the love of Christ, the love which He showed when He gave and sacrificed Himself for us. We did not deserve it and were utterly unworthy of such love, yet Christ loved us despite all.

Imagine the spirit of unity that would exist within a church if every member would let the love of Christ flow through him. There would be no bitterness, anger, or strife—no action that would hurt another person whatsoever. If the person was wrong and deserved punishment, the church's members would sacrifice and give themselves for him.

**Note [Phil. 2:2](#):**

⇒ **"Have the same love"**—the same love Christ had for you.

**Thought 1.** This is the answer to unity: the Lord's spirit of love! How desperately the church needs its members to let the love of Christ flow through them to each other!

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" ([John 13:34-35](#)).

"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you" ([John 15:12](#)).

"Let love be without dissimulation [hypocrisy]. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" ([Romans 12:9](#)).

"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you" ([1 Thes. 3:12](#)).

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" ([1 Peter 1:22](#)).

### **3. (Philippians 2:1) Holy Spirit, Fellowship: there is the trait of fellowship in the Spirit.**

Once a person has trusted Jesus Christ as his Lord, God's Spirit **does two significant things to him.**

- a. The Holy Spirit enters the believer's heart and life to comfort, guide, teach, equip, and use him as a witness for Christ.
- b. The Holy Spirit creates a spiritual union between the new believer and other believers. He melts and moulds the heart of the believer to the hearts of other believers. He attaches all their lives together, and they become one in life and purpose. They have a joint life sharing their blessings and needs and gifts together—all focused upon their Lord and His purpose.

The mind of the Holy Spirit is set upon unity and fellowship—all centered around Jesus Christ and His mission. The church and its believers are to have the same mind. There are to be no discordant elements whatsoever in the church: no talk about differences; no sharing of bad news; no gossip, rumors, cliques, nothing whatsoever that would tamper with or disturb the fellowship of the Spirit in the church.

Again, quickly glance at [Phil. 2:2](#):

⇒ "**Be of one accord**"—keep the unity of the Spirit, the fellowship of the Spirit.

#### 4. (Philippians 2:1) Compassion: there is the trait of compassion.

Compassion is the trait that stirred Christ to reach out for us. Compassion is the force that drives Him to keep after us time and again—even if we are in rebellion and stand opposed to Him. We may be cantankerous; we may even curse Him and take up arms against His movement. But His compassion drives Him to stay after us so long as we live.

If we allowed His compassion to flow through us, can you not see what would happen in the church?

**What would happen if we were driven by compassion to go after those.....**

- a) who have been hurt?
- b) who differed?
- c) who withdrew?
- d) who have been disturbed?
- e) who were critical?

The list could go on and on. But just think how many would have already been reconciled back into the fellowship of the church if we had been compassionate and gone after them. Just think how much less trouble would have happened if we had reached out in *compassion* when a difference first appeared.

**The point is this:** we are to let the compassion of Christ flow both in and through us. His compassion will comfort us when we differ and are disturbed; it will stir us to reach out in compassion when others differ and become disturbed. The compassion of Jesus Christ flowing in and through us keeps the unity of the church. It will also keep our minds together—keep them focused upon the needs of a world that must be reached and ministered to in compassion.

**"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" ([Romans 15:1](#)).**

**"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" ([Galatians 6:2](#)).**

**"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" ([Hebrews 4:15-16](#)).**

**"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous" ([1 Peter 3:8](#)).**

**"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him" ([Psalm 103:13](#)).**

**"In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old" ([Isaiah 63:9](#)).**

## 5. (Philippians 2:2) Joy: there is the trait of joy.

The believers in a church are to be concerned for each other's joy. And note: the one thing that brings joy to a church quicker than anything else is unity.

**"Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind" (Phil. 2:2).**

Paul's point is simple but direct: his joy in Christ would be fulfilled by only one thing—the unity of the Philippian church. The leaders and members of a church usually have joy in Christ, but their joy can be fulfilled only if unity exists between them. Joy is always disturbed when there is criticism, dissatisfaction, grumbling, murmuring, cliques, opposition, and a host of other divisive negatives. We are to **worship, plan, organize, program, build, staff, finance, minister, and serve in the joy of Christ.**

**But the only way we can do that is.....**

- a) to be likeminded.
- b) to have the same love.
- c) to be of one accord.
- d) to be of one mind.

**"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John 15:11).**

**"Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:24).**

**"For the kingdom of God [the church] is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17).**

**"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10).**

**"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you" (2 Cor. 13:11).**

**"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephes. 4:3).**

## 6. (Philippians 2:3) Humility— Lowliness of Mind: there is the trait of humility or lowliness of mind.

**Note two significant points.**

1. A strong and active church will always have two problems to stick their ugly heads up: *strife and empty glory*.

- a. Some people are just going to *strive* with others.

**They are not mature in the Lord, not yet; therefore, they give in to.....**

- |                              |                           |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| a. talking about differences | e. desire for position    |
| b. jealousy                  | f. desire for recognition |
| c. envy                      | g. opposition             |
| d. loving flattery           | h. forming cliques        |

If they do not get their way or what they want, they strive against the church or other members. The result is disunity and divisiveness, one of the most terrible crimes within the church to God.

**"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" ([Phil. 2:3](#)).**

**"Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers" ([2 Tim. 2:14](#)).**

**"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient" ([2 Tim. 2:24](#)).**

**"But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth" ([James 3:14](#)).**

**"Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm" ([Proverbs 3:30](#)).**

**"It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling" ([Proverbs 20:3](#)).**

**"Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame" ([Proverbs 25:8](#)).**

**"He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears" ([Proverbs 26:17](#)).**

- b. Some people are going to *seek glory* within the church. But note what Scripture calls it: vainglory, which means empty glory. Some people just want the attention, the recognition, the position, the flattery, the praise, the honor. They want people seeking their advice and counsel and opinion. They want to be on the major committees and acknowledged as a leader of the church.

**"And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" ([Matthew 23:12](#)).**

**"And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest" ([Luke 22:24](#)).**

**"How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" ([John 5:44](#)).**

**"He loveth transgression that loveth strife: and he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction" ([Proverbs 17:19](#)).**

**"For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount**

of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the Most High" ([Isaiah 14:13-14](#)).

"Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord" ([Obadiah 4](#)).

2. The spirit that must prevail in a strong church is that of humility or lowliness of mind. In fact, the only way a church can remain strong and be blessed by God is for its people to walk in a spirit of humility.

### **7. ([Philippians 2:4](#)) Humility: there is the trait of controlling self-interest**

or what Barclay calls concentration on self (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.40). Very simply, a Christian believer must forget himself.

**He must quit looking upon his own things, his.....**

- |                         |                                 |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. ambition             | g. being neglected              |
| b. desires              | h. being overlooked             |
| c. position             | i. being ignored                |
| d. not being recognized | j. not being given the position |
| e. not being honored    |                                 |
| f. wants                |                                 |

Believers are to concentrate upon Christ and His ministry to people and reaching the world with the glorious gospel of salvation. They are not to be focused upon self. The world is too needful and too desperate for any believer to be focused upon himself. Every believer is needed to reach the lost and lonely, the shut-ins and helpless, the hungry and cold, the sinful and doomed of his community and city, country and world. Every believer does not need to be thinking on his own things, but on the things of others.

**He needs to be out.....**

- |                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| a. visiting     | g. sharing    |
| b. ministering  | h. feeding    |
| c. helping      | i. clothing   |
| d. transporting | j. counseling |
| e. listening    | k. planning   |
| f. advising     | l. teaching   |

"Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me" ([Matthew 19:21](#)).

"I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not" ([Matthew 25:43](#)).

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For

whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it" ([Luke 9:23-24](#)).

"Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth" ([1 Cor. 10:24](#)).

"Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved" ([1 Cor. 10:33](#)).

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" ([2 Cor. 8:9](#)).

"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" ([Phil. 2:4](#)).

## PHILIPPIANS: DIVISION II

### THE STEPS TO UNITY, [Philippians 2:1-18](#)

#### B. Humbling One's Self, [Philippians 2:5-11](#)

**([Philippians 2:5-11](#)) Introduction:** this is one of the greatest passages ever written about Jesus Christ. It paints the perfect picture of humility—the humility of Jesus Christ. No one has ever come close to humbling himself like Jesus Christ did, and no one ever will. Yet, if the problems of the church and of the world are to ever be solved, we must humble ourselves just as Christ did. The church is too often divided, too often rumbling with criticism, murmuring, differences, jealousy, envy, ambition, outside talk, negative feelings, and desires for position and recognition. The only answer is the declaration of this passage: humility—letting the humility of Jesus Christ flow in and out of our minds. Humility is the second step to unity. The unity of a church depends upon one thing: its members walking in humility—in the humility of Jesus Christ.

1. **Christ is the supreme example (v.5).**
2. **Christ is of the very nature of God (v.6).**
3. **Christ emptied Himself and became a man (v.7).**
4. **Christ humbled Himself to the point of utter humiliation—to the very point of death (v.8).**
5. **Christ was rewarded—highly exalted by God (v.9-11).**

#### 1. ([Philippians 2:5](#)) **Jesus Christ, Humility: Jesus Christ is the supreme example of humility.**

As stated, this is one of the greatest passages ever written about Jesus Christ. Very simply, the passage says that Jesus Christ is God, yet He humbled Himself and became Man. Jesus Christ is the Person who dwelt in all the glory of perfection, but He humbled Himself and came to this corruptible world that knows little else other than selfishness, greed and death. Just imagine the enormous step down that Jesus Christ had to take to become a Man. It is utterly impossible to grasp the humility it took. Yet, this is exactly what He did and it is what we are to do. The very same mind that existed in Jesus Christ—that led Christ to give up everything He was and had—that very mind is to be in us. The only way the problems of the world can be solved is for every person to let the mind of Christ flood his mind.

**Consider the problems of.....**

- |                      |                       |                      |
|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>a.</b> war        | <b>j.</b> selfishness | <b>s.</b> greed      |
| <b>b.</b> hate       | <b>k.</b> pride       | <b>t.</b> disease    |
| <b>c.</b> anger      | <b>l.</b> cockiness   | <b>u.</b> stealing   |
| <b>d.</b> arguing    | <b>m.</b> haughtiness | <b>v.</b> jealousy   |
| <b>e.</b> abuse      | <b>n.</b> arrogance   | <b>w.</b> envy       |
| <b>f.</b> prejudice  | <b>o.</b> cursing     | <b>x.</b> immorality |
| <b>g.</b> indulgence | <b>p.</b> hunger      |                      |

- h. extravagance
- i. hoarding
- q. homeless
- r. poverty

The list could go on and on. How can these problems ever be solved unless we step down from where we are to where needy people are? Unless we step down and humble ourselves—step down to where hurting people are—these problems will never be solved. Realistically, most people are not going to do this. Most people are not going to take all they are and have and get down to where the needs really are. But the Christian is to do this. **This is the point of the present passage:** Jesus Christ *set* and *focused His mind* upon humbling Himself. He took all He was and had and came down where we are and met our need.

Now.....

**"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."**

Take the mind of Christ and let it flow through you. Let the mind of humility and lowliness surge through your mind. Take all you are and have and get down where the needs really are. Do all you can to solve the divisiveness and cliques, grumbling and murmuring, selfish ambition and pride, desire for position and power, greed and selfishness, hurt and pain—both in the church and in the world. Humble yourself and do all you can to solve the awful problems that afflict the church and the world. Humble yourself as Christ did and become part of the solution instead of the problem. Look at the mind of Christ. Lay hold of it as it is descriptively pictured in the notes that follow. Do not miss out on the opportunity of an eternity—the glorious privilege of possessing the very mind of Christ Himself.

## **2. (Philippians 2:6) Jesus Christ, Deity: Christ is of the very nature of God.**

**This is critical to note, for it means.....**

- a) that Jesus Christ was not *like* God; He is God.
- b) that Jesus Christ did not just *achieve a high level of righteousness* when on earth, He was the very embodiment of righteousness.
- c) that Jesus Christ did not just *walk more perfectly* than other men walk, He was the very *picture (essence) of perfection*.
- d) that Jesus Christ did not become God when on earth, He has been God throughout all eternity.

**Three points in this verse clearly show that Jesus Christ is God.** Jesus Christ is of the very nature of God.

**1. Jesus Christ is of the "being" of God.** The word "being" (*huparchōn*) means existence, what a person is within and without. It is the very essence of a person, what a person is; that part of a person that cannot be changed. It is who a person is and all that he is.

This is a most glorious truth because it means that *Jesus Christ is God*; He is the very *being of God*.

**"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" ([John 1:1](#)).**

**2. Jesus Christ is *in the form of God*.** The word "form" (*morphē*) means the permanent, constant being of a person. It is the very essence of a person, that part of him that never changes. It is the unchangeable being. Barclay points out that there is another Greek word translated "form" (*schema*). In contrast, it means the fleeting, outward form of a person that is always changing. For example, a man is always changing (*schema*) in looks because of age and fashion. But his manhood (*morphē*) never changes. (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.44.)

This means a most glorious thing. Jesus is of the very essence and being and image of God. He is the divine, unchangeable God Himself. He dwells in the very perfection and essence of God; He possesses the very attributes of God Himself.

**"Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" ([Hebrews 1:3](#)).**

**"Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature" ([Col. 1:15](#)).**

**3. Jesus Christ is "equal with God" (Greek).** The word "equal" (*to einai isa*) means to be *on an equal basis with God*; to possess all the qualities and attributes of God Himself. Note also the word "robbery" (*arpagmon*). It is the picture of a thief seeking to snatch or take something that is not his.

**When Jesus Christ was on earth, He was constantly claiming.....**

- a) to be God.
- b) to be the Son of God.
- c) to have the nature of God.
- d) to be one with God.
- e) to be *on an equal basis with God*.

Was He a thief? Was He robbing and snatching the title of God or was He truly God?

The answer is a most glorious truth. Jesus Christ did not have to rob or snatch at equality with God. He did not have to rob and grasp after the deity of God; He was already on an equal basis with God.

**"I and my Father are one" ([John 10:30](#)).**

**"Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews**

answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God" ([John 10:32-33](#)).

"Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am" ([John 8:58](#)).

### **3. (Philippians 2:7) Jesus Christ, Humiliation; Condescension: Christ emptied Himself and became a man.**

Remember that we are dealing with the subject of humility—the fact that Jesus Christ took one great step down from heaven to earth. The step down was so great and so far that theologians do not call it *the humility of Christ, but the humiliation of Christ*.

The Sovereign Lord of the universe—**He who existed**.....

1. in eternity and perfection
2. in glory and majesty
3. in dominion and power

.....**stepped down and became a man.**

**But more than this:** He who was the Lord and Master of the universe—who deserved all the honor and service of all living creatures—took upon Himself the form of a servant. He became the Servant of men—not only of God, but the *servant of men*. **Imagine!**

1. The Lord whom we are to **serve**, came and **served us**.
2. The Lord whom we are to **love**, came and **loved us**.
3. The Lord whom we are to **adore**, came and **adored us**.
4. The Lord whom we are to **wait upon**, came and **waited upon us**.
5. The Lord whom we are to **minister** to, came and **ministered to us**.
6. The Lord whom we are **to seek**, came and **sought us**.

**The great distance between the majesty of Christ in heaven and the humiliation of Christ upon earth can never be measured.** Our understanding of the distance would amount to no more than a small bucket of water compared to the great ocean. But we are commanded to let the *same mind of humility* flow through us; therefore, we must study the deep humility of Jesus Christ and do our best to grasp and practice it.

**Two statements** in this verse need diligent study.

**1. Jesus Christ made Himself of no reputation; that is, He emptied Himself.** The word "emptied" (*ekenōsen*) means to completely empty. It is the picture of pouring water out of a glass until it is empty or of dumping something until it is all removed (Barclay. *The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.44).

The very picture of being completely empty stirs a feeling of just how far Christ went in humbling Himself for us. What was it that was poured or emptied out of Jesus Christ when He left heaven and came to earth? (This is what theologians call the *kenosis*

theory.) Note that this passage does not say. It only says that Christ *emptied Himself*. Other Scriptures, however, give some indication.

- a. Christ did not lay aside His deity when He came to earth. He could not cease to be who He was: God. No person can ever cease to be who he is. A person may take on different traits and behave differently; a person may change his behavior and looks, but he is the same person in being, nature, and essence. Jesus Christ is God; therefore, He is always God—He always possesses the nature of God
- b. Christ laid aside some of His rights as God:
  1. He laid aside His right *to experience only the glory* and majesty, honor and worship of heaven. In coming to earth as a man, He was to experience anything but glory and majesty, honor and worship. Men would treat Him far differently than a heavenly being.
  2. He laid aside His right *to appear only in heaven* and to appear only as the Sovereign God of heaven. In coming to earth as a man, He was, of course, to appear as a man on earth.

**Matthew Henry** has a brief but excellent statement of the fact:

*"He emptied Himself, divested Himself of the honors and glories of the upper world, and of His former appearance, to clothe Himself with the rags of human nature" (Matthew Henry's Commentary, Vol.6, p.732f).*

As stated above, **Jesus Christ emptied Himself of certain rights: the right to appear only in heaven and to experience only the glory of heaven.** This is exactly what Jesus Christ Himself said when He was about to be crucified and return to heaven.

He was praying to the Father when He said:

**"And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" ([John 17:5](#)).**

⇒ This is also the point of other Scriptures.

**"For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham [the nature of man]. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted ([Hebrews 2:16-18](#)).**

**"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For**

we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" ([Hebrews 4:14-16](#)).

2. Jesus Christ "was made in the likeness of men." The word "was made" (*ginomai*) means to become; a definite entrance into time. It is not a permanent state. Jesus became a man, but it was not to be a permanent state. It was only for a time, a particular period. In the fullness of time He made a definite entrance into the world as a man.

**Thought 1.** Note that Jesus Christ did not come to earth as a prince or some great leader upon earth. He did not come to receive the homage and service of men. He came as the humblest of men, as a servant to serve men. "He was brought up meanly, probably working with his supposed father at his trade. His whole life was a life of humiliation, meanness, poverty, and disgrace; he had nowhere to lay his head, lived upon alms, was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, did not appear with external pomp, or any marks of distinction from other men. This was the humiliation of his life" (Matthew Henry. *Matthew Henry's Commentary*, Vol.6, p.732f).

"For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth" ([Luke 22:27](#)).

"He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded" ([John 13:4-5](#)).

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" ([2 Cor. 8:9](#)).

"But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" ([Phil. 2:7](#)).

**4. ([Philippians 2:8](#)) Jesus Christ, Death; Humiliation; Condescension: Christ humbled Himself to the point of utter humiliation—to the very point of death—even the death of the cross."**

Note two significant points.

1. **Jesus Christ humbled Himself to the Father.** He was obedient to God the Father. It was the Father's will for Christ to come to earth and to die for the sins of men. And Christ did it; He obeyed God the Father.

"No man taketh it [His life] from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" ([John 10:18](#)).

"But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do [go forth and die]. Arise, let us go hence" ([John 14:31](#)).

"For as by one man's [Adam's] disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one [Christ] shall many be made righteous" ([Romans 5:19](#)).

"Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second" ([Hebrews 10:9](#)).

**2. Jesus Christ humbled Himself to men.** He willingly allowed men to kill Him. He did not have to bear such hostile humiliation and rebellion, but He did.

**Just picture what is involved in the death of the cross.**

- a. Christ humbled Himself to die.
- b. Christ humbled Himself to come out of the spiritual and eternal world (dimension) into the physical and corruptible world in order to die.
- c. Christ humbled Himself to lay aside His eternal glory and majesty and become a man for the purpose of dying.
- d. Christ humbled Himself to suffer rejection, denial, cursing, abuse, arrest, torture, and murder at the hands of rebellious men—whom He had originally created for the joy of eternity—rebellious men whom He had come to save.
- e. Christ humbled Himself to take all the sins of men upon Himself and to bear the weight and suffering of them all.
- f. Christ humbled Himself to bear the judgment and condemnation and punishment of sin for every man.
- g. Christ humbled Himself to suffer the awful experience of having God the Father turn His back upon Him.
- h. Christ humbled Himself to suffer the terrible justice and wrath of God against sin.
- i. Christ humbled Himself to bear the pain of suffering for sin eternally. Christ is eternal; therefore, His death is ever before the face of God. (Just imagine! It is beyond our comprehension, but the Lord's eternal agony is fact because of the eternal nature of God.)

The discussion could go on and on, but the point is well made by Scripture. Jesus Christ not only humbled Himself to become the servant of men, He humbled Himself to suffer the ultimate degree of humiliation:

⇒ *Jesus Christ became sin for men and died as their sin before the just wrath of God.*

In a sense, hanging there upon the cross Christ was not even a man; He was sin, the very embodiment of sin. In some way He embraced all the sin of the world and died for the sins of men.

**"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21).**

**"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one [all criminals] that hangeth on a tree" (Galatians 3:13).**

**"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9).**

**"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter 2:24).**

**"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1 Peter 3:18).**

**Thought 1.** Remember the point of this passage: the fact that we must let the humility of Jesus Christ flow in and through us. We are to be humble—to walk in humility before each other—to go to the extreme of humility, even if it means humiliation before each other. Why? So that the church can be unified. Unity is to prevail among us. We are to live and breathe unity.

**There is to be no discord in God's church:**

- |                                |                                 |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>a.</b> no divisiveness      | <b>g.</b> no personal ambition  |
| <b>b.</b> no grumbling         | <b>h.</b> no self-seeking       |
| <b>c.</b> no murmuring         | <b>i.</b> no prejudice          |
| <b>d.</b> no negative truth    | <b>j.</b> no air of superiority |
| <b>e.</b> no downing of others | <b>k.</b> no criticism          |
| <b>f.</b> no jealousy          |                                 |

But note: the only way we can ever know such unity is to let the mind of Christ captivate our mind. We must study, think, and learn the humility of Christ. We must let His humility flow in and through us.

**"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:3-5).**

## **5. (Philippians 2:9-11) Jesus Christ, Exaltation: Christ was rewarded—God highly exalted Him.**

Christ had humbled Himself in obedience to God the Father, and because He was faithful in being humble, God rewarded Him by exalting Him ever so highly. The point is well made: God will reward and exalt any believer who will walk as Christ walked—humbly before Him and men.

**Note how highly God has rewarded and exalted Christ.**

**1. God has highly honored Christ.** God has given Christ a name above every name. Right now, the name of Jesus Christ is cursed all over the world. In fact, at every passing tick of the clock, the name of Jesus Christ is being cursed thousands of times by hordes of people all over the world. But note: not everyone curses His name. Some of us love His name.

**To us His name is the most glorious name ever uttered by human voice, for His name is.....**

a. the name that forgives our sins.

**"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations" ([Luke 24:47](#)).**

b. the name that gives us access into God's presence.

**"And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" ([John 16:23-24](#)).**

**2. God has given Christ supreme power and authority.** God has destined every knee to bow before Christ—the knees of everything in heaven and earth and under the earth. Nothing shall be exempt. The day is coming when every creature in *all the worlds and dimensions of being* shall bow their knees in subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ.

**"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church" ([Ephes. 1:22](#)).**

**"Who 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](#)).**

**"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear" ([Isaiah 45:22-23](#)).**

**3. God has given Christ supreme worship.** God is going to see to it that every creature confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father:

- a. every nation, tongue, and language
- b. every person, mind, and body
- c. every race, color, and shape
- d. every belief, creed, and religion
- e. every man, woman, and child
- f. every king, leader, and authority
- g. every professional worker and laborer

Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is exactly who He claimed to be: the Son of the living God. Every creature is going to worship Him as Lord, the Lord God of the universe.

**"For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God" ([Romans 14:11](#)).**

**"Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" ([Rev. 5:12](#)).**

**"Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest" ([Rev. 15:4](#)).**

**Thought 1.** The point is clear: God will exalt the man who humbles himself and works for the unity of the church.

**"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" ([Matthew 18:4](#)).**

**"But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee" ([Luke 14:10](#)).**

**"But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve" ([Luke 22:26](#)).**

**"But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" ([James 4:6](#)).**

**"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" ([1 Peter 5:5-6](#)).**

**"A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit" ([Proverbs 29:23](#)).**

**"For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also**

that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" ([Isaiah 57:15](#)).

"For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" ([Isaiah 66:2](#)).

"He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" ([Micah 6:8](#)).

## PHILIPPIANS: DIVISION II

### THE STEPS TO UNITY, [Philippians 2:1-18](#)

#### C. Working Out One's Own Salvation or Deliverance, [Philippians 2:12-18](#)

[\(Philippians 2:12-18\)](#) **Introduction:** this passage is still dealing with unity—unity in the church and unity among believers. But the passage is unique because it brings up the great subject of salvation. Keep in mind that salvation means deliverance and that salvation is of God. It is God who has saved and delivered you: "**For by grace are ye saved**" ([Ephes. 2:8-9](#)).

But once you are saved, go to work—work out your own salvation and deliverance. Salvation is not stagnant and complacent. A saved person is not to be sitting around doing nothing and letting the chips fall where they may. A saved person is to get up and go to work. He is to do all he can to work out his own deliverance. This is the subject of the present passage. If the church is to be unified—if believers are to walk in a spirit of unity, then they must look at their salvation—at the whole scope of their life and the glorious salvation God has given them—and they must do all they can to work out their own deliverance.

1. **The first work: to work out one's own salvation (deliverance) with fear and trembling (v.12).**
2. **The second work: to work at obedience—to work out the stirrings of God within the heart (v.13).**
3. **The third work: to work at not murmuring (v.14).**
4. **The fourth work: to work at being pure (v.15).**
5. **The fifth work: to work at witnessing (v.16).**
6. **The sixth work: to follow the example of sacrificial labor (v.17-18).**

#### 1. [\(Philippians 2:12\)](#) **Salvation— Deliverance: believers are to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling.**

Remember Paul is in prison being held on false charges. There is a good chance he will be executed. He is not sure he will ever see and share with the Philippians again. Therefore, what he is now writing is carefully chosen. So far as he knows, these words could be his last words to the Philippian church. This is the reason we need to pay close attention to the instructions.

**What does it mean to work out your own salvation?** The word "work out" (*katargazethe*) means "to work on to the finish, to completion, to perfection". It always means to complete the effort and the work begun; to accomplish it perfectly; to bring it to completion. The point is: do not go half-way in salvation. Do not take bits and pieces when there is a whole parcel. Do not be satisfied with a little when you can have

much. Go on, grow until salvation is completed in you. It is your own salvation. No friend, no pastor can work it out for you. You alone must do it.

**The point is clearly stated:** once God has saved a person, that person is to get busy obeying God. He is to take hold of the new life and salvation God has given him, and he is to work on it until it is completed and finished, that is, until God takes him home and perfects it.

**Note that the Philippians are an excellent example.** Paul says that they had always obeyed God, not only when he was with them, but also when he was away. Now, as he was facing death, he wanted them more than ever to work out their salvation—to continue obeying God until their salvation was completed and perfected.

**Note also the words "fear and trembling."** Life is not a bed of roses. It is full of trial, pain, hurt, tragedy, disease, accident, loss, temptation, sin, evil, corruption, and death. Every human being experiences such things until he comes face to face with death. Life is sometimes beautiful and wonderful, but reality is what has just been listed: life is a journey of trials until the point of death. And no amount of denial or camouflage can hide or escape the fact. The only thing that can bring abundance of life is **the absolute confidence** that we shall live eternally in a perfect world.

**What is the point of mentioning all this? The point is forceful: we are expected to work out our own salvation and to do it with fear and trembling.**

- a. We are to fear and tremble because of the trials and temptations of life. Anyone of them can throw us or cause us to buckle under. The world and its temptations and trials are strong and the flesh is weak. We can slip into sin and failure before we know it unless we are constantly working out our deliverance—fearing and trembling lest we fail.
- b. We are to fear and tremble lest we disappoint the Lord. He has saved us, and He has gone to the ultimate limit in order to do it. He has demonstrated a perfect love for us by taking all our sins upon Himself and bearing our punishment for us. Therefore, when we sin and fail, it cuts His heart to no end. For His sake—to keep from hurting Him—we must work out our salvation, fearing and trembling lest we do cut His heart.
- c. We are to fear and tremble because we are to face the judgment seat of Christ. If we sin, we shall be judged and judged severely. Though we may try to reason away the fact, our thoughts about the judgment of God do not affect God's judgment one iota. Every one of us who sins and fails to work out his own salvation shall be judged and suffer loss—great loss. Scripture teaches nothing else. For this reason, the reason of judgment, we must work out our salvation—work it out with fear and trembling.

"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" ([Matthew 10:28](#)).

"But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" ([Acts 10:35](#)).

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" ([Titus 2:11-12](#)).

"And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear" ([1 Peter 1:17](#)).

"And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul" ([Deut. 10:12](#)).

"Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!" ([Psalm 31:19](#)).

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" ([Eccles. 12:13](#)).

"Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread" ([Isaiah 8:13](#)).

## 2. ([Philippians 2:13](#)) Salvation—Obedience: the second work of salvation is to obey.

Believers are to work out their salvation by *working at obedience*—by obeying the stirrings of God within their hearts.

"It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" ([Phil. 2:13](#)).

The word "worketh" (*energōn*) means "to energize". God arouses, stirs, and energizes the heart of the believer to do God's will. This is a most wonderful truth. Just think about it: we all experience movements and stirrings within our heart toward God. These stirrings are of God. God is working within us—energizing us—giving us both *the will and power* to do what pleases Him.

As stated, this is a most wonderful truth. Our duty is to grab hold of the stirrings—not to let them pass. We are to grab hold of them and do exactly what the *stirrings* are arousing and energizing us to do.

**Thought 1.** This is a most wonderful truth. It means that God does not leave us alone to work out our salvation and deliverance. He works within us: moves, stirs,

energizes, and arouses us to get up and get to it. And whatever the energy points toward is what we need to do. God uses the energy and stirring to direct and guide us. The point to see is that God is forever working within us—never leaving us alone—working and stirring us to complete our salvation.

**Thought 2.** The tragedy is this: ignoring, neglecting, and refusing to respond to the stirrings and workings of God. When we feel the stirrings, we desperately need to respond and do whatever God is stirring us to do. Just think how often the stirrings are rejected, ignored, or neglected. How often we continue to sit or go about our own affairs instead of heeding the working and stirring of God. How complacent and lethargic we are. Just think how much growth we lose and how often we must cut the heart of God to the core—all because we choose the things, possessions, and activities of this world instead of Him and His stirrings.

**"For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth [makes alive] whom he will" ([John 5:21](#)).**

**"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" ([John 6:63](#)).**

**"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring [stir] all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" ([John 14:26](#)).**

**"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove [convict and stir] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" ([John 16:7-8](#)).**

**"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" ([Romans 12:1-2](#)).**

**"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know [be stirred to know] the things that are freely given to us of God" ([1 Cor. 2:12](#)).**

**"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins" ([Ephes. 2:1](#)).**

**"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" ([Col. 3:1](#)).**

**"But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you ye shall abide in him" ([1 John 2:27](#)).**

### 3. (Philippians 2:14) Murmuring— Division: believers are to work out their salvation by working at not murmuring and disputing or arguing.

The word "murmuring" (*goggusmōn*) means "to mutter, murmur, grumble, and complain". **Note:** it means the quiet, soft, behind-the-back, undertone of murmuring and grumbling. It is the kind of criticism, dissatisfaction, fault-finding and gossip that goes on within small groups or cliques.

The word "disputings" (*dialogismōn*) means "arguments, outward and vocal questionings, and expressions of doubt". Simply stated, it is just as Scripture says: disputes or arguments that have broken out into the open.

#### **Note several significant facts.**

1. Murmurings and disputes are not to be allowed in the church. As the verse says: *all things* are to be done without murmurings and disputings. If murmuring begins among a clique or even between two people, the spiritual leaders of the church are to deal with it just as Christ laid out in (Matthew 18:15-20). It is not to be allowed to fester. Murmurings, unless they are stopped, will lead to disputes, turmoil, and divisiveness.

2. Murmuring and disputes are *never of God—never!* This is the very point of this charge. *All things*—nothing is left out—are to be done without murmuring and disputes.

3. Murmuring and disputes were the very sins that brought judgment upon so many Jews in the wilderness wanderings of Israel.

**"Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer" (1 Cor. 10:10; cp. Numbers 20:2f; Numbers 21:4).**

4. The person who murmurs and disputes is not working at his salvation or deliverance. He is doing the very opposite: working to bring judgment upon himself.

**Thought 1.** The results of murmuring are far worse than people ever think. This is the primary reason God forbids murmuring and disputes in no uncertain terms.

#### **Murmuring.....**

1. hurts
2. damages
3. divides
4. tears down
5. downs a person
6. says "look at me"
7. elevates selfish opinion
8. opposes God's will
9. hinders progress
10. stymies growth
11. misleads people

12. is self-centered
13. pushes people away from Christ and the church

**"For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" ([1 Cor. 3:3](#)).**

**"For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults" ([2 Cor. 12:20](#)).**

**"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" ([Phil. 2:3-4](#)).**

**"Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers" ([2 Tim. 2:14](#)).**

**"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient" ([2 Tim. 2:24](#)).**

**"Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbor hath put thee to shame" ([Proverbs 25:8](#)).**

#### **4. ([Philippians 2:15](#)) Purity: believers are to work out their salvation by working at being pure.**

1. Believers are to work at being "**blameless**" (*amemptoi*): free from fault and censure; to be faultless; above reproach and rebuke. The believer is to live a blameless, faultless and pure life, both in the church and in the world. No one is to be able to point to the Christian and accuse or blame him with anything. The Christian is to be clean, unpolluted, spotless, holy, righteous, and pure before man and God.

2. Believers are to work at being "**harmless**" (*akeraioi*): unmixed and unadulterated. It is the idea of flour or grain passing through a sieve to separate the pure from the impure.

**It means that our thoughts and lives.....**

- a) are not to be polluted by watching, reading, and listening to worldly and sexual attractions.
- b) are not to be given over to worldly and sexual attractions.

Our thoughts and lives are to be pure, clean, uncontaminated, and unpolluted.

**"I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple [harmless] concerning evil" ([Romans 16:19](#)).**

**"That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ" ([Phil. 1:10](#)).**

**"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" ([Phil. 2:15](#)).**

**"For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" ([Hebrews 7:26](#)).**

**"And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" ([2 Tim. 4:18](#)**

**"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" ([Jude 24](#)).**

3. Believers are to work at being **"without rebuke" (*amōma*)**: without blemish, spot, or defect. This is a word that is taken from the Old Testament sacrifices made to God. The idea is that the believer is to live and walk upon earth under the eyes and scrutiny of God. He is to walk without any blemish, spot, or defect.

However, note a fact: the believer lives in a crooked and perverse generation. The world is wicked and evil, twisted and perverted; therefore, the believer has a difficult path to walk. But walk he must, for he is to be the light of the world. He is to shine as a light in the world. He is to reflect the purity and holiness of God Himself.

**"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid" ([Matthew 5:14](#)).**

**"For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth" ([Acts 13:47](#)).**

**"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light" ([Ephes. 5:8](#)).**

**"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" ([Phil. 2:15](#)).**

**"Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do" ([1 Thes. 5:5-11](#)).**

## 5. [\(Philippians 2:16\)](#) **Witnessing: believers are to work out their salvation by working at witnessing.**

The wording is descriptive: "**Holding forth the word of life.**" Imagine! There is a *Word of life*. Men can live, truly live—both now and forever. Men never have to die.

1. It is like saying the fountain of youth has been discovered with one difference: the Word of life not only brings eternal youth, it brings perfection—a perfect world and a perfect life.
2. It is like saying the cure for cancer has been discovered with one difference: the Word of life not only cures the cancer, it injects the energy of everlasting life into the other cells of the body.

But note the terrible tragedy! So many of us do not hold forth the Word of life. We hold back. We do not share the message of the glorious gospel of life. The Word of life is just what it says: it is the message of life that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" ([John 10:10](#)).**

**"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" ([John 10:28](#)).**

**"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" ([John 3:16-17](#)).**

**"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" ([John 5:24](#)).**

**"Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed" ([John 6:27](#)).**

**"But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" ([Romans 6:22](#)).**

**"But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" ([2 Tim. 1:10](#)).**

**"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" ([Titus 1:2](#)).**

**"And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life" ([1 John 2:25](#)).**

**"Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" ([Jude 21](#)).**

**Thought 1.** The one thing we must work at is holding forth the Word of life. The Word of life is the only hope for a world that reels under the weight of so many desperate needs, especially the desperate need to handle sin and evil and the terrible destiny of death.

**"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" ([Matthew 28:19-20](#)).**

**"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" ([Mark 16:15](#)).**

**"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" ([Acts 1:8](#)).**

**"We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak" ([2 Cor. 4:13](#)).**

**"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God" ([2 Tim. 1:8](#)).**

**"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" ([1 Peter 3:15](#)).**

**"Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name" ([Malachi 3:16](#)).**

## **6. ([Philippians 2:17-18](#)) Sacrifice— Labor: believers are to work out their salvation by following the example of sacrificial labor.**

Very simply stated, Paul had offered himself as a sacrifice to serve men. The picture is that of the sacrifice and offerings made by people to the heathen gods. Paul had taken his body and offered it as a sacrifice and service for people. He lived for nothing else except to hold forth the Word of life to people. His body was totally sacrificed for that purpose and that purpose alone.

**"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" ([Luke 9:23](#)).**

**"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may**

prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God"  
[\(Romans 12:1-2\)](#).

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your  
body, and in your spirit, which are God's" ([1 Cor. 6:20](#)).