TALKING POINTS

Uniting Heaven and Earth:
Christ in Philippians & Colossians
Q1L5: "Shining as Lights in the Night"

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MEMORY VERSE: "Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world." Philippians 2:14, 15, NKJV

LESSON STUDY INTRO

This week we look at Paul's instruction in Philippians 2:12-30.

1. We work out what God works in (Sun)

- Paul repeatedly reminds us that we are not saved by our works (Phil. 2:12, 13).
    - "[M]an is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law" (Rom. 3:28).
    - "[M]an is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ… for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified" (Gal. 2:16)
    - "[B]y grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9).
- Paul's counsel in Phil 2:12, 13 is simply addressing the practical application of God's saving grace in our daily lives.
    - "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).
    - "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God" (Gal. 2:20).
    - "Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law" (Rom. 3:31).
        - "Without question, salvation is God's work, and we can take absolutely no credit for it ourselves. Even faith itself is a gift, encouraged through the work of the Holy Spirit. Our own works cannot save us; however, through the new birth, God re-creates us spiritually, enabling us to do good works. God's Spirit works in us, empowering our will to choose the right, to resist temptation, and to make right choices." Qtly, Sun, par 3

2. God expects us to *be* light and to *bear* light (Mon, Tue)

- Our Christ-like character should shine bright in a dark world (Phil. 2:14-16; Mt. 5:14-16; Job 1:6-8).

> God requires His people to shine as lights in the world. It is not merely the ministers who are required to do this, but every disciple of Christ. Their conversation should be heavenly. And while they enjoy communion with God they will wish to have [interaction] with their fellow men in order to express by their words and acts the love of God which animates their hearts. In this way they will be lights in the world, and the light transmitted through them will not go out or be taken away. ChS 20.3

- Our witness to the world includes sharing Bible truth.
    - Our good works give our message credibility, and our message gives our good works eternal significance.
    - The Gospel message includes present truth from God's Word (see Qtly, Tue, par 3).

> In every church the members should be so trained that they will devote time to the winning of souls to Christ. How can it be said of the church, "Ye are the light of the world," unless the members of the church are actually imparting light? Let those who have charge of the flock of Christ awake to their duty, and set many souls to work. ChS 61.4

3. We should appreciate faithful laborers (Wed, Thu)

- Paul was willing to be "poured out" in sacrifice, and he had sincere gratitude for those who were equally committed to God's cause.
- Paul was particularly thankful for the ministry of Timothy and Epaphroditus.
    - Timothy had grown from a timid young man (Acts 16:1-5; 2 Tim 1:3-7) to a valiant missionary worker (Phil 2:19-23).
    - Epaphroditus was likewise a tremendous help to Paul and the church in Philippi (Phil 2:25-30).
        - We are counseled to "hold such men in esteem" (Phil. 2:28; see also *Sketches from the Life of Paul*, p. 231).

CONCLUSION

> The real character of the church is measured, not by the high profession she makes, not by the names enrolled upon the church book, but by what she is actually doing for the Master, by the number of her persevering, faithful workers. Personal interest and vigilant, individual effort will accomplish more for the cause of Christ than can be wrought by sermons or creeds. ChS 12.1