

THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS

“The Word of Life”

Philippians 2:14-16

Review

1. To get the impact of the text, it is imperative to review the assumptions of (v. 1), the command (v. 2), and the six exhortations (vv. 2-4). All of this forms the appeal for the “mind of Christ” in the believer (v. 5). This is the most exalted goal set before a child of God!
2. What the “mind of Christ” is may be seen in the seven steps He took down in self humiliation (vv. 6-8). How the Father exalted the Son is recorded (vv. 9-11). An appeal by the Apostle Paul is immediately given (vv. 12-16). The “wherefore” (v. 12) has the meaning “consequently” or “so then.”
3. It is clear this passage is addressed to those who have been saved. The addressee are “my beloved” (v. 12), hence believers. They are urged to view God as the Enabler to live out now the life of a Christian (vv. 12, 13).
4. At this wonderful information, the believer is commanded to conduct his life in the light of God’s enabling (energizing) power. Mark the verb “do.” It is a present tense (continuing action), active (subject of the verb acting), plural (all believers), and imperative (a command). The unbeliever is responsible to believe (Jn. 7:17), while the believer is responsible to obey/do (cf. v. 12, here). God’s grace makes salvation possible, but holds man responsible. God’s grace makes sanctification available, but holds a believer responsible. So, for what is a believer responsible? Here are the expectations of the text:

1. Do -- NEGATIVELY v. 14
 - a. Without Murmuring

“Without” means “apart from.” There is to be no tinge of murmuring. This is a onomatopoeic term meaning muttering (cf. Jn. 7:12; Acts 6:1). It is a moral issue to be apart from (cf. 1 Pet. 4:9).
 - b. Without Disputing

One adverb governs the two nouns. This second noun is something intellectual. It suggests inward questioning. There is a strong possibility that where there is “murmuring,” “disputes” will come.
2. Do -- PURPOSIVELY v. 15

The purpose clause (“that”) makes patent what is here. Significantly the verb “be” must be translated “become” indicating a process (cf. Jn. 1:14).

 - a. Blameless

This means to keep from censure. It says without possibility of rightful charge being brought against a person. Christ was blamed, but He was not guilty. The KJV translates this word as “faultless” (Jude 24).
 - b. Without Rebuke

While the text here has alternate words, the idea is clear: what is irreproachable, unblamable. The reference is to the inward condition. It mirrors the character of Christ.

NOTE: All these purposeful and positive considerations are in view of a fact: “sons of God.” Two words in the original text and without an article (anarthrous). The stress is on the character of children, but children of birth so that they manifest the likeness of the begetter.

3. Do -- ACTIVELY vv. 15, 16

Twice the original text uses the preposition “in.” The first is in the phrase “in the midst” and the second “among (in) whom.” Both are used to show the effective activity of the believer. The initial participle of v. 16 “holding forth” adds dimension to the activity which relates to:

- a. People

The word “nation” is understood to be “generation” which is the obvious concept here. It refers to the people at a given period. They are described as 1) Crooked which is translated “untoward” (Acts 2:40). It is the opposite of straight. 2) Perverse which is a perfect passive participle meaning to distort, twist, or turn to one side (cf. Mt. 17:17; Acts 13:10).

- b. Place

The terrible people “among whom” believers act is one thing, but the place is similarly bad. It is the kosmos (world) system ordered and controlled by the Evil One. Nevertheless, believers shine or are seen (middle/passive form). There is personal interest! Sons of God appear as luminaries (not lights). They are light-bearers. Mark: This is a statement, not a command. There is a difference between a believer’s manner of life and the “generation”/“world.” If there is no difference there is good reason to question whether one has come out of the darkness into the light.

- c. Program

Here is a present active participle setting forth the message of a believer to the generation which is in the world. The reference is to the Gospel, not to the Person of Christ. Albeit, the former includes the latter. We have a personal program. It centers in Christ. The message is a “word of life.” Hallelujah!

4. Do -- INTENTIONALLY v. 16

A preposition is used with a dative case (ethical dative) to indicate intention. The reference is to Paul and his appearance at the Judgement Seat of Christ (Ro. 14:10). All the previous context is written so that Paul might have exultation in the Day of Christ (cf. Prov. 27:21). If that actually takes place, it will attest Paul has not run (aorist) in vain or labored (aorist) in vain. Think how much depends on what the spiritual progeny of Paul do!

Conclusion

Our Lord obeyed right to the death of the Cross. We are called upon to obey -- whether with other believers or none. True, God does energize us, but we are not automatons or robots. There is a “do” for the born one of God. The responsibility is given. The accountability is in your hand and mine. Lord -- find us faithful. Amen.