

Philippians 2: 1-17

Why am I here? What is the purpose that I have here on this earth?

- question many struggle with... whole life--never are able to answer
- pick a cause and that defines them --
- the environment -- EG/ CATS

Our theme is... "Shine"

- read with you Philippians 2: 12-16a (one of my favorite passages...)
- proper PERSPECTIVE of how we are to view ourselves as Christians in this world
- helps us understand the HIGH CALLING the church has been given

For the Christian that question has been answered – No Doubt

- If we have been called by JC...through God's grace
- LD 1 → I with body and soul belong to my faithful savior JC
- Westminster SC → "Glorify God and enjoy him forever"

→Specifically HERE –the apostle Paul draws a painting for us

- YOU LIVE in a world of darkness...(sin, perversion, brokenness, sadness)
- it is a crooked and perverse generation....
- God has a mission for you in that setting→ TO BE LIGHTS!!
(stars in the universe)

From the beginning-- In the OT & NT, this has always been the case

- "At one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord" Eph. 5:8
- I Peter 2:8 "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, God's special people.....Called out of the darkness into his MARVELOUS LIGHT!!!"
- "you are the light of the world – a city set on a hill cannot be hidden" Matt 5

When we think of ourselves as a Church...our identity, calling→ LIGHTS

Specifically what does this look like....

- In our obedience.
- In our witness (holding fast the Word of life)
- Practical implication for us today.

What is God's design for us to be lights? (2 ways mentioned here)

1) Verse 12... "As you have always obeyed..."

- 1:27 → as we are obedient to JC –stand firm...STRIVING
- OBEDIENCE→response to the gospel -- love Christ

We can understand the "working out of our salvation" as thinking through or wrestling...

- what does it mean to live out the gospel...
- what do I believe...practically what does the process of sanctification look like?

Vs 13 says →God works in you, both to will and do HIS GOOD PLEASURE

- not what we want to do—not to live OUR life...OUR pleasure...what WE WANT..

- what now matters to the X is what Christ wants
- love for HOLINESS (turning from the world and the flesh)

Vs 14 says → “Don’t grumble”

- this verse might seem a little out of place in the context → but it is not.
- it fits perfectly.
- John 13: 35 “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

This obedience is shown in every area of our life...

- 1) in our marriages... (love our wives as Christ...)
- 2) families... (train up our children in the way that he should go...)
- 3) way that we work.... (honest, hard-working)
- 4) in society (responsible citizens, respect & pray)
- 5) entertainment....

When we live in this way...what happens? →people notice...

- this person has different priorities!
- this person’s passion isn’t about the here and now....
- He LOVES and SERVES Jesus Christ.

Matt 5: 16 Let your light so shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your father who is in heaven

- I Peter 2:12** Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

So it begins with obedience....but there is more mentioned

2) It has a beautiful picture here of the Christian doing something...holding fast the WORD OF LIFE....

- this has two ideas: 1) Holding on 2) Holding out*
- we have been given a treasure to share—THE WORD OF THE LIVING GOD
- holding it out to a needy and dying world....
- faithfully bringing the good news of the GOSPEL....

The Christian is called not just though his actions show his love for Christ → Verbally he needs to express that to the world.

- I Peter 3:15 “Give reason for the hope that you have”

REALLY...this should be something that comes naturally....

- when there is something in our life that we love (hobby, sport)
- when something good happens to us...(but a house – get a raise)
- we want to tell people about it right?

--1st generation Xs...EG/ IRVING

We know →God has set men apart specifically for this work...SPECIAL CALLING

- those ordained to preach the good news...
- heralds – pastors that are trained to teach and preach...(my privilege)

I Peter 2:8 (to the church) “You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, God’s special people...THAT YOU MAY PROCLAIM THE PRAISES of him who has called you out of darkness....

- B&S this is something that EVERY Christian is called to...
- to hold forth...to proclaim... to speak of what Christ has done....

Historically...this is what we see....in the book of ACTS don't we?

- as the church was persecuted...scattered
- proclaiming...(that was the purpose, right?)
- to reach the world with the good news...
- from the NT times till now....

Matt 10: 32 →Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. [HYPERLINK "http://biblehub.com/matthew/10-33.htm"](http://biblehub.com/matthew/10-33.htm) **33**"But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.

- if we cannot testify about what JC has done in our life...
- if we do not speak when we have opportunity...WE ARE DENYING CHRIST
EG/ Light under a bushel (ashamed of the gospel of JC)

So as the church of JC we are called...

- 1) live for JC openly in love and obedience...
- 2) hold forth the word of LIFE

3) That is our calling B & S...Practically –WHAT does that look like in the local church?

For many of us we understand this –yet it is a challenge isn't it?

- we live in an age that is increasingly secular & anti-Christian
- we live in times where we are losing a sense of community (segregation)
- we live a media driven society.

What are some of the things that can keep us from living as “LIGHTS”?

- 1) At times we can be fearful – it is hard to stick our necks out
 - not always comfortable.
- Indifferent – we are comfortable in the church the way things are.
Passive – caught up with our own life.

So the question is → How can we foster a culture of evangelism and mission in the church?

Love for the lost.

Matt 9: 36 *When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.*

- Personal involvement – getting your hands dirty.
- tremendous blessing to living your life “out loud”
- don't leave it just to the leadership in the church

Churches with open doors and open hearts.
--on Sundays – welcoming

--inviting.

Christian homes that are committed to hospitality.

--sharing a coffee or meal is just a first step.

--showing love in a tangible way.

PAGE

PAGE 1