



The Letter to the Philippians – Lesson 4

Philippians 2:5-18

In every generation and in every human culture, the church of Jesus Christ will face opposition and hostility. The challenge we face is to live out our faith with humility and grace. We are to represent our Lord with a sacrificial love that strengthens the unity of the church and serves as an example to the culture.

It's a daunting challenge, but we have been equipped to meet this challenge through the provision of the Holy Spirit and through the victory achieved by Christ's sacrifice on our behalf. We have a powerful message and a glorious destiny.

1. For review, read again Philippians 1:27-2:1-4.
 - a. How would you express in a nutshell Paul's concern for the Philippian church? See especially Phil. 1:27 and Phil. 2:2.
 - b. How does Paul describe an attitude of humility? See Phil. 2:3-4
2. Read Philippians 2:5-11 *Jesus is the supreme example of humility*
 - a. What is Jesus' essential nature? See also John 1:1.
 - b. Refer to Colossians 1:16. What is Jesus' role in creation?

- c. What was the greatest act of Jesus' earthly life? See Phil. 2:8.
- d. What did that act accomplish? See Romans 5:8-10.
- e. How does Christ's death on the cross affect your life? What does it mean for you personally?
- f. Break down the passage Philippians 2:9-11 into its component parts. List in sequence the events that are referred to here.

3. Read Philippians 2:12-13 *Salvation is a lifestyle, not just an event*

We think of salvation as a decision to be made—a faith to be embraced—and it is! Even so, the Bible offers an even richer perspective on the glorious gift we have received. Salvation provides a past, a present, and a future blessing. In the past, God saved us from the penalty of sin. In the present, as we walk in obedience to Him, He is saving us from the power of sin. In the future—when we are united with Him in glory—He will save us from even the presence of sin.

- a. What do you learn from Ephesians 2:8-9 about how one receives eternal salvation?
- b. We understand from Ephesians 2:9 that salvation is “*not a result of works*”, but Paul challenges the Philippians to “*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*” At first this may sound like salvation *by works* instead of *by grace*. What assurance do you see in Phil. 2:13 that makes it clear that it is *not* salvation by works?

- c. Paul's letter to the Philippians is encouraging, positive, and joyful. How does his exhortation to "*work out your salvation with fear and trembling*" fit into this picture of a joyful Christian life? What do you think Paul means by "*fear and trembling,*" given that our Savior did not come in wrath, but in humility. He did not come to judge, but to save. He secured for us eternal joy, not eternal loss.

4. Read Philippians 2: 14-18 *We follow Christ's example of humility*

- a. What specific (difficult!) instruction is given to us in verse 14 regarding our attitudes and responses to life's problems?
- b. In Phil. 2:17, when Paul writes of being "*poured out as a drink offering,*" he is referring to the possibility of his being martyred. What is the hope that Paul holds for his beloved Philippians—a hope that provides unwavering joy for Paul? See Phil. 2:15-16.
- c. ***For personal reflection:*** How might the lessons you have learned from this passage help you handle the difficulties in your life? What have you learned from this study that you can apply specifically to change your attitude and sweeten your relationships?

Take a moment to pray and contemplate the glory of the salvation that has been purchased for you. Ask God to give you a new attitude of humility, gratitude, and joy. Ask Him to renew and recharge your perspective on salvation.