

SESSION 8. GRUMBLING, MUMBLING, COMPLAINING, DISPUTING— **REBUKE IT AND REFUSE IT!**

Philippians 2:14-16, “Do everything without grumbling or arguing, ¹⁵ so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation. Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky ¹⁶ as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain.”

Live Without Grumbling or Disputing

This is our chance to show ourselves “if we’re working out our salvation with fear and trembling.” Will we do all things without grumbling or disputing?

Do you know of conversations that consist of people talking about how much they hate their job, how little money they have, how terrible the roads and traffic are, how they had to do what they didn't want to do, about how bad the weather is, about how their neighbors are inconsiderate, and how the other people in their family make life so difficult.

Grumbling, complaining, whining, disputing, and arguing. Paul says that the Christian is not to be like this. We need to “grow up.”

The Proof is in the Pudding...

- ✓ Prove that you are a child of God.
- ✓ Prove that you are different from the world.
- ✓ Shine your light as a witness of Jesus.
- ✓ Hear the Word and hold fast to it.
- ✓ "Stop complaining. Stop arguing."

WHY? Where I (Paul) can know that my preaching, my teaching, my praying, my working...is not in vain.

If the Philippians were obedient, then Paul would know that he had not wasted his time preaching the gospel in Philippi.

- ✓ There is great pleasure in seeing one grow in Christ
- ✓ There is agony in the soul of the teacher when he sees people stagnate and in a backslidden state.

It makes him feel as if he has just been wasting his time, running and toiling in vain.

Philippians 2:17-18, "But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. ¹⁸ So you too should be glad and rejoice with me."

Poured Out As a Drink Offering

Teaching the Word to Christians, evangelizing the lost, doing the work of the ministry is far more work than most people will ever realize. Paul wanted to know that he had not been doing it all for nothing. He wanted to see the Philippians grow in Christ.

He described his work as him "being poured out as a drink offering." As you may already know, a drink offering was a sacrifice to God which was poured out as a liquid instead of being burnt in fire on the altar.

Paul poured out in the work of the ministry as a sacrifice to God.

When the ministry dictated that he make tents all day long in order to preach, he worked and sweated. When the ministry demanded that he travel dangerous roads, at times being robbed and assaulted, he did it so that he could preach the gospel in the next town.

When he found himself poor and alone because of the cause of Christ, he didn't give up - he just considered himself a drink offering, poured out to God.

Still I (Paul) Rejoice...

Will you rejoice with Paul?

Although PAUL was sitting in a Roman prison, although he was physically scarred and emotionally spent, he said, "Regardless of all that, I will rejoice."

- ✓ Paul's Christian maturity meant that his joy was not found in circumstances.
- ✓ His joy came from knowing that he was saved, that his inheritance was in heaven, and
- ✓ He had the privilege, yet a responsibility, to share the Good News with others.

May we today have this same attitude.

May we say as David said,

Ps. 51:12, "Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation, and sustain me with a willing spirit."

"JOY" SHOULD BE THE NORM OF EVERY CHRISTIAN?

Philippians 2:19-30, *"I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. ²⁰ I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. ²¹ For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. ²² But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. ²³ I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. ²⁴ And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.*

²⁵ But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. ²⁶ For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. ²⁷ Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. ²⁸ Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. ²⁹ So then, welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor people like him, ³⁰ because he almost died for the work of Christ. He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me."

Friends of Paul and Lovers of God (Timothy and Epaphroditis).

Paul was just saying how, in spite of his own suffering, he was rejoicing, because he knew that the Philippians would be obedient to his exhortation to get along and show love for one another.

Paul still hoped that he could be there with the Philippian church members. But, as you know, he was in a Roman prison, unable to leave and pay them a visit.

Not being able to go himself, he was hoping to send someone else that would both minister to them and bring back news to him.

When you are sending a substitute in to take your place or speak what is on your mind, you need someone with like countenance and like mindedness...someone who could be trusted by yourself and those receiving the message.

There was a “kindred spirit” between the church at Philippi and Timothy and Epaphroditis!

The most obvious choice of who to send was Timothy. He alone was qualified to be sent to minister to the Philippians.

His qualifications did not come from his physical strength, dashing looks, or powerful personality.

Timothy’s qualifications for ministry were threefold:

1. He had a kindred spirit with Paul,
2. He was genuinely concerned about the Philippians' welfare, and
3. He was seeking God's interests, not his own.

Choosing someone to help in your ministry....is very much like choosing a babysitter for your children. You are entrusting this person with people that you love.

Philippians 2:22-24...Trust in the Lord

The Philippians were very familiar with Timothy; knowing how devoted he had been in serving God and serving Paul. There would be no question in anybody's mind about his genuineness when Timothy showed up in Philippi.

Paul hoped that he himself would also be showing up on their doorstep sometime soon. He said, "I trust in the Lord that I myself also shall be coming shortly."

You know, if we are honest with ourselves, we have to admit that we are people who look too much at our earthly circumstances instead of our Heavenly Father. Paul said and believed that he was to "Trust in the Lord, not in the circumstances."

Col. 3:2, *"Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth."*

Helen Lemmel wrote, "Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in His wonderful face. And the things of earth will grow strangely dim. In the light of His glory and grace."

Paul was trusting that Jesus was still in control. He would send Timothy soon, and trusted in God that he wouldn't be far behind.

2:25-28 Epaphroditus

In spite of Timothy's soon departure, and hopefully Paul's, Paul also had to send Epaphroditus to Philippi.

A little bit about Epaphroditus:

- **He was from the Philippian church.** He had been sent with a gift from the church to Paul, but had gotten terribly sick. Deathly ill. Word got back to the Philippian church about his condition, and they were very worried.

Epaphroditus knew that they knew he was sick, but didn't know if they

knew he had gotten better. He worried about their concerns, and longed to see them all again.

- **Epaphroditus was described by Paul as "my brother, my fellow worker, my fellow soldier, your messenger and minister to my need."**

"My brother" means that they were both Christians. Two children with the same father: God.

- **Not only did Epaphroditus labor physically with Paul, but he also labored spiritually as a "fellow-soldier."** Wearing the full armor of God by living a godly and righteous life.
- **Finally, he is called "your messenger and minister to my need."** He had taken the gift from the church to Paul, putting his own life in mortal danger.

2:29-30 Hold Men Like Epaphroditus in High Regard

- **We need to begin to recognize those among us who, like Epaphroditus, diligently serve the Lord.**

Recognize and appreciate the people who serve week after week in the nursery, in the Sunday school, in set-up and tear down...In prayer, in ministry.

- **The world holds the rich, the famous, and the powerful in high regard; those who set the records, those with the most toys, those with the best skills.**
- **In the kingdom of God, however, we should hold the most godly in the highest regard.**

Hebrews 13:7, *"Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith."*

- ✓ We should look up to them - not as people to worship, but people to imitate.
- ✓ People who set the standard for us to pray more, to know the Word better, to serve more diligently, to behave more righteously.
- ✓ Let us look around and imitate them as they imitate Christ.

Live life with a “Spirit of Excellence” as your goal!

Questions for this session:

- 1. Do you see yourself as a servant...one who gives and expects nothing in return?**
- 2. Do you have friends that you can trust? Do you tell them that they are a trusted friend?**
- 3. Write down on paper those people who you know are living for God and you can trust?**
- 4. Make an effort to tell them how much you respect and hold them up as dear friends.**

