

# LIVING AS LIGHTS IN A DARKENED WORLD:

November 19, 2017 | Pastor Randy Remington

Last week we began this two-part study in Philippians 2. Last week we looked at how we can live in unity in a terribly divided world. In this lesson, as we continue in Philippians, let's consider together how we live as lights in a darkened world.

*Philippians 2:12-13 "Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose."*

It's important to note that Paul is not saying that we have to work to obtain or keep our salvation. He has already taken care of this for us.

He's challenging us to "live out" our faith and this will be done in very practical ways:

- **Us:** "work out" (faith, obedience). It's God's work in us that gives us the ability to "live out"
- **God:** "work in" (gives us the will and the ability)

Listen to the insight we get from verses 14-16:

*Philippians 2:14-16 "Do everything without grumbling or arguing, 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 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."*

The key phrase is "may become", let's break this down further:

## 1. A MATTER OF CHOICE:

*"Do everything without grumbling or arguing..."*

One author observed that we live in a "culture of complaint"; we can see it all around us. In summary it has become the normative.

There are basically two ways to deal with this; change your surroundings so everything is perfect or change your internal world. This is a very serious issue:

- **Complaining:** the essence of rebellion

The original word for complaining "goggysmos" is to make a guttural grumbling sound when you are disgruntled and frustrated. It also means "muttering" or murmuring, the rolling of the eyes, maybe the comments made under our breath. This is a chronic thing that lays under the surface. It's described as muttering, complaining or grumbling "in their tents".

*1 Corinthians 10:10 "And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel."*

*Numbers 14:26-27 "The Lord said to Moses and Aaron: "How long will this wicked community grumble against me? I have heard the complaints of these grumbling Israelites."*

In the whole of scripture, it is an expression of rebellion against God. For the Nation of Israel, it is the number one reason that they didn't receive what God had for them. It's not about losing the covenant, (salvation) but we'll lose something.

There is a distinct difference between grumbling and groaning. God said in scripture, "I have heard the groan of my people". The Psalmist groaned before the Lord; even creation groans under the weight of sin. This is God centered, face to face with God. Grumbling is behind God's back (as if possible) and it's centered on us, not God.

It is a cancer that will spread to others, our family, our community, our nation and our world. But gratefulness and thanksgiving will also spread, influence and impact our culture...more coming on this.

**"Choosing praise and thanksgiving can be our default response to challenges and difficulty"**

When this becomes our default, something wonderful happens:

***Psalm 118:19-20 "Open for me the gates of righteousness; I will enter and give thanks to the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord through which the righteous may enter."***

Thanksgiving, praise and gratefulness creates and opens a gate of access to God, with "grateful hearts". As sad as it is, grumblers and complainers never come before God like this...but thankfulness will open that gate.

***Psalm 22:3 "Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the praise of Israel."***

In addition, thankfulness will open gates in our marriages, other relationships, at work and in other areas in our lives. But in addition to complaining Paul also refers to "arguing".

- **Arguing:** Intellectual rebellion

**"When you speak, you are agreeing with God or disagreeing with Him"**

When we realize that arguing is "intellectual rebellion", we begin to understand why Paul warned us against this. Remember it's not what we choose to be, it's what we become when we walk in praise and thankfulness

**"Choosing to trust God and His Word can be our default response to uncertainty and impossibility"**

## 2. A MATTER OF BECOMING

As we mentioned "may become" is the key phrase in this scripture. So Paul says: ***"Do everything without grumbling or arguing"***. This is the "work-out" part that we are obedient in and God will enable us to do; then: ***"...So that you may become blameless and pure, "children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation."*** Let's look at what we will become:

- **Blameless:** No basis for accusation
- **Harmless:** Pure, no mixture (nothing hidden)
- **Faultless:** No moral or ethical blemish
- **A shining Light in a Perverse World:** How the world will see you.

This is done in a ***"crooked generation"***. The original word for "Crooked" is "skolios" crooked or Bent, abnormally unethical and/or immoral.

***Acts 2:40 "With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt (perverse) generation."***

Who we are before God is already set, because of the work of the cross and God's grace. But what we're talking about here is before the world. The world needs to see something that is aligned with God, something or someone who is blameless, harmless and faultless. This world that is bent, twisted and perverse, needs a shining light. How is the world seeing us?

- **Lights:** Pointing the way in a darkened world

**"When we work out our salvation with fear and trembling, the focus is not on becoming a certain kind of person before God, but to become a certain kind of person before people, before the 'dark' world in which we live"**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. We know that because of the work on the cross and the grace of God, we are his children. This had nothing to do with our efforts or work. But we are instructed to: ***"continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling"***. Although it will be clarified later in our study, what does this mean to you at this point?
2. It is a matter of choice on our part, to: ***"Do everything without grumbling or arguing..."*** First do you agree, as one author said, that we live in a "culture of complaint? If so, how has our current culture affected people around you and possibly even you?
3. Pastor Randy taught us that "complaining is the essence of rebellion". After reviewing the word in its original form and the scriptures on page two, discuss what this means and the difference between ***grumbling*** and ***groaning***?
4. So we are beginning to see that complaining is far more than just being a whining person. So not wanting to be rebellious, what does this quote mean to you, "Choosing praise and thanksgiving can be our default response to challenges and difficulty"? Also what "gates" are opened for us when we are thankful, full of praise and grateful?
5. The first part of our study is about complaining, the second half of this is arguing, which we learned is "intellectual rebellion". What does this mean to you and what are your thoughts about this quote; "When you speak, you are agreeing with God or disagreeing with Him"?
6. So Paul tells us; ***"Do everything without grumbling or arguing"***. This is the "work-out your salvation" and the "matter of becoming" part that we referred to earlier. Discuss the list Paul says, "we will become":
  - **Blameless:** No basis for accusation
  - **Harmless:** Pure, no mixture (nothing hidden)
  - **Faultless:** No moral or ethical blemish
  - **A shining Light in a Perverse World:** How the world will see you.
7. Lastly please finish by discussing this last quote:

***"When we work out our salvation with fear and trembling, the focus is not on becoming a certain kind of person before God, but to become a certain kind of person before people; before the 'dark' world in which we live"***