

## Energized Faith – Philippians 2:12-30

### Some Key Points:

Immediately, preceding the text this study is focused on (Phil. 2:12-30) there is one of the most important descriptions of Christ and His ministry in the entire Bible (Phil. 2:1-11). We would normally expect Paul to break out into a prayer of thanksgiving or even a benediction after such a glorious depiction of Christ. But, instead of a prayer, Paul connects the “Christ Hymn” (Phil. 2:1-11) with the everyday of our lives.

Take notice of the places that Paul connects high Christology to life. First, he locates it into the situations where we feel overwhelmed by our sin and circumstances (2:12-13). Paul tells the Philippians to respond with obedience. By obedience Paul means a total devotion to Jesus Christ. And so, it is within this total devotion to Christ that one is to “*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*” The Greek verb here for work out is “*katargazesthe.*” Interestingly, it means to “bring about.” Paul wants the believer to work out their salvation with all seriousness but this “working out” is not an earning of your salvation (see Romans 4:4-5). The good news for believers in their fight against sin and battling through difficulty is in verse 13, “*for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*” D.A Carson once said, “So this does not mean, therefore, that you back off into passivity, let go and let God, God's doing all the struggling on my behalf. Rather, it's precisely God working in us that empowers us, and compels us, and activates us, and motivates us, and strengthens us, in order to keep struggling. So you are mandated by Scripture to choose the right.”

The second real life situation Paul addresses is the church's life together (verses 14-16). Note Phil. 2:15 and the OT echo Paul uses from Deut. 32:5. Grumblers will focus on everything that is wrong with us but children of the light will focus on everything that is right about us in Christ. We must not settle for anything less than loving and honoring one another as Christ has loved us.

Third, Paul addresses the situation of when our joy is at stake (v. 17-18). Paul and the Philippians were both sacrificing their life by pressing into Christ. Paul shows the Philippians that their final outcome will be joy. And although, their final outcome will be joy they must also choose joy (v. 18).

Fourth, Paul gives two real life examples of Timothy and Epaphroditus (v. 19-30). As you look at verses 19-30 consider all the connections Paul is trying to draw from the Christ hymn (2:1-11) and the example of Timothy and Epaphroditus. Paul is proving the power and work of Christ in these two men.

### Questions:

1. What did you find important about this passage?
2. Philippians 2:12-13 are important verses that address the process of our sanctification. Discuss these verses and the following quote, “*Decisive power for conquering sin is in Christ's cancelling of sin...the only sin you can defeat is a forgiven sin.* If we try to deal with our sins on our own, we attempt to be our own saviors and that is disaster. Christ has conquered our sins...Why should there be fear and trembling as I attack my sin? The reason given in the text is not a threat. It's a gift. Work and will to kill your sin, and do it with fear and trembling, because God Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, redeemer, justifier, sustainer, Father, lover is so close to you that your working and willing are His working and willing.” (John Piper)
3. As you study verses 14-16 ask yourself, “what is my motivation for grumbling?” Where does grumbling stem from? How does God help us to address it and become blameless and innocent?
4. Study Timothy and Epaphroditus (v. 19-30) what connections do you see Paul making back to (2:1-11)? How are these connections important to you today?

**Prayer:**

Take time to praise God that in Him we have all-sufficient grace for conquering sin and pressing through difficulty. Take time to pray for the needs of others in your connecting group.

**Further follow-up:**

Begin to pray and think about ways that you can honor others in Christ, not with flattery, but with genuine Christ-like affection. Paul says in Romans 12:10, “*Love one another with brotherly affection. **Outdo one another in showing honor.***” Let’s think about how we can ‘almost’ competitively outdo one another in showing honor to others. As we do so, we will shine as lights in the middle of generation that is full of finger-pointing and negativity.