

Bible Study, Series 4, Week 5

Personal Bible Study

Day: 1

Read Philippians 2: 14-15

Paul tells us to do everything without complaining. It is being reborn and holiness that makes us willing to change according to God's will. Only then verse 14 becomes possible.

"Blameless and harmless" Pure with only good intentions, pure of character
"Without rebuke" to live in such a way that you do not have to be reprimanded by other people

"A crooked and perverse nation" According to Matthew 12: 39 and Acts 2: 40 it is people who strayed from God's way and fell into immorality

"Holding forth the Word of Life" A holy life, pure and sincere is the light in a world of darkness. Remember: you are not the light - you only shine like one because Christ is the light in the world and He shines through your (compare 1 John 1: 5-7)

1. Paul says in verse 15 that we must live a pure life blameless and without rebuke. How do you achieve such a life?
2. How do you act as the bringer or carrier of light? (2 Peter 1: 10 and 2 Peter 1: 3)

Day: 2

Read Philippians 2: 16-18

1. Light and life are inextricably connected to each other. Just as light is not possible without a source of power, light and life is dependent on each other. How does verse 16 say we have to act as carriers of this "light?"
2. This "light" has to be spread for Christ to come! Then it will be clear, says Paul that his work was not in vain. How can you help to spread the light?
3. The congregation has already brought "sacrifices" because of the prosecution. They for instance had to suffer bodily, for Christ, for instance. Paul is willing to die if it has to happen. Then his sacrifice will be to God's honor and to His service. This is his offer in God's service. This is the language of Paul, the little cross bearer, what does your offer look like?

Day: 3

Read Philippians 2: 19

While waiting for his trial Paul is aware of the fact that the trial may go against him. In verse 19 and 23 read we read though that he thinks an acquittal may be possible. It is his

hope (according to Jesus' plan) because He is Lord and controls everyone and everything. In humble reliance Paul is waiting for the outcome. As soon as it is known he will send Timothy to them with the news.

1. How does one succeed in staying so positive in such bad circumstance?
2. Take note of the good reference he gives about Timothy. (Read more in 2 Timothy 3: 15, Acts 16: 2, 1 Corinthians 4: 17 and Romans 16: 21)
3. According to verse 21 Paul also knows bitter disappointment (compare 2 Timothy 4: 10, 16; and verse 21 possibly refers to 1; 15-16.) What do you learn from the fact that Paul does not mention the names of the "unreliable people"?

Day: 4

Read Philippians 2: 25-26

1. How is Epaphroditus described in verse 25-26?
2. The name Epaphroditus is very interesting. The name means "prostitute" and is close to the name of the goddess of love, sex and fertility Aphrodite. She was the patron of the prostitutes. We have to remember that many of the members of the congregation in Philippi came from the heathens and they still lived in a heathen society. It is therefore very possible that Epaphroditus' family was heathens and that they served the goddess Aphrodite, therefore his name.
3. If you have a look at Epaphroditus' family background and you read verse 25-26 again you see the mercy of God very clearly. The same God can do the same for you! Do you believe it?

Day: 5

Read Philippians 2: 27-30

Epaphroditus was ill, he nearly died but, God had mercy on him and as Paul says He had mercy on him as well.

1. Why didn't Paul who had the gift of healing, as seen in Acts 28: 8, not heal Epaphroditus by the laying up of hands and prayer? Or, if he did it, why were Epaphroditus not healed? Or does one not have these gifts permanently?
2. Even in those times the apostles did not heal everyone. Have a look at 2 Corinthians 12: 8 and Galatians 4: 13. What advice does Paul give Timothy in 1 Timothy 5: 23?
3. We have to see this matter in the following way: it is always God who heals. As His vessels He uses medical sources and prayer - normally both! If we remain ill, we have the comfort of His promises. Read Hebrews 12 in this connection.

Day: 6

Read Philippians 2: 27-30

1. How do you see God? Do you see Him as Epaphroditus saw him: as a merciful God? Or do you see Him as A judge? Do you see Him as a "soft man" distributing gifts or as a strict judge writing down all your sins in a book?

*If you see Him as a judge, you will not be able to love Him. Your religion will be one of fear.

*If you only see Him as a loveable one, you do not have an explanation for all the suffering on earth.

2. Who is God? God IS love - bur God is also fair. His love does not wants to punish is but His fairness also cannot ignore all our sin. This is why he let all our sins fall onto Jesus, his Son. On the cross He punished Him - and we are free! Read Colossians 2: 13-14 and make the promise in Romans 8: 38-39 your own.

Group Bible Study

Read Philippians 2: 12-16

In Philippians 2: 12-16 Paul writes about two matters: our obedience (verse 12-13) and our testimony (verse 14-16)

1. People sometimes have the idea that their spiritual life consists partly of their own efforts and God will see to the rest. For instance: my part is 50% and God supplies the other 50%. Do you agree, looking at these verses? Motivate.
2. "For it is God who works in you" (verse 13) how does God make us willing and able to do this?
3. The emphasis in verse 12 is the attitude we have to do the work with. What does it mean to work in "obedience" and "fear" on your salvation?
4. The growth in your spiritual life is a life long process. How does the Bible draw it to us in Philippians 3: 12, 14, 16?
5. Paul asks the Philippians in verse 15 to be an example and live your testimony amongst rotten people (the world) but as unblemished children of God (not of the world.) Do you really live in the world? Do you have enough interaction with the everyday things and people? Why is it necessary?
6. Do you still keep the desired distance? Are you still aliens on earth, in your heart? (Psalm 119: 19) Or has you become to much at home on earth?
7. What is the correct balance between the two?
8. The Bible draws two important pictures of our testimony: carriers of the light in this world (verse 15) carrying the word to the world (verse 16) which specific aspects of our message to the world are being shoe to us in these two examples?