

**Subject: *How Should Christians Live?***

**Scripture: *Philippians 2:14-18***

In this marvelous letter, Paul says that life is all about Christ (Phil. 1:20, 21; 4:4).

### **1. Live without complaining (vs. 14)**

Paul has been speaking of working out our salvation, and this is one of the practical ways we do that. It begins with the right attitude...no murmuring (complaining) and disputing (arguing) either among Christians or with God. Someone said there are sins of *commission*, sins of *omission*, and sins of *disposition*.

Years ago a young man entered a monastery and took a vow of silence. He couldn't talk to anyone except once a year and then he could only say two words. The first year rolled by and he said: "Bed hard." The next year went by and he said: "Food cold." One more year passed by and he said: "I quit." The overseer of the monastery said: "I'm not surprised. All you've done is complain ever since you got here."

### **2. Live with integrity (vs. 15a)**

We are sons of God by our adoption into His family, but we must live as sons of God. That means we are set apart from the world and holy unto the Lord. The word "blameless" means above reproach, not sinless. "Harmless" means pure or unmixed. This word was used to describe precious metals that were refined and pure. Jesus told his disciples they were to be "harmless as doves." This world is "perverse," which means permanently crooked or morally warped.

### **3. Live as lights in a dark world (vs. 15b-16a)**

We must live right in a crooked world and we must shine bright in a dark world. We must shine bright because this world is dark and getting darker all the time. The darkest places need the brightest lights. Jesus told His disciples, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." He said, "You are the light of the world."

**Ephesians 5:8** *For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.*

**1 John 1:5-7** <sup>5</sup> *This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup> If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: <sup>7</sup> But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

Light shines, penetrates, and exposes. That is the very nature of light, what it does.

**John 3:18-20** <sup>18</sup> *He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. <sup>19</sup> And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup> For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved (exposed).*

We hold forth the word of life so others can have eternal life. We hold forth His Word to give life to people who are spiritually dead in trespasses and sins and to give light to people walking in darkness.

#### **4. Live as a joyful sacrifice (vs. 16b-18)**

The concept of joy runs throughout this book. What is the source of Paul's joy? Paul looked forward to the day of Christ (vs. 16), the day of judgment when the Lord evaluates our Christian life and our service for Him. Paul lived so he would rejoice in that day. He would have joy because he had not run "in vain" (without purpose). He was running with a purpose and with a goal in mind. How can you invest your life so it will not be in vain?

**1 Corinthians 15:58** *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*

Paul said it best in Philippians 1:21... "to live is Christ and to die is gain." If the saints in glory could speak to us today, they would say living for Christ is worth it all. It's worth the time, it's worth the effort, it worth the cost, it pays to live for the Lord. To live for Christ, to worship Christ, to serve Christ, to sacrifice for Christ...it's all worth it.

Paul referred to himself as a drink offering poured out upon the altar. To Paul the important thing was the sacrifice of their faith. Compared to that, he saw his own life as incidental and secondary. In effect Paul said, "If I must sacrifice my own life in order to serve you, I will take joy in that, and you can rejoice with me."

**Romans 12:1** *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

**2 Timothy 4:6** *For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.*

You don't hear much about sacrifice these days. Some people may appreciate Christ's perfect sacrifice for them, but most aren't interested in making their life a sacrifice for Him.

When Raphael was working on his famous paintings in the Vatican, a couple of church leaders stopped by to watch and criticize. One said, "The face of the Apostle Paul is too red." Raphael replied, "He blushes to see into whose hands the church has fallen." It is a shame how the church has become so self-centered and self-serving instead of Christ-centered and Christ-serving. Paul counted it a joy and privilege to pour out his life as a sacrifice for Christ.

J. C. Ryle described how a Christian should live: "He sees only one thing, he cares for one thing, he lives for one thing, he is swallowed up for one thing; and that one thing is to please God. Whether he lives, or whether he dies, whether he has health or whether he has sickness, whether he is rich, or whether he is poor, whether he pleases man, or whether he gives offense, whether he is thought wise, or whether he is thought foolish, whether he gets honor, or whether he gets shame, for all this the man cares nothing at all. He burns for one thing; and that one thing is to please God and to advance God's glory."

That's how should Christians live. The question then becomes...are we living like that?