

# PHILIPPIANS

## JESUS OUR JOY

### A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families for the week of December 27, 2020

#### Working Out Inworking

This week, Pastor Steve Shelby preached from [Philippians 2:12-13](#)

Paul reminds the Philippians that they obeyed the Gospel when first preached to them and he expects that to continue. Whether he is ever present with them again, the Truth is still the Truth. He lovingly calls on them to obey. What does it mean to “work out your salvation”?

Remember this is being read in the context of the gathered church at worship.

“Therefore I urge you to take some food. For it will give you strength, for not a hair is to perish from the head of any of you.” ([Acts 27:34](#))

What needs do the Philippians have?

“Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.” ([Philippians 2:4-7](#))

The whole context of the hymn about the Incarnation is for the Philippians to consider Jesus and His sacrifice as a means to unity in the Body.

Life that places the self solely at the center ultimately becomes self-destructive. That’s a theological truth, but one also evidenced sociologically, politically, economically, and psychologically. We may not like to admit it, but many of our lives are bound by the heresy of individualism.

“Biblical wisdom has a different starting point. God’s saving work always moves toward creating a faithful community of God’s people. The inspiring stories of the Old Testament are framed around calling, liberating, and leading the people of Israel as a covenant community. The fulcrum of God’s justice always falls on the side of shaping the shared life of a people whose hospitality and faithfulness reflect the covenantal love of God. It’s not about me; it’s about the ‘we.’ Jesus always called people not only to follow him, but to join with other disciples in doing so. On his last night with them before his crucifixion, he washed the feet of those closest to him, yearning for his love to bind them to one another. On the day of Pentecost, the outpouring of the Spirit came to create the community of God’s people as the body of Christ, the church. As the church’s emerging life is recorded in Acts and the epistles, this continuing story

describes the work of God’s Spirit to form a community of those bound together as one in Christ’s love. Paul’s declaration in I Corinthians 12 that we are parts of one body and members of one another is as sharp a rebuke to the heresy of individualism that one can find.” (*Wesley Granberg Michaelson*)

“Do all things without grumbling or disputing” ([Philippians 2:14](#))  
So the verses about working out our salvation are between verses about the humiliation of Christ and a command not to grumble.

God is at work in the Philippians so that His good pleasure would be worked out.

#### For Further Discussion: [Philippians 2:12-13](#)

<sup>12</sup>Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup>for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

- When Paul writes, “Therefore” (12), he signals that the **church’s call to worship and follow our humbled & exalted Lord (2:1-11) prompts a response** from His followers.
- What initial response do you have to the word “obey”? What is **Paul’s definition of “obedience”** in v.12? What does this mean?
- How is **working out** your salvation different that **working for** it? According to Philippians 2:5-11, **how did we obtain the salvation** that Paul wants us to work out?
- What does **God empower us** to do (13)?
- Paul is teaching us that being a disciple of Jesus is a **relational** endeavor. **His love demands a response** in our lives, not as a **condition**, but as **confidence** that God is at work in us. **What difference has it made that Jesus loves you?**
- Paul is teaching us that being a disciple of Jesus is **participation** with God. “Your own salvation” (12) is not an **objective** to be reached, but **fellowship with Christ** to be enjoyed. **How is the Holy Spirit at work in you this week?**
- Paul is teaching us that being a disciple of Jesus is **passionate** business that involves “fear and trembling”. Do you have a sense of **fear, awe, and amazement before God** these days? **Why, or why not?**
- **Pray together** in light of this week’s passage.

To hear sermons and access past study guides visit  
<http://www.wepc.org/worship/sermons-media-study-guide>  
Questions? Contact Pastor Kevin Greene, [kevin@wepc.org](mailto:kevin@wepc.org)