

❖ Work Out What God Has Worked In (12-13)

➤ Work it out both publicly and privately (12a)

- "Therefore"- Leads to an application about unity through humility.
- "my dear friends"- The lit. is *agapetoi* – “my beloved ones.” Not a military command but a loving, big-brother command.
- Be the real deal *as always!* " *have always obeyed --not only in my presence.*"
- Application: Are you performance-based; holy when people are around or are you authentic-based, the same person when no one is around?

➤ Work it out seriously (12b)

- "work"- *Work (ergos)* involves “effort, energy” (e.g. ergonomics).
- "work out"- not "for." We don't work *to obtain* but *because of* salvation.
- "your salvation"- It's time to share the affect of your salvation by loving others. (*spend the energy to bear the fruit of salvation*).
- "fear and trembling"- Whenever a person was *seriously* impacted by Jesus there was a *serious* response—cost of discipleship. Take it seriously.
- *Be who you really are.* Paul wants them to live to their potential in Christ.
- Application: Are you a couch potato Christian, lying in your hammock 'til heaven, or are you going for it? Seeking to be like Him and follow Him?

➤ Work it out with God's power (13)

- "for it is God who works"- lit. "for God is the energizing One in you"
- "to will and to act."- He changes the heart (the willing) and the body (the doing, "to act, work, energize"). It's not just *what* you do but *how* you do it.
- "his good purpose": good will, benevolent purpose.
- Application: When I put forth any effort to respond to Christ, whose work is it really? My effort is ultimately loving God and others as myself.

❖ Shine Like Stars (14-30)

➤ Stars shine brightest in the darkest nights (14-16)

- Paul is making a contrast here between the character of unbelievers and believers. As believers we are radically changed in character.
- *Blameless*- “pure, sincere,” literally “unmixed, unadulterated.” The emphasis is on the lack of duplicity rather than on perfection. I.e. “the real deal.” Used for pure wine, of unalloyed metals.

- *without fault*-An unblemished sacrifice. Paul is not thinking of sinless perfection but of giving God our all.
- *"warped and crooked generation"*
- *"in which you shine like stars in the sky as you hold out the word of life"*
- Application: Just believing in, obeying and following Jesus will make us automatically shine like stars against the black night of this culture.

➤ **Stars are joyful (17-18)**

- *"even if I am being poured out like a drink offering"* - Paul is still not sure of his future (martyrdom or not).
- *"I am glad and rejoice . . . 18 So you too should be glad and rejoice with me."* - Joy: Paul invites them to join him in his joy.
- Application: What trial(s) seem to dim your starlight? Is there joy to be found in the midst of your trials?

➤ **Examples that shined like stars (19-30)**

- *Timothy*-an example of a selfless, humble, loving servant.
- *Epaphroditus*-another example of a kingdom hero; almost died serving.
- Application: Who is an example of a shining star in your life?

❖ **Thinking It Through**

- Paul commands us to *work out our salvation*. Why are we afraid to use the word "*work*"? Does *work* have to always mean *earn*? Why do we associate grace with being passive?
- Have you ever been a performer? That is, acted like a better Christian around certain people? How do you feel about that?
- Why is love, obedience and servanthood the mark of our salvation?
- Paul says we shine like stars in a warped and crooked generation. Do you think this world is getting better or worse and why?
- Paul says we "hold out the word of life" to this world. What are the ways we do that? Who is someone you are holding the *word of life* out to?
- Paul invites the Philippians to join him in being joyful during hard times? How can you apply that to your present situation?
- Timothy and Epaphroditus were heroes of the faith. Is there someone you currently know who models Christ to you?
- Are there people you can serve in ways you're not doing now? Shine, shine, shine brilliantly the love of Christ.