

WHY DO WE GRUMBLE?

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Exodus 16:1-9 --- Phillipians 4:9-13

Well, this morning's scripture is a lot to unpack. How many of us don't remember to trust and obey God's plans for us on a daily basis? How many wander and grumble like the children of Israel? Why should God even bother with us?

These are really important questions that Paul touched on in his letter to the Phillipians.

Have you ever thought the grass was greener on the other side of the fence? Maybe if I move or change jobs or go to a different church, things will be better? I think we've all thought that way. Quite often it seems like we just like to grumble instead of changing our circumstances.

What does that have to do with Paul's letter to the Phillipians you ask?

Earlier in his letter, Paul encourages the Phillipians to work out their salvation by the power of God's grace, and to shine like stars in the dark world.

In Phillipians 2 Paul wrote, "Therefore my dear friends, as you have always obeyed- not only in my presence, but much more in my absence — continue to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who works in you to Will, and to act in order to fulfill His good purpose. Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure.

Paul provided us with a great starting point for how we can be more like Christ. This passage is not based on our works. Paul doesn't say, "work for your salvation.

In Ephesians 2: 8-10, we read, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by work, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

Paul says to work it out ourselves. Huge difference. God worked salvation for us by His grace alone. Christ has done the work on the cross to bring us this gift. We need to learn to live in the light of His gift for us.

In verse 12, Paul opens up by praising the Phillipians for obeying Jesus constantly. He points out that they obeyed in His presence, and also in His absence. He praises them before He commands them.

We also should feel encouraged and motivated here.

If you are moving closer to Christ and become more like Him, it's due to God's grace. We aren't what we ought to be one day, but by God's grace, we are not what we used to be. To work out our salvation means to follow the example of Christ. He has shown us what humble, God-glorifying obedience looks like. We might wish there was a shortcut for this.

Case in point. How many of us dreamed about being a professional athlete or a famous person? Yet, how many of us have put in the work to become those things? There are no shortcuts, it requires discipline and long practices.

So it is , with growth in Christ. This is a challenge to be obedient and patient. We live in a fast-paced, fast food, microwave, internet culture. but becoming like Christ is a slow process. We can come to church, or watch an event online, and get fired up, and ready to do what God calls us to do, at least temporarily. He wants us to do His will, day in and day out!

In verse 13, Paul says God is working in us for His good purpose. And in verse 14, he said to "do everything without grumbling or arguing." I don't know about you all, but that's the hardest request for me.

Complaining is a temptation for anyone, whether in your home, or in the community, because people don't always live up to one another's expectations. I'm going to strive harder to remember Paul's words even if it's not going to be easy.

Obviously we should avoid grumbling because it is offensive to God. Paul has a bigger reason. He says. that grumbling and arguing damages our relationship with God and others.

Consider the opportunity we have to make a difference in someone's life just by speaking differently. We can replace grumbling with gratitude and praise. God is at work within us. We are not alone in this. Paul loves the church. His own suffering is second place to his faithfulness. Even though he knows his time is limited, he is not complaining. He's glad and is rejoicing that he gets to suffer. Paul gives an amazing picture of rejoicing through trying times.

How is it possible to rejoice through pain, and hurts, and brokenness? Just remember, Jesus is Lord, He will complete what He's started. In Jesus, we are doing better than we deserve. How do we do what He wants for us? Be happy you can help others by the Grace of God and anticipate the coming day of Jesus.

In closing, let us pray: Heavenly Father, Thank you so much for the grace that you extend to us every single day. Please help us to become more like you and shine like the stars in the sky. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen