

Transcendent Joy: Learning How to Rejoice No Matter What

Message #11: **How to Live an Untainted Life** (Philippians 2:14-18) – February 12, 2023 - Pastor Jeff

- Paul continues his call for the church *“to work out your salvation with fear and trembling”* and challenges everyone to live an unstained or untarnished life that is *“blameless and innocent”* and *“above reproach”*.
 - We understand it is impossible to live an unstained life because we are born stained by sin.
 - We know also that when you have been washed by the blood of the Lamb, God has removed the stain of your sin.
 - And now having been cleansed by the Lord, we know we must obey His commands to *“cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God”* (2 Cor 7:1) and to *“cleanse your hands you sinners and purify your hearts, you double-minded”* (James 4:8)
- So scripturally, we are positionally stain-free in Christ (cleansed of all our sins), yet practically we strive to live a stain-free life even though we will still be stained by sin (Titus 2:14).
- Paul gives us four ways that we as believers can strive to live an unstained life:

❶ Stay away from the sin of discontent (2:14)

- Paul is direct and to the point: *“do all things without grumbling or disputing”* and this command teaches us two things:
 - It is a comprehensive command (*“do all things”*). God doesn’t leave us any wiggle room when it comes to whining, murmuring, or questioning anything in our life, whether it be people, things or our circumstances.
 - It is a critical command because grumbling or disputing says to God that His will and purpose for us is not good and needs to include our wants. The lessons the children of Israel had to learn in their grumbling were very hard, but needed (Exodus 14:10-12, 30-31; 15:22-26; 16:1-3, 7-8; 17:1-7; Numbers 11:1-9; 14:1-4, 27, 36-37; 16:41ff, 45-49; 20:1-4; 21:4-5; Psalm 106:24-26; Rom. 9:20; Lam. 3:39)

❷ Stay motivated by your call to distinctiveness (2:15)

- Believers are called to be different and distinct from the world system and its beliefs: we live for a different purpose (2 Cor. 5:15), a different place (heaven is our ultimate home-Phil. 3:20), and by a different pattern (Paul’s point in verse 15).
- We don’t grumble and dispute for two compelling reasons:
 - First, we live to show our transformed life (*“so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach”*). We tend to emulate our parents and as *“children of God”*, our heavenly Father wants us to reflect His character in living a separated life (*“holiness”*)
 - Second, we live to shine our illuminated life (*“among whom you appear as lights in the world”*). We live in a dark world of sin which is described as *“crooked and perverse”*. Yet, we are not called to live like hermits, but *“lights”* that testify of God’s amazing truth and grace that others need to experience (Eph. 5:8; Matt. 5:16)

❸ Stay gripped by the word of life that delivers (2:16)

- We are called to keep a firm grip on *“the word of life”* (Jesus is called the *“Word of life”* – 1 John 1:1 as is the gospel, and both give life – John 5:24; Acts 13:48)
- This *“word of life”* (the gospel) is a worthwhile message that delivers the truth in a dark world and takes you all the way to your heavenly home. It is a gospel that delivers, and Paul wants them to know how

important it is to him that their commitment to the gospel reassures him that he didn't serve them "*in vain*" (1 Cor. 15:58; 3 John 4)

④ **Stay joyful despite all the difficulties (2:17-18)**

- Paul returns to his theme of joy and wants them to know how much his joy fueled his ministry for them and others no matter how tough the circumstances. He uses a powerful word picture on "*being poured out as a drink offering*" (Num. 15:1-15; Ex. 29:38-41) which pictures his life being poured out in sacrificial ministry on behalf of those who would believe and be part of the Lord's church (2 Cor. 12:15; 2 Tim. 4:6).
- Paul wants the church to "*rejoice in the same way and share your joy*". How did we do this? It is by having a joy that submits to Jesus and serves, shines, and sacrifices for Him like Jesus did for us (Heb. 12:2)