Power to Change October 14, 2018

*Philippians 2:12-18 Series: Inextinguishable Joy*

“I never felt as good as I wanted to be.

My bar was Beethoven." – Billy Joel

Intro: Complaint resists eviction. How can I change?

1. Live out your salvation, don’t just receive it.
2. With change, where we start will determine how far we get.

v. 12 *Therefore*

v. 12 *my beloved*

v. 12 *your own salvation*

1. Salvation isn’t just a prayer to get into heaven.

v. 12 *work out your own salvation*

2 Corinthians 7:1 *Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.*

1. Change comes when we live with a reverent awe of God.

v. 12 *with fear and trembling*

The opposite of fear is a light, casual attitude toward God.

Exodus 20:20 *Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin.*

* Are you more tempted to direct your complaints against others or against yourself?
* Why is it important to not just “try to change” but instead start by focusing on what Jesus has done for you?
* What are some ways you can cultivate a fear of God, when we live in such a casual world?

1. Trust in the power of God working in you.
2. God’s work in us is our motivation to work out our salvation.

v. 13 *for it is God who works in you*

1 Corinthians 15:9-10 *For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.*

1. God works to change us from the inside out.

v. 13 *God who works in you, both to will and to work*

Gordon Fee: This … does not so much mean that God is “doing it for them,” but that God supplies the necessary empowering.

Colossians 1:29 *For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.*

* Why should God’s working in me motivate me to work out my salvation? i.e. What difference does it make that God is at work in me “to will and to work for his good pleasure?”
* Why is it important that God works on our will and not just our work?
* Paul talks of toiling and struggling with the energy that God worked in him. Where are you toiling and struggling to serve and to grow spiritually?

1. Resist discontentment and choose to rejoice.
2. True faith confronts discontentment.

v. 14 *Do all things without grumbling or disputing …*

v. 15 *be blameless and innocent, children of God*

1. True faith looks different than the world.

v. 15 *in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation … shine as lights in the world*

v. 16 *so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain*

1. True faith chooses to rejoice.

v. 17 *Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering … I am glad and rejoice with you all.*

v. 18 *Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.*

* Why is grumbling a sin?
* If the Philippians continued to grumble, why did Paul fear that he might have laboured in vain? i.e. What does that mean?
* Shining as light in the midst of a “crooked and twisted generation” comes with challenges and difficulties. Why does Paul feel the Philippians “should be glad and rejoice” anyway?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study Philippians 2:19-30

Notes