



LC STUDY GUIDE

Done in Sync with the Come Together Sermon Series

The Passage: Philippians 2:12-18

For Life Community usage the week of 11/16/14

Intro: As we approach the conclusion of our "Come Together" series, we return to Philippians Chapter 2 to process what it looks like to work out our salvation so we can make a difference in this dark world. It might be helpful for us to reflect on what brings darkness in life and what brings goodness and light.

Today's Big Idea: We can only shine with the radiance of Jesus in a dark world as we keep processing what God has done in our lives and as we keep practicing Christian obedience.

Philippians 2:12-18

12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

14 Do everything without grumbling or arguing, 15 so that you may become blameless and pure, "children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation." Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky 16 as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. 17 But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. 18 So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

O – Referring to the humility and obedience of Jesus, Paul encourages the Philippians to continue in their obedience. What do you see as the "marks of obedience" throughout this passage?

I – Paul says that salvation is to be worked out with "fear and trembling." If salvation cannot be earned with human merit and grace cannot be revoked, what do you think he's teaching? Second, why does he describe that this should be done with fear and trembling?

(The response that God seeks is rooted in authentic love, and not in being afraid. Therefore, this idea of fear and trembling is more about reverence, humility and awe).

A – What are the matters and moments in life that make us fearful? How does our faith in God inform and perhaps change, our fears?

O – Doing everything without complaining and arguing is a reference to the ancient Israelites grumbling after the Exodus. Can you describe a time when you felt or saw grumbling and complaining following a time of incredible deliverance? After the high of deliverance, there is a new normalcy that sets in. Why do you think grumbling/complaining so easily becomes part of that?

(The "new normal" is often uncharted territory and this brings us anxiety as we try to individually and collectively figure out what it means for us. Therefore, adjusting to it requires virtues like patience, kindness, humility and greater faith.)

O – In working out our salvation and avoiding grumbling, believers are in a posture to be blameless and pure before a "crooked generation." This is another reference to the ancient Israelites' place in Canaanite culture. Being mindful of sounding judgmental, what can we identify as shortcomings and moral failures in our respective generation?

A – "Shining like stars and holding firmly the word of life" echoes Jesus' teaching to be the salt of the earth, a lamp, or a city on a hill. This is Paul's encouragement for the church to carry the spiritual legacy that God called Israel to. In continuing this legacy, what do you see in today's Church that should be distinct, pure, and blameless from the corruption identified in our own culture?

A – Paul's boasting in their "shining" is not out of conceit but from the joy of being identified with such a brilliant testimony. For this, he considers martyrdom worthwhile. Further, he encourages his readers to rejoice similarly. What do you hope to see when you look back on your life (and the life of your church community) so that you can sincerely rejoice?

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- a. **Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single meeting.** Take some time and select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your Life Community group.
 - b. Certain questions work better for certain groups. You are encouraged to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best.
 - c. Complement these questions with "process questions" (what else? what more? what do others think?).
 - d. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don't rush people but encourage their participation. And avoid answering your own questions!
 - e. Timing/pacing: allocate your time and move forward gently, with a steady pace.
 - f. Application: Pace the study to conclude with "difference making" application.
 - g. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into "teaching," rather than facilitating. It can cause people to feel distracted or de-powered.