

Mutual Joy

“Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me” (Phil. 2:17-18).

“I joy and rejoice with you all,” says Paul. He is glad by himself to make the offering of his life, if this supreme sacrifice is demanded. He will not shrink back, but will meet it gladly, and all the more readily since he can share his joy with them. Fellowship is a blessed reality. Paul is glad on his own account that he has been the instrument in their salvation (Kennedy). He is still more joyful at the experiences of grace which they have in Christ. Joy is not selfish, but wishes company. The woman in Luke 15:9 who found her lost piece of money called in her women friends and said: “Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost.” So the shepherd who found the one lost sheep said to his friends: “Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost”. So the father says: “Make merry, for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found” (Luke 15:24). The child all aglow with his Christmas toys wishes other children to come and share his joys. “And in the same manner do ye also joy, and rejoice with me.” Play up to your part of the joy. Plutarch tells of the messenger from Marathon who expired on the first threshold in Athens with these words on his lips: “Rejoice and we rejoice.” Nowhere in the Epistle is Paul so insistent about joy as here. The Christian is rich in his joy in Christ. What joy it will be in heaven to tell the story of the triumph of Christ over sin in your life and in mine. ■

NURSERY MINISTRY WORKERS FOR THIS WEEK

10:50 a.m. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Charity Crawford
Cradle Roll 2: Volunteer Needed!!!
Lord's Supper Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Shirley White
Cradle Roll 2: Volunteer Needed!!!
Wed. Eve. Service ----- Volunteers Needed!!!

AND THE PEOPLE CAME...

Week of April 5, 2015

Sunday School ----- 16
Sunday Morning Service ----- 40
Sunday Evening Service ----- 38
Wed. Eve. Service, 04/08/15 ----- 20

AND THE PEOPLE GAVE...

Week of April 5, 2010

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 890.10
Total Received for Week of 04/05/10: \$ 890.10

Average amount of Undesignated Offerings needed to operate the church EACH WEEK, as a minimum = \$ 1,400.00

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED

1. Admit that you are a sinner.
2. Admit that God says all sins must be paid for.
3. Accept the fact that Christ took upon Himself the suffering necessary to pay for all your sins.
4. You must change your mind about sin and sinning (God calls this repentance).
5. By an act of your will, accept by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, who can save you from the penalty of sin. Then, tell God about this in a simple prayer. Believe that God keeps His promise to save you, and thank Him for His salvation.



Please Remember To Be Faithful to Give!

As with everything else, the costs of keeping a church going never go down - they always go **up**. Bills wait for no one, and churches are no exception to this. An extra, sacrificial gift today by everyone present would go a long way...

We encourage all of our membership to practice obedience to God by being faithful every payday to give back to Him His tithe (10%). *If every family in our church would practice this one simple discipline, we would never have weeks where we have to put off paying some bills until the following week!*

Everything is expensive, especially for a small church like ours, but ours is a BIG God, and He LOVES to bless His children when they are obedient to Him!

If you are already a tither, we thank you, and encourage you to also give offerings as well. If you're currently not tithing, won't you please start **today - OK?** Thank you.

Church Directory

Todd W. White ----- Pastor
Mickie Shatwell ----- Pianist
Lois Mae Floyd ----- Pianist/ Organist
Dickie Eberle ----- Greeter
Shayne Hooper, Todd W. White ----- S.S. Teachers
Larry & Mary Byars, Ella Allen ----- Outreach
Flowers ----- Shirley White, Charity Crawford

SOUTH HEIGHTS BAPTIST'S WEEKLY
REMINDER

Volume XX

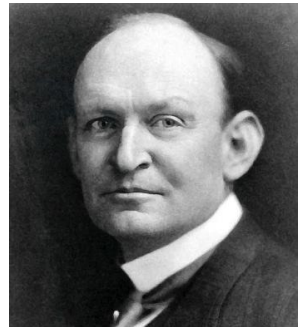
April 12, 2010

Number 12

Realizing God's Plan In Life

by Dr. A. T. Robertson

Text: *Phillipians 2:12-18*



Dr. A. T. Robertson
1863 - 1934

Paul is eminently practical as well as really profound. He is equally at home in the discussion of the great problems of theology and in the details of the Christian life. He is a practical mystic who does not leave his mysticism in the clouds, but applies it to the problem in hand. There is in Paul no divorce between learning and life. Speculative theology as philosophy he knows and uses as a servant to convey his highest ideas, but he never forgets the ethics of the man in the street or at the desk. He has just written a marvellous passage on the Humiliation and Exaltation of Christ Jesus, scaling the heights of Christ's equality with God and sounding the depths of the human experience of Jesus, from the throne of God to the death on the Cross and back again. But Paul has no idea of leaving this great doctrinal passage thus. "So then, my beloved," he goes on with an exhortation based on the experience of Christ. He returns to the whole lump. There are men and women in our churches who remain true when pastors come and go and when others fall away.

Working In and Working Out

"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."
- Phil. 2:12-13

In Paul's absence he desires that the Philippians shall press right on with the work of their own salvation in so far as the development is committed to their hands. The eye should rest upon the final goal and so Paul uses a verb that puts the emphasis on the final result. Salvation is used either of the entrance into the service of God, the whole process, or the consummation at the end. The Philippians are to carry into effect and carry on to the end the work of grace already begun. Peter (II Pet. 1 : 10) likewise exhorted his readers to make their calling and election sure. They must not look to Paul to do their part in the work of their salvation. His absence cuts no figure in the matter of their personal responsibility. It is **"your own' salvation."** It is the aim of all to win this goal at last. If so, each must look to his own task and do his own work. The social aspect of religion is true beyond a doubt. We are our brother's keeper and we do owe a debt of love and service to one another that we can never fully discharge (Rom. 13:8). But it is also true that each of us is his own keeper and stands or falls to God. Kipling has it thus: "For the race is run by one and one and never by two and two."

Work it out **"with fear and trembling,"** Paul urges; *"with a nervous and trembling anxiety to do right"* (Lightfoot). People today do not tremble much in the presence of God and most have little sense of fear. Jonathan Edwards' great sermon on **"Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"** finds little echo today. We live in a light-hearted and complacent age. The Puritans went too far to one extreme, but we are going too much to the other. We all need afresh a sense of solemn responsibility to Almighty God. Paul did not feel blindly complacent about himself (I Cor. 9:27). Religion is both life and creed. The creed without the life amounts to little. We touch a hard problem here, to be sure, but Paul feels no incompatibility between the most genuine trust and the most energetic work. The two supplement or rather complement each other, though we cannot divide them. Divine sovereignty is the fundamental fact in religion with Paul. He starts with that. But human free agency is the inevitable corollary, as Paul sees it. The two are not inconsistent in his theology. Hence Paul is not a fatalist like the Essenes and the modern Hyper-Calvinists nor is he a mere Socinian like the Sadducees.

(continued inside)

The Pharisees held to both divine sovereignty and human free agency as most modern Christians do in varying degrees, to be sure. Paul seems to see no contradiction between them as Jesus did not (cf. Matt 2:27+). All our modern efforts to explain the harmony between these two necessary doctrines fail, but we must hold them both true nevertheless. God must be supreme to be God at all. Man must be free to be man at all. The difficulty probably lies in our imperfect processes of reasoning for two such far-reaching truths. But Paul gives the divine sovereignty as the reason or ground for the human free agency. He exhorts the Philippians to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling precisely because God works in them both the willing and the doing and for His good pleasure. We can at least feel that the working of God's will has provided the whole plan of salvation in which we are included and at which we are at work. We toil in the sphere of God's will. But far more is true than that, though we are conscious also that our own wills have free play in this sphere. God presses His will upon ours. We feel the impact of the divine energy upon our wills which are quickened into activity thereby.

A child can grasp this, and rest upon it. A boy of four said joyfully to his mother, **“When we do anything, it's really God doing it.”** So then in one sense God does it all. God is the one who energizes in you both the impulse and the energy to carry out the impulse. No one knows what energy is. It is the scientific name for God. It is ceaseless as the sea, restless as the rapids of Niagara. One of the theories of matter is that all matter is in a vortex of inconceivable velocity, whirling round and round these bombarding electrons. What makes them whirl so? The particles of radium can be seen darting violently into space. We were dead in trespasses and sins till God's Spirit touched us and we leaped to life in Christ This is the mystery of grace. They that are in the flesh cannot please God (Rom. 8:7). God plants in our souls the germ of spiritual life and He does not let it die. His Spirit broods over us and energizes us to grow and work out what God has worked in us.

This is the ground of hope and joy that makes Romans 8 so different from Romans 7. We are in league with God. God's grace is not an excuse for doing nothing. It is rather the reason for doing all. In religion as in nature we are co-workers with God. We plant the seed and plan the plant and hoe it and harvest it. But God gave us the seed and the soil and sends the rain and the sunshine and supplies that wondrous thing that we call life and makes it grow to perfection. **“God has more life than anybody,”** said a child. It is idle to split hairs over our part and God's part. We must respond to the touch of God's Spirit else we remain dead in sin. Jesus is the author and the finisher of faith (Heb. 12: 2), of our faith, but we must believe all the same and keep on looking to Him, the goal of faith and endeavor. There is no higher standard of rectitude than God's good pleasure by which He regulates our lives. Happy is the man who finds God's plan for his life and falls in with it.

Cheerfulness Under Orders

“Do all things without murmurings and disputings.”

- Phil. 2:14

Having committed our lives to the control of God's will we are under orders. It is unmilitary and peevish to fret at God's commands. ***“Do all things without murmurings.”*** The allusion may be to the conduct of Israel in the wilderness (Ex.16:7+ Num. 16:5,10). The Israelites murmured bitterly against Moses and against God repeatedly and with dire results. ***“Neither murmur ye, as some of them murmured and perished by the destroyer” (I Cor. 10:10).*** These inward murmurings against God's will would easily turn to grumbings towards each other. People do not usually stop with resentment against God, but wish to blame somebody. Disunion had already manifested itself in the church at Philippi. If God is supreme and does all things why did He allow this thing to happen? It is easier to ask than to answer that question.

The next step is to become sour towards one another. ***“Without disputings.”*** This word is used for questionings, then doubtings, then disputings. This is the usual course of our intellectual revolt against God. Probably the moral revolt (murmurings) comes first. The sceptical spirit follows resentment against some crossing of our will by God's will. The final result is “intellectual rebellion.” (Lightfoot) Thoughts of hesitation or doubt turn to distrust. Distrust ripens into open disputes when a public stand is taken with others against God Doubt leads to dispute even over trifles. (Kennedy) So then, as good soldiers, Christians are to carry out the orders of the Captain of their salvation. Explanations, if they come at all, come after obedience, not before.

“Into the Valley of Death rode the Six Hundred

Theirs not to make reply,

Theirs not to reason why,

Theirs but to do and die.”

Soldiers go to the charge with a smile on their faces.

Perfection in the Midst of Imperfection

“That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.”

- Phil. 2:15-16

Paul here expresses his purpose about the Philippians. It is a double purpose, their own highest development and the greatest service to others. The first is a prerequisite to the other, though they can- not be wholly separated. They are to become ***“blameless and harmless.”*** They are not so in the state of nature and do not easily become so in a state of grace. Certainly none are absolutely free from blame in the eye of God and men can usually find some fault with most of us. But, at any rate, we can give men as little ground as possible to pick flaws in our character. Whimsical critics cannot be satisfied, but we do have to regard the sober judgment of God's people in ethical matters. Lightfoot

takes “harmless” to refer to the intrinsic character as in Matthew 10:16 **“harmless as doves.”** The word means literally “unmixed” or “unadulterated” like pure milk or pure wine or unalloyed metal.

In Romans 16:19 Paul says; ***“I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple unto that which is evil,”*** a noble motto for young and old. It is a great mistake to feel that one must know evil by experience in order to appreciate good. An unsullied character a man wants in his wife and the wife equally so in her husband. It is this sheer simplicity of character that is so delightful in children and, par excellence in the “children of God” in the full spiritual import of this term. The children of Israel, when they murmured, were not acting like children of God. Paul here quotes Deuteronomy 32:5 and applies it to the Philippians. The children of Israel were full of blemish, while the Philippians are to be “without blemish” like the freewill offering (Lev. 22:21). The Israelites had themselves become ***“a crooked and perverse generation.”*** But the Philippians must not fall to that low level, as they will if they give way to inward discontent. They must exhibit marks of perfection “in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.” It is an indocile or froward and so “crooked” (cf. Acts 2:40; I Pet. 2:18) generation. The word was used of crooked paths (Luke 3:5) and so of crooked steps and crooked ways. The word “perverse” means twisted or distorted and is a bolder word like the Scotch “’thrown” with a twist in the inner nature (Kennedy). Surely our own generation is not without its moral twist and means many straight men when so many are crooked (“crooks”), twisted out of shape.

Paul changes his figure, but goes on with the same idea, ***“among whom ye are seen as lights in the world.”*** These are the very people, the twisted and blinded by the darkness of sin, who need the light. Jesus is the real light of the world (John 8:12), but the followers of Christ also pass on the torch and so bear light to others (Matt. 5 : 14). Here the Philippians are pictured as “luminaries “, rather than as lights in the world of darkness. As the moon and the stars “appear” in the night, so the Christians come out to give light in the darkness. In the dark night of sin the church of Philippi is a lighthouse in the breakers, ***“holding forth the word of life.”*** The Gospel has the principle of life in it John's Gospel unites hght and life as descriptive of the **Logos** (1:4) and Christ offers to men “the light of life “ (John 8:12). Paul naturally blends the two figures here. Vincent rightly calls it “hypercritical” to change the figure in “holding forth. It is common to personify a luminary as a lightbearer.” The figure can be either holding on to the word of life or presenting the word of life. In this latter sense one naturally thinks of the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbour, holding forth the torch of freedom. ***Every church is a lighthouse in a dark place.*** The darker the place the more the light is needed. It is sad to see so many churches deserting the downtown districts where they are so much needed. Rescue work must be carried on where sin has done its worst. It is like fighting the plague. Thank God for the men and women who do take the light into the dark corners of our cities. What would our modern

cities be like without our churches? The answer is the cities of Japan, of China, of India to-day. The word of life quickens to life and brings light to the darkened soul.

Paul's Pride (v. 16)

“For a ground of glorying in the day of Christ.” This clause is related to all of verse 15 and the preceding part of 16. The day of accounts comes to figure more largely in Paul's mind as he grows older.(Kennedy) The writer of Hebrews speaks of the sleepless watch of the shepherds of souls ***“as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief; for this were unprofitable for you.” (Heb. 13:17)*** Paul longs' to have “whereof to glory” in the day of Christ. The success of the Philippians will give Paul something tangible to present to Christ. They will be stars in his crown. He means by “day of Christ” the judgment day, commonly termed the day of the Lord outside of this Epistle. Paul does not wish to be saved “so as by fire” with all his works gone. (I Cor. 3:15) When that day comes and Paul looks back upon his work in Philippi, he does wish to feel ***“that I did not run in vain neither labour in vain.”*** He has the metaphor of the stadium before him as in Galatians 2:2 when he expresses the same dread about the Galatians. He does not wish it all to come to nothingness. The word for labour here means the weariness of labour. Toil and sweat and weariness were all for naught. It is a pitiful case when the preacher has to see the people go back to the flesh-pots of Egypt and leave his work null and void. The Philippians will be Paul's jewels in the presence of Christ as the mother of the Gracchi boasted of her boys.

Paul's Sacrifice

“Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all” (Phil. 2:17).

He will not shrink from death in order to be of service to them and to help them in their efforts to press on in the Christian life. He hopes to live, but he stands in the constant presence of death, and he is not afraid. He had faced death at Phillippi and often since. It will come some day. He is ready now. It is not his apostolic office, but his very life that he offers. The picture here is of their faith in the sense of their Christian life as a sacrifice and priestly service. The Philippians as priests lay down upon the altar their Christian lives (faith and fidelity). Upon' this Paul is ready to pour out his own life as an additional sacrifice in their service.

It is not necessary to press the point whether Paul has in mind the Jewish custom of pouring the drink offering around the altar or the heathen of pouring the libation upon the altar. The latter would be more familiar to the Philippians but the point holds good in either case. Paul is willing to spend and be spent in the service of the Philippians (cf. 2 Cor. 12:15). One thinks of the student volunteers who offer their lives for mission service and challenge the churches to furnish the money for their support. One thinks of David Livingstone who gave his life gladly for the healing of the open sore of the world in Africa.