Philippians 2026 Series -Lesson 18

"Holding Forth the Word of Life"

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Introduction:

Last week we saw in Philippians 2:15 that as believers we are to *"shine as lights in the world,"* In that study I made reference to the parallel between this result of our developing the mind of Christ in order to Shine as lights in the world and the Old Oil Lamp. Today you will note the Old Lamp on the piano. In our study, I pointed out: (1) The base of the lamp is a good representation our physical bodies - designed for a purpose - but void until filled by the Holy Spirit. (2). The oil is the fuel for the light - oil is used in Scripture to represent the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the fuel for our spiritual witness as lights in the world. (3). The burner is the control on the lamp and is representative of our volition - free will with which we make choices. – that little knob is I John1:9 and illustrates our freewill through which we make choices- good and bad. (4). The wick saturated by the oil transports fuel to the fire, which is the light. The wick is representative of our being controlled by the Holy Spirit. In Ephesians 5:18 we are commanded to be filled by the Holy Spirit. The word *"filled"* is translated from the Greek Word 'plerousthe.' It means to be saturated to the point of control. In the same way the wick transfers fuel to the light through our volition the Holy Spirit transfers the power of God to our witness. (5). The light itself is Jesus Christ living in the believer. Fire is used in the Bible as a symbol of judgment - Christ was judged on our behalf. He is the Light of the world! Living in us, we become the means by which that light shines in the world. (6). The chimney or globe of the lamp reflects and magnifies the light. The globe is representative of our personal actions through which we are able to magnify Jesus. If the globe gets dirty the light is not reflected properly, in that same way our personal choices can prevent Christ from shining forth in our lives reflected by our behavior.

Christ is the light of the world (John 8:12) and our text today challenges us "Hold forth that Word of Life." Philippians chapter two verse sixteen describes our ability to shine as lights in the world by, *"Holding forth the Word of Life."*

Text: Philippians 2:16

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

I. Exegesis of Verse 16:

"*Holding forth*" (epe-chontes) Making it a principle to constantly hold up the word as a light…

Participle - believers are to make it a principle to hold up the light
Imperative Mood - we are commanded to hold it up
Present Tense - we are to hold it up continually
Active Voice - we are to perform the action

This word is used of a guiding star or for holding up a torch in order for people to see. The torch we are to hold up is... *"the word of life;"*

"*the word*" (lo-gon) word

Noun – person, place, or thing (word)
Accusative Case- establishes limits and boundaries of what we are to hold up
Masculine Gender- the "word" is the initiator
Singular - only one "true word"

There is no article (the) before the word "*word*." Thus, the emphasis is on the character or quality of the *Word* not the identity of the word. When we have received the Word and accepted it as truth, the Word is reflected in our lives. The Chimney or Globe of the lamp is a reflector of the light and magnifies the brightness. So also is Christ to be reflected in our lives and becomes a living lesson rather than a biblical story. Our life lived by the "Word" makes it a "living word."

"*of life.*" (zo-aes) of life

Noun- person, place, or thing (life)
Genitive Case - source of life
Feminine Gender - responder (life is a result of response to the word being held up)
Singular - there is only one life in view here - Spiritual life. Jesus said,"*...I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*" (John 10:10)

II. Doctrine of Holding Forth the Light.

1. We have been commanded to "*Hold Forth The Light*" (Philippians 2:16)

2. Jesus Christ is the Word that is the source of life (John 1:1-14)

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the

darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but [was sent] to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

3. Holding forth the light means to "lift up" or "put on display" Jesus Christ! We studied the "Doctrine of The "Magnification of Christ" back in chapter one. But, let's review it here again.

(1). To magnify Christ in our bodies means to so enlarge Christ in our lives that He is clearly seen by our attitude and actions. If you have ever been inside a lighthouse, you were no doubt disappointed at the size of the lamp until you observed the reflector behind it that multiplied the light many times over, So also by developing the mind of Christ we magnify Christ like the reflector on the lamp of a lighthouse.

(2). In order to magnify Christ in your life He must reside there. He takes up residence in the life of the believer at salvation (John 5:56; 14:20; 17:23; Romans 8:10; II Corinthians 13:5; I John 4:13; II John 9). But it is only as we accept His teachings and apply them to our lives that He is magnified.

(3). If Christ is to be magnified in you body you must put off the "Old Man" (the Old Sin Nature) and your former manner of life and operate under the control of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:22-32; 5:18; I John 1:5-9).

(4). If Christ is to be magnified in your body you must continually present your body as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1)

(5). If Christ is to be magnified in your body you must have a renovated mind acquired by knowledge and acceptance of God's Word (Ephesians 4:23; I Corinthians 2:16; Romans 12:2). You must have the Mind of Christ in You (Philippians 2:5-7).

(6). The result of these actions will be that others will be able to see Jesus in your actions and will glorify God (Matthew 5:16).

(7). Christ is to be magnified through your speaking boldly for Him

(Philippians 1:20)

Now let's go back to point number four where we left off concerning the doctrine of "Holding Forth the Word of Life."

4. **The Word is the source of life. Therefore when we are holding Him forth others are able to be exposed to the source of eternal life. (John 1:4)**

5. **Holding Forth is an Imperative, Present Active Participle which indicates that we are commanded to make this a constant principle. (Philippians 2:16)**

6. **Our Holding Forth The Word of Life is the basis of joy for ourselves, but also for those who have ministered to us Philippians 2:16b**
   "...that I may rejoice in the day of Christ…"

   ***"...day of Christ...."* is the rapture of the Church and the Judgement Seat of Christ, and the beginning of our being with the reigning Christ. Paul is talking about his having a basis for rejoicing when Christ comes in His kingdom, because those to whom he ministered have held forth the word of life and they are the result of His labor.**

7. **Our Holding Forth the Word of Life is visible evidence to those who have ministered to us that their labor has not been in vain. Paul said in Philippians 2:16c,**
   "...that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain...."

Therefore,

"*You are commanded to adopt a way of expressing the thoughts and feelings of Christ that you have in your mind, totally, and in all ways, and not cop an attitude that says, I really don't want to do it - but will, and not to question or deliberate about it - Just Do It!*

In order that you, having the potential, may become something you were not - without blame and without impurity; Children belonging to God as a result of a spiritual birth, without blemish, in this generation that is characterized by pursuing a crooked way - having been perverted, among whom you shine as lights.

***Keep making it a principle to constantly hold up the word that is the source of life, resulting in my rejoicing in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain, or that I did not labor to the point of exhaustion in vain."* (Expanded translation of Philippians 2:14-16.)**

III. We Are To have Productive Labor:

There are two key phrases in verse 16 that indicate that we as believers are to have production in our lives: *"...that I have not run in vain,"* and *"...that I did not labor to the point of exhaustion in vain."* These two concerns of the Apostle Paul are important to our study here and are summarized in the fact that we are to have productive labor.

Let's look at these two concerns: *"...that I have not run in vain,"* and *"...that I did not labor to the point of exhaustion in vain."*

A. That I have Not Run In Vain:

The first phrase is *"...that I have not run in vain,"*

Paul often used the illustration of running as an example of the Christian life. And, having been a runner, I can certainly understand the validity of the illustration.

Let's examine the implications of the statement... *"...that I have not run in vain,"*

1. The Mental Attitude of The Runner:

a. The productive runner must have a love for the sport (desire is foundational) in order to maintain the discipline required to be productive.

b. Likewise the productive Christian must have a love for the Christian life- you can't live it if you don't love it (I John 2:15) *Love not the world, neither the things [that are] in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

2. There Must Be Commitment to Discipline:

a. The productive runner must be committed to excellence. *"I therefor so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."* (I Corinthians 9:26-27)

b. Likewise, the productive Christian must be committed to Christ. *"According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but [that] with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether [it be] by life, or by death.For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."* (Philippians 1: 20-21)

3. The Discipline of The Runner:

a. The productive runner must be disciplined. Discipline is required to faithfully practice even when he just doesn't feel like it or wants to.

b. Likewise, the productive Christian must be disciplined. ***"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring [it] into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*** **(1 Corinthians 9:24-27)**

Application: As Paul approached the end of his life he said, "*…I have fought a good fight, I have finished [my] course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing…"* **(II Timothy 4:7-8)**

In our text here in Philippians 2:16 he said, ***Keep making it a principle to constantly hold up the word that is the source of life, resulting in my rejoicing in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain.***

B. That I Have Not Labored To The Point Of Exhaustion In Vain:

After challenging the believers at Philippi to ***"...Keep making it a principle to constantly hold up the word that is the source of life, resulting in my rejoicing in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain..."*** **Paul adds,** ***"...that I did not labor to the point of exhaustion in vain."***

We are to follow Paul's example and labor to the point of exhaustion.

1. The Christian Life Involves Labor

In Philippians 2:12 we were told, ***"...work out you own salvation with fear and trembling..."*** **Let's quickly review what we discovered.**

"*work out*" (kater-gadz-esthe) keep participating in bringing to the outside that which is on the inside...

Verb- expresses action
Imperative Mood - a command
Present Tense - continuous action
Middle Voice - subject participates in the action

Now, follow this very close... In our previous study we observed

that we are to develop the mind of Christ. Here, in the context, Paul has spoken of listening to, attending to, and applying the Word of God. Now.... this Greek word "katergadzesthe" means participating in the process of bringing to the outside that which is on the inside.

What is to be on the inside?? The Word of God - The mind of Christ!!!

This phase, *"...work out...."* is used idiomatically of using principles to carry something to its ultimate conclusion. It is used of solving a math problem. That is, using the principles of mathematics to solve a math problem - addition, subtraction, division, etc. all have basic principles. You are able to use those principles to carry a math problem to its ultimate conclusion.

In this same way the believer is to use the principles of God's Word, the mind of Christ, to carry his salvation (which he already possesses) to its ultimate conclusion - good works.

Ephesians 2:10 says,

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Thus, we are to use the principles of God's word, which are in us, to carry our salvation to its ultimate conclusion - the performance of good works and a proper conduct in representing God.

Who do we participate with - the Holy Spirit and the doctrine resident in our minds - these enable us to properly represent God. And we are to do so ....

"with fear and trembling" **with radical and total dependency**

"fear" **(phobou) reverential awe that draws us…**

Noun - thing
Genitive Case - genitive of description
Masculine Gender - reverential awe that draws us to God is to be the initiator of our service

Notice this? The initiator of our representation of God is a reverential awe for God which motivates us to apply what we know of the Word of God to our lives.

"trembling" **(tromou) trembling from exertion**

Noun- thing
Genitive Case - genitive of description
Masculine Gender - initiator of representation

This phrase is used in the Greek to express radical and total dependency - that is faith - faith is radical and total dependency. It means to place ones weight or dependency upon an object.

Expanded Translation of this phrase in Verse 12: ***participate in carrying to its ultimate conclusion your salvation with a radical and total dependency.***

2. This Involves Carrying Salvation To Maturity:

(a). Requires Knowledge of The Word In The Right Frontal Lobe
(b). Requires Application of Knowledge To Experience

3. This Involves Carrying Salvation To Service:

(a). Requires Knowing Your Gifts
(b). Requires Using Your Gifts

C. In Running or In Laboring We Use the Resources of God:

Philippians 2:13 said
For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of [his] good pleasure.

"For it is God" **(theos)(gar)(estin) For God keeps on being...**

This verb, (estin), is in the Present Tense (continuous action), Active Voice (God the subject produces the action of being, Indicative Mood (mood of reality).

"which worketh" (ho)(en-ergon) the one which as a matter of principle continually operates ...

Participle- as a principle
Present Tense - continuous action
Active Voice – the subject -God- produces the action
Nominative Case - identifying the source of our ability to function
Masculine Gender- initiator

This word is the one from which we get our English word 'energy.' The participle here identifies a principle of continuous operation...

"in you" **(en)(humin) within you...**

Noun - person
Dative/Locative/Instrumental -advantage, location and means of operation

God has taken up residence in the believer in order to provide the

operational energy necessary to represent Him properly. The emphasis of the Dative case indicates it is to your advantage to have Him providing the operational energy. The emphasis of the Locative case identifies where God provides that operational energy - in you. The emphasis of the Instrumental case indicates He has provided the means by which we can serve Him. God works within us to...

"both" **(kai) both...**
There are two specific things that God places in operation in us....

"to will" **(the-lein) to desire as a matter of purpose**
Infinitive - denotes purpose
Present Tense - continuous action
Active Voice - God enables us to have the desire

When we have listened, accepted, and submitted God is able to develop in us His will for our lives. Each of us should be reminded that God has a plan for our representation of Him and He will provide the desire.

"and to do" **(energein)(huper) and to operate on behalf of as a matter of purpose**
Infinitive - denotes purpose
Present Tense - continuous action
Active Voice - God enables us to produce the action

The use of this infinitive with the word 'huper' indicates that God enables us to produces the action on His behalf

"of [his] good pleasure" **(eudokias) that which will bring Him approbation**
Noun- thing (approbation -Praise)
Genitive Case - genitive of description and possession
Feminine Gender - response (the response to our desire and action will bring Him praise)

Expanded Translation of Verse 13: ***For God keeps on being the one continually operating within you both to desire as a matter of purpose, and to operate on behalf of that which will bring Him approbation***

1. **God Keeps Operating In Us:**
   (a). He keeps giving us the desire to live for Him
   (s). He keeps giving us the ability to live for Him.

2. **If we lack either the desire or the ability it is because we do not have His Word residing in us and are not carrying it to its ultimate conclusion.**

3. **With our free will we can yield to Him or to our Old Nature.**

(a). Our Old Sin Nature has its own desires - Ephesians 2:3

Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others

(b). Our Old Sin Nature has its own way - Isaiah 55:8

For my thoughts [are] not your thoughts, neither [are] your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

Conclusion

We have a race to run! Our spiritual gifting determines the course, and God manipulates our circumstances to provide course markers along the way.

We have a work to do! As God reveals our tasks we are to perform them with a reverential awe that draws us to Him and we are to labour at the tasks to the point of exhausting. Our exhaustion is where He steps in and provides what we need. Remember, He provides both the will and the ability to enable us to do what He has assigned us, but we must develop the mind of Christ and make application of Biblical Truth in order to carry our role with God to completion.

Therefore, let us do the work and run the course as God reveals it to us from day to day,

But it All Begins at Salvation:

For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God...
The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life...
With the heart man believes unto righteousness...
But with the mouth confession is made unto salvation...
For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved!

"… and your joy no man taketh from you…"
(Luke 16:22)