



# ADVANCING THE GOSPEL

Philippians 2:12-18

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# Introduction

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- We advance the Gospel when we shine the light of the Gospel in our lives.
- Because of Christ, the Christians in Philippi had the power and the example to follow him in godly obedience. However, Paul was getting at a deeper level of obedience than merely following rules.
- Paul called the Philippians to Christlikeness in all areas of life in order to display the beauty of Christ to the world.
- In serving one another and sacrificing for the Gospel, Christians follow Christ's example.

Philippians 2:12-13

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# Obedience

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- For Paul, the basis for everything in the Christian life is found in the example of Christ.
- He begins this collection of verses with the word “Therefore,” centering the focus of Christian obedience on the work of Christ and His humility.
- Paul encourages these partners in the Gospel to conduct their lives in a manner worthy of the Gospel (Philippians 1:27), in light of Christ’s work.

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# Obedience

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- Paul calls these Christians to obey, and to look to Jesus who has gone before them and modeled faithful obedience and a godly dependence on their behalf and for their sake.
- A Christian's obedience is not centered on rules.
- Obedience is defined not in legal terms but in relational terms as knowing Christ, being like him, and serving him.
- It is a way of life, following in the footsteps of Christ

# Obedience

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- Paul writes “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”
- Despite common confusion on this verse, Paul was not telling the Christians of Philippi to achieve their salvation on their own effort, that their salvation required them to save themselves.
- This idea directly contradicts Paul’s message in Ephesians 2:1-10, that salvation is by God’s grace and not our works, so that none can boast.
- Keep in mind Paul’s call to live in a manner worthy of the Gospel in 1:27.

# Obedience

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- As Christians work out their salvation, they are not achieving it, but rather displaying the proof of it as God works in them.
- Paul's point here is that once grace saves us, grace continues to work in us.
- This is the truth from John 15:5 when we abide in the vine, we bear fruit. What is inwardly true produces outward manifestations of that truth.
- The idea is that the Philippians were to make their salvation external because God had made it internal.

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# Obedience

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- And this “working out” that takes place happens, Paul says, with fear and trembling.
- Here’s what Paul is not saying: “Be scared of God in all that you do, always unsure of where you stand with Him as you continue to seek His approval.”
- Rather, this phrase describes someone who stands in awe of God and approaches Him with great reverence (Exodus 3:5; 1 Samuel 12:24; Hebrews 12:28).

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# Obedience

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- This was the nature of how priests approached God throughout the Old Testament.
- The rituals surrounding entering the temple where God's presence dwelled were quite extensive.
- Now, because of Christ, God's Spirit dwells in His children.
- Therefore, knowing God works and moves in and through the life of the Christian should make us live in reverent awe.

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# Obedience

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- This is why we shine the light of the Gospel as we seek to know Christ. We behold Him for all that He is and we are humbled by the fact that His Spirit works in us and shows us signs of our salvation as He is active in our lives.
- The deeper we know God, and know that He is at work in us (verse 13), the more we shine the light of the Gospel.
- When we know that God works among us, we remain aware of our own inability to achieve salvation for ourselves, as well as live the Christian life altogether.

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# Obedience

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- The Christian depends on God daily, for obedience, as well as for outward displays of the Gospel at work within us.
- Paul's call for obedience is not disconnected from the power needed to live out that obedience. And that power comes as believers rest in the finished work of Christ.
- Believers won't shine the light of the Gospel by looking to their own efforts to live lives worthy of the Gospel. That's works-based righteousness. And that isn't the hope of Christ.

Philippians 2:14-16

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# Blameless

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- “Do all things without grumbling or disputing,” Paul writes in verse 14.
- Relational disputes and the tendency to complain negatively affects the Church’s witness to the world.
- How will the Church show unity and be of the same heart and mind (as Paul writes in 2:2) if bickering and complaining are what characterize the interactions within the Church?
- Paul continues to urge the Philippians to be like Jesus.

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# Blameless

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- The apostle Peter described Christ in this way in his first letter:
- “He [Jesus] did not commit sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth; when he was insulted, he did not insult in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten but entrusted himself to the one who judges justly” (1 Peter 2:22-23).
- Look to Jesus’ example as He bore the weight of sin and the shame of the Cross, and let it produce a spirit of gladness instead of complaining.

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# Blameless

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- Why does Paul say this?
- Verse 15 explains: Don't give the surrounding culture anything that would bring accusation to Christ or His Church.
- He encourages these Christians to “be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation.”
- Don't let the ways of the outside world taint the body of Christ. Continue to live out the calling of the Gospel in a manner that is worthy of Christ's life and sacrifice.

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# Blameless

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- The cornerstone of the Christian life isn't the moral purity and perfection of Christians.
- The cornerstone of the Christian life is the purity and perfection of Christ Jesus given in the Christian's place.
- This is why the life of the Christian shines a light to the world, because the life of the Christian points to Christ, not the Christian.
- This is what Paul means when he writes in verse 16, "holding fast to the word of life ..."

Philippians 2:17-18

# Sacrifice

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- Paul gave his life for the Gospel. According to verse 17, he was “poured out as a drink offering” for the sake of the faith of them
- This language concerning Paul’s sacrifice connects back to verse 7 when Paul writes of Christ that He “emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant.”
- This is how the life of the Christian shines as a Gospel light in the world and for the world. Paul understands the Christian calling is one of sacrifice and service. Jesus said, “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35).

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# Sacrifice

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- For this reason, the Church shines one of the truest lights of the Gospel when it seeks to serve the world like Christ.
- Paul says, “Even if my life is emptied for your sake, I am glad and will rejoice.”
- Paul encourages the believers to be glad and rejoice with him because serving others with Christlike sacrifice is evidence of the Gospel that the on-looking world cannot ignore (verse 18).

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# Sacrifice

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- Paul writes in 1:21, “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”.
- As Christ emptied Himself to bring about salvation for God’s children, Christians must empty themselves to shine a light on Christ’s sacrifice for those not yet redeemed.
- Paul did this. So, too, must the Church if the Gospel is to advance and shine brightly in a dark world.

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# Ask Kerby

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Questions about Easter, Palm Sunday, as well as the Easter bunny and Easter eggs.

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# Why is Easter later this year?

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- Why does Easter fall on April 21 this year?
- The date of Easter was set in AD 325 at the Council of Nicea.
- Easter is set for the first Sunday after the first full moon occurring on or after the vernal equinox.
- Vernal equinox is around March 20, but the full moon can vary quite significantly.
- Easter can happen between March 22 and April 25.

# Why do we call it Easter?

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- The Frankish church (Germans who settled in Rome during the fifth century) celebrated the resurrection.
- The celebration of Christ's resurrection included the word *alba*, which means white (the color of the robes worn during the resurrection festival). The word *alba* also meant sunrise.
- When the name of the festival was translated into German, the sunrise meaning, *ostern*, was used to describe the sunrise ceremony. And the word associated with the ceremony (*ostern*) is how we got the English word *Easter*.

# Why do we have an Easter bunny?

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- Some historical sources suggest that the Easter bunny tradition arrived in America in the 1700s with German immigrants who settled in Pennsylvania and brought their tradition of an egg-laying hare called “Osterhase” or “Oschter Haws.”
- The children made nests in which this creature could lay its colored eggs.
- Eventually, the custom spread across the U.S. and the fabled rabbit’s Easter morning deliveries expanded to include chocolate and other types of candy and gifts, and decorated Easter baskets replaced nests.

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# Why do we have Easter eggs?

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- Easter eggs are likely linked to pagan traditions. The egg, an ancient symbol of new life, has been associated with pagan festivals celebrating spring.
- Decorating eggs for Easter is a tradition that dates back to at least the 13th century, according to some sources.
- One explanation for this custom is that eggs were often listed as a forbidden food during Lent.
- People would paint and decorate them to mark the end of the period of penance and fasting, then eat them on Easter as a celebration.

# How is Easter related to Passover?

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- The Old Testament ceremony of Passover is a celebration of how God delivered the Israelites from bondage in Egypt.
- Death would come to the firstborn male from every household, but God promised to pass over any house with the blood of a perfect lamb smeared on its doorpost.
- God then commanded the Jews to remember their deliverance through the annual ceremony of the Passover.
- Its position in the Jewish calendar corresponds to the beginning of Spring.

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# How is Easter related to Passover?

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- Jesus celebrated the Passover prior to His crucifixion.
- Jesus was crucified on the Friday of Passover week and resurrected on Passover Sunday.
- Jesus is seen as the ultimate Sacrificial Lamb. Anyone who accepts the gift of His sacrifice is said to have His blood on the doorposts of their hearts.
- No other sacrifice needs to be made for our sins.
- Jesus paid the penalty and set us free from the power and penalty of sin.

# How does that relate to Palm Sunday?

- Palm Sunday commemorates the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.
- It is documented in all four gospels (Matt. 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-44; and John 12:12-19).



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# Palm Sunday

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Daniel 9:24-27

1. There would be a decree to rebuild Jerusalem.
2. Jerusalem and the Temple would be rebuilt.
3. Then an anointed one would be “cut off” (or killed).
4. Jerusalem and the Temple would be destroyed again.

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# Palm Sunday

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## Daniel 9:24-27

1. The decree is from Artaxerxes to Nehemiah, which occurs in 445 C. (Nehemiah 2:1-8).
2. Then count 69 sevens of years (173,880 days)
3. Starts on March 14, 445 BC (decree)
4. Ends on April 6, 32 (Palm Sunday)

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# The Real Meaning of Easter

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