



## Living in a Crooked World

I love Philippians. This Christian Epistle is so very practical. Philippians teaches many practical aspects of Christian behavior; things that we need every day. Isn't it amazing that, even though thousands of years have transpired between then and now, we still have the same needs? God knew what He was doing when He provided this revelation to Paul. *Learning how to walk and talk like a Christian simply couldn't be easier; God knew exactly what He was doing when he had His wonderful Word recorded!*

Honestly, I could pick almost any



couple of verses in Philippians and write for days. I recently taught on what "in the Lord" meant. When this phrase is used, it refers to Christian behavior, how a Christian should behave in this crazy world, which leads me to these verses.

Philippians 2: 13-16:

13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. 14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings: 15 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; 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.

Verse 15 says that the Philippians were living in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. Tell me that that doesn't sound familiar no matter where you live today, two millenniums after this was written? It sounds eerily familiar, doesn't it? Today, we find ourselves in the midst of corrupt governments, financial systems, economic systems and religious systems to name

# Living in a Crooked World

a few. What a time, a special time, to learn how to behave as a Christian. What can we learn from these verses that will definitely help us behave as God wants us to?

Verse 13 gives us the reason to keep on going when we learn that God always is at work in us. Even if you feel like you are a worthless person. Let's say that you lose your job and are depressed. God still works in you to will and do of His good pleasure. Let's say that you just lost your house because you couldn't make your payments. God still works in you to will and do of His good pleasure. Let's say that some ill has befallen you. God still works in you to will and do of His good pleasure. ***No matter your situation, God is still at work in you!*** This is what keeps us in the groove, so to speak. God never leaves us.

Now, maybe your religion teaches that God leaves you at times. But this cannot be true if God worketh in you both to will and do of his good pleasure. Sometimes you have to choose between what man says and what God's Word says. ***God's Word will always take care of you; Man's word might not.***

Because God is always at work in you for the greater good, He asks that you live your life without murmurings and disputings. Far too many people spend far too much time complaining and being part of the problem. Let's be people that spend our lives helping others with the wonderful things that God performs within us. No cause for murmurings and disputings when you're about God's business. The only time you have time for those bad things is when you aren't about God's business. The next

time you start complaining, stop yourself and say something nice. If you can't say something nice, then don't say anything at all. Then, next time you want to complain, try again to say something nice. Eventually, you'll get the hang of it and be able to change a bad habit into a good one. The same holds true to causing disputes among people. If you look up one day and find that you indeed are the one who is causing disputing, stop doing it and start helping people. You'll be surprised at what you find you can do, especially when you realize that God is at work in you to will and do of His good pleasure.

The next verse tells us how God wants us to appear in this world. Blameless and harmless! Blameless doesn't mean that you are without fault; it means that your actions are according to God's Word, and that they

# Living in a Crooked World

(your actions) are unable to draw blame against you. God's really big on not wanting or allowing anyone or anything to lay blame at a Christian's feet. He will do His part, but we have to do ours. If you really want to live your life according to God's Will, this is a concept that you'll want to master. God wants us to appear blameless and harmless in this world. The question is, "do you?" If you do, then you may need to alter your behavior a little, or quite a bit. ***What changes do you need to make so that you can stand before God and say, "I definitely live my life both blamelessly and harmlessly."***

But that's not all. God wants us also to be "without rebuke." Now, can you imagine that? Rebuke is what happens when someone comes up to tell you that you just did something wrong and need

to change your behavior. Keep in mind that this change always should relate directly back to God's Word. In other words, if someone is asking you to behave contrary to God's Word, then pay them no bother. But, if someone is coming up and asking you to change according to God's Word, then that's okay. But, God wants us to take this a step further by willingly accepting responsibility to live blamelessly and harmlessly so that we are always without rebuke. If you live both blameless and harmless, you will also be without rebuke!

And here is where we learn that we live in the midst, not in the middle, but surrounded on all sides, by a crooked and perverse world. I suppose that I didn't need to tell you that, but I wanted you to see it in God's Word. God knows how messed up the world was, and would be by the time you came along. He knew that

it would be all messed up; no surprise to Him! Well, now that you know that, you can breath a sigh of relief and get busy doing what He wants you to be doing – shining as lights in the world. I agree, this is a fairly tall order, but not one to refute. God wants us to shine, shine, and shine some more. Only those who pay attention to the first part of this teaching will truly be able to shine like God wants. ***Polish up the blameless and harmless departments in your daily business and you'll be a great shiner! Shine like there's no tomorrow.***

How? By holding forth the Word of Life. The life from God's Word can never be made by man. The world simply isn't good enough to produce God's kind of life. But God's WORD is! When you speak God's Word, you are literally speaking Words of Life.

# Living in a Crooked World

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Just think of how many people need this life today. Millions. Millions in corrupt governments, corrupt financial systems, millions in corrupt economies, and especially millions in corrupt religions. Why, the number of places where you could speak God's Word is practically endless. *The question is, do you want to speak God's Word? I should hope so.*

Aside from being able to help people so very much, this kind of superior Christian behavior is important for another special reason. That you and those with you may rejoice in the Day of Christ (when Jesus Christ returns to gather together all Christian saints – you and me)! God wants and expects rejoicing at that time. He has made it available to people like you and me to live a very fulfilled life while in this crazy world. He wants you to

look back and be proud at how you ran this race. Do you want to be proud too? If the answer is a resounding “yes,” then get busy following these very practical guidelines of Christian behavior. In time, you'll be glad you did!

Much love in Christ,

Jerry D. Brown