

Life Group Notes 10/1/2023  
Pastor Mark Warren Philippians Week 4

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[No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at [tbeachhead@comcast.net](mailto:tbeachhead@comcast.net). Thank you for taking the time—Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.]

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP.** BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! **Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.**

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Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 10/1. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** I include each of the passages mentioned in full, to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes. Footnotes are not meant to distract. This week's footnotes include:

1. [On fear and "the fear of the Lord."](#)
2. [On taking notes.](#)

\*\*\***Important:** At the very [end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week. \*\*\*

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Pastor Mark began by correcting a statement he had made last week concerning heavenly worship 24/7. Look up Revelation 4:2-11. You will see the Throne, four creatures and twenty-four elders each on thrones, singing. Now turn to Revelation 5, and these same elders have the incense from the prayers of the saints, and each has a harp which they play as they sing. As the lamb is exalted from verses 6-14, they are joined by angels and living creatures and elders numbering myriads and thousands of thousands all singing.

1. What does this evoke when you see it?
2. Where are you in this crowd?
3. What stirs you most on the inside and causes you to praise (speak highly of, and affirm) someone else or something?
4. Do you enjoy sports? Why does an excellent play in any sport evoke praise?

Pastor Mark refers to us as a "dimmer switch." He says, "We need to see what makes us go dim, and what makes us go bright."

1. What do you think?
2. When are you at your brightest?
3. When are you at your dimmest?

### **Lights in the World**

*12* Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, *13* for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

1. Why “therefore?” Review the verses before this one “to see what the “therefore” is there for.” We were told in verse 5 to have the same mind of humility in us as was in Christ when He gave up all title and power and divinity, to empty Himself as a servant. Jesus set the example. What steps do we take?
2. Mark points out that “you have always obeyed” relates to Jesus’ own obedience spoken of in verse 8, “...becoming obedient to the point of death on the cross.” How does Paul know of the obedience of the Philippians? How much time did he spend with them? How much love have the Philippians shown Paul?
3. What steps do you need to take to work out your salvation? What happens to your will? Whose will comes first? How is that like a death?
4. If you’re working out your *own* salvation, whose salvation are you not supposed to work out? (Why is this a relief for your neighbors and friends and family?)
5. Why fear? (See [footnote 1](#) on fear and the fear of the Lord.) Pastor Mark relates this fear to the surprising sound of an acorn falling in the woods as he walks his new puppy. He’s teaching her to be aware of new sounds. How does awareness relate to fear? How does fear also protect from disaster?
6. Mark teaches his dog, “Stop! Watch! Listen!” How does this relate to fear? How does alertness help? How does attentiveness help?
7. Why trembling? How does this relate to Mark’s “heightened awareness?” How does it relate to humility?
8. Mark asks, “Do you realize that God made you to be alive in this day, in this time for His purposes?” Answer. What are your thoughts? Do you have a testimony?
9. What part does God play in your “working out your own salvation?” Mark says this calls us to “...work out what God has already started in you.” Explain.
10. Review what Paul said in chapter 1: *4* In every prayer for all of you, I always pray with joy, *5* because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, *6* being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. From where does Paul derive his joy? How has he witnessed the Philippians’ obedience? What part has God already played in “working out their salvation?” Who began the work? Who is invested in the work’s completion? Explain.
11. Look up 1 John 4: *1* Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God. For many false prophets have gone out into the

world. *2*By this you will know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, *3*and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and which is already in the world at this time. *4*You, little children, are from God and have overcome them, because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. *5*They are of the world. That is why they speak from the world's perspective, and the world listens to them. *6*We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. That is how we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of deception. Describe the difference between the world's perspective and that of the Spirit? Have you ever wondered why folks do not listen to you? How does John's instruction help you understand the challenge, as you work out the Spirit's will in your own life?

12. Why is pursuing godliness of greatest value? What are the steps?
13. Who helps you grow to *want* to work it all out? Whose will is at work in you? How? Do you have a testimony?
14. Who helps you get it done? What have you already seen?
15. Pastor Mark says, "God is looking for partnership, to work together with you." Look again at what Paul said in chapter 1, quoted above in [question 10](#). How important is the concept of partnership? Who is involved? Who is left out?
16. Why is this cause for thanksgiving? When are you ever alone in this work?
17. Again, why fear and trembling?
18. Look again at verse 13 above: "*13*for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure." How does a father feel when he sees his child arise to a difficult task and do it well? Who is enjoying watching us work this out? (His "good pleasure" is *eudokia*. His satisfaction/delight) To what end? What does He gain as your will conforms to His, and you complete and do well the work Jesus began? Who else benefits? And who else? How do you benefit?

*14*Do all things without grumbling or disputing, *15*that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, *16*holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. *17*Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. *18*Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

1. Where do grumbling and disputations come in? How? How much license do we have to grumble? What is your response when you hear it?
2. What is the effect of grumbling and disputation in the workplace?
3. What is the impact on the workplace when you do not grumble or dispute?
4. In a world that is looking for hope, how does grumbling and disputing help? Refer to what John said, quoted [above in chapter 4](#) of his first epistle.
5. What is the antidote to grumbling and disputation? Do you have a testimony?

6. How practical is this advice?
7. Who told us we are the light of the world? Explain what Jesus meant in Paul's context.
8. Mark says, "Obstacles are actually opportunities depending on what your own attitude is." Explain. Explain in the context of grumbling.
9. Mark tells the story of the lamb in the pit, and the wise guy who stands there throwing stones into the pit as the shepherd cries, "What are you doing?! My lamb is there." Eventually, the wise guy threw enough stones in the pit to permit the lamb's escape. How did the obstacles and evil circumstances become the way of escape? Do you have a testimony?
10. Look at Romans 5: [1](#)*Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, [2](#)through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. [3](#)Not only that, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; [4](#)perseverance, character; and character, hope. [5](#)And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us.* Explain again how grumbling is the opposite of the response our circumstances require. What does Paul say is the source of our hope? How does suffering lead to hope? And what are the steps Paul outlines here?
11. Explain how Joseph's sufferings led to the salvation of the world in his day? Look up Psalm 105:19, referring to Joseph: "*Until the time that His word came to pass, The Word of the LORD tested him.*" Review: What were Joseph's dreams? Were they real and prophetic? If he dreamt the dreams at age 10, but rose to Pharaoh's right hand at age thirty, how great was the temptation to forget the dreams as his own imagination? What was the test that the Psalm describes? How does this encourage us to endure hardship? What promise have you received that you have not yet seen come to light. Does it help to know that in Pharaoh's dungeon you are only two dreams away from Pharaoh's right hand?
12. How does hope bring light to a situation? How does your attitude express hope?

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### **The Follow-up Application**

1. Use the [SOAP journal studies](#) below throughout the week.
2. Go over your notes from Mark's sermon or these notes at least twice this week to review what the Spirit is saying to the Church. Write your observations.
3. The big idea, says Mark, is "...Work out what God has already worked in you." Write down what this means. What has He begun?
4. Think: How do I turn up my light in my own situation at home and at work? Take a step.

**Take the time to pray.**

**Scribe's Notes:**

1. **On fear and “the fear of the Lord”**—The church seems to have a phobia when it comes to the word “fear,” even when one of the most oft repeated proverbs is this: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom/knowledge /understanding.” Indeed, the Word of Faith movement taught that “fear” was bad confession, and an unacceptable condition. Yet the Hebrew word for fear found in the Old Testament is “*yirah* (יִרָא). When God is not the object of the fear the word always means “terror, great fear, the object of terror.” When translators translate this word when it’s associated with God, they substitute “reverence” or “respect.” In the New Testament, the Greek word is “*φόβος*”/*phobos* from which we get the word “phobia.” Here’s what it means when not used in association with God: “fear/terror/alarm, it is the object or cause of fear.” Again, translators avoid the implications when God is the object, and they substitute “reverence” or “respect.” Ironically, the Greek word comes from the verb *phobomai* which means “to fly in panic,” “the causing of fear,” “terror.” When you are alone with this verse, does the Fear of the Lord evoke panic flight? Or reverence and respect? What do you think it would evoke in Lot, when Sodom’s doom has been pronounced? How much fear is needed to begin a walk where absolute and deliberate obedience is the whole intention and hope, and failure is not an option? Almost as a parable, I learned this principle: my house is on Route 3, a main drag between Concord and Manchester whose traffic increases with the increase in tolls on the highway. My children were told that to play in the front yard, near the road would bring punishment. They learned to fear Pappa, and never learned the fear of the Mac Truck that passed by with alarming frequency. In his first epistle, John the apostle tells us “Perfect love drives out ALL fear.” How is love the end of that walk that began with fear? Why are “respect” or “reverence” inadequate translations for “panicked flight?” Now consider: Why do you work out your salvation with fear and trembling? What is at stake?
2. **On taking notes**--Pastor Mark says taking notes help us become doers the Word and not just hearers only. James 1 says, “[21](#)Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and every expression of evil, and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save your souls.[22](#)Be doers of the word, and not hearers only. Otherwise, you are deceiving yourselves. [23](#)For anyone who hears the word but does not carry it out is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror, [24](#)and after observing himself goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. [25](#)But the one who looks intently into the perfect law of freedom, and continues to do so—not being a forgetful hearer, but an effective doer—he will be blessed in what he does. Explain. In Matthew 7, at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says the one who hears and does is like the one who built his house on a rock. It is a good time

to review the purpose of these notes weekly. In Pastor Mark's message, the Spirit of God Himself speaks often, and His word comes in layers that are often missed at the first hearing. Christian meditation, unlike New Age meditation where one empties the mind, requires ruminating over a lesson as a cow chews its meal twice. It is the intentional and frequent repetition of lessons learned for the purpose of retaining and acting upon them. Good students take from the classroom and study the material again and again...preparing for an exam that promises credentials and advancement.

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**For further study:**

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP**... (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—What is God saying? / **P**ray—What is your response?) ...method to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: Philippians 2:12-13
Tuesday: Philippians 2:14-16
Wednesday: James 1:21-22
Thursday: 1 John 4:2-6
Friday: Psalm 119:104-106
Saturday: Psalm 105:19
Sunday: Romans 5:3-5

Once again, some passages suggested here have more than the usual number of verses. This is not to increase the burden but to provide clarity of context. Pick the verses that speak to you most clearly, and run these through the SOAP steps.