



SERMON SERIES STUDY GUIDE

Philippians: A crooked and twisted generation, Pt. 1

Pastor John Riggs

Summary:

This message takes us deep into Philippians 2:12-18, where we're challenged to examine how we live out our faith in a world that desperately needs the light of Christ. The central question isn't about working FOR our salvation—that's already been accomplished through Christ's finished work on the cross—but rather working OUT what God is actively working IN us. We're reminded that our salvation is purely by grace through faith, not by any merit of our own. Yet once saved, we have a responsibility to live out this new life with intentionality and joy, not with grumbling or disputing. The parallel drawn to Israel's journey from Egyptian slavery to the Promised Land is striking: just as the Israelites were miraculously freed yet constantly complained about God's provision, we too can fall into the trap of murmuring about our circumstances despite being freed from sin's slavery. The message confronts our tendency toward self-centered complaining and calls us to remember who God is and what He's done for us. When we grasp that we've been chosen as God's treasured possession, redeemed by Christ's blood, and given eternal life, how can we justify grumbling? Instead, we're called to shine like stars in a crooked and twisted generation, demonstrating Christ's joy and faithfulness regardless of our circumstances. This isn't just about personal contentment—it's about being a living testimony to a world lost in darkness.

Video Breakdown:

- Chapter 1: Understanding Salvation by Grace Through Faith. 0:00 - 14:49
 - We explore the foundational truth that salvation comes by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, not by our works, and that we are God's workmanship created for good works.
- Chapter 2: Israel's Grumbling in the Wilderness. 14:49 - 29:59
 - We examine how the Israelites responded to God's deliverance from Egypt with constant grumbling and complaining, despite His faithfulness, love, and provision for them.
- Chapter 3: Paul's Example of Rejoicing in Suffering. 29:59 - 41:09
 - We learn from the Apostle Paul's example of rejoicing while imprisoned for four years, demonstrating how to live without grumbling by focusing on Christ's faithfulness and the advancement of the gospel.
- Chapter 4: Do All Things Without Grumbling or Disputing. 41:09 - 51:18
 - We are called to do all things without grumbling or disputing so that we may shine as lights in a crooked and twisted generation, demonstrating Christ to a dark world.

Scripture References from the Sermon

Directly Cited or Read:

1. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 - Opening verse about Scripture being inspired by God
2. Philippians 2:12-18 - Main sermon passage
3. Philippians 2:12-13 - Working out salvation with fear and trembling
4. Ephesians 2:1-10 - Dead in trespasses and sins, saved by grace
5. Deuteronomy 32:5 - Crooked and depraved generation
6. Deuteronomy 1:26-27 - Israel's refusal to enter the promised land
7. Numbers 14:26-30 - Judgment on the grumbling generation
8. Deuteronomy 7:6-9 - Israel as God's chosen people
9. Philippians 1:12-14 - Paul's imprisonment advancing the gospel
10. Philippians 1:19-21 - "To live is Christ, to die is gain"
11. Galatians 2:20 - "I have been crucified with Christ."

Referenced or Alluded to:

12. Philippians 2:5-11 - The humiliation and exaltation of Christ (mentioned in context)
13. Exodus 14 - Red Sea crossing (alluded to in discussion of Israel's deliverance)
14. Numbers 13-14 - The twelve spies (Joshua and Caleb story)
15. Hebrews 12:2 - Jesus enduring the cross, scorning its shame (alluded to near the end)

Relevant Verses for Themes Discussed:

16. 1 Corinthians 10:10 - "Nor grumble, as some of them did"
17. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 - "Give thanks in all circumstances"
18. James 5:9 - "Do not grumble against one another"
19. Matthew 17:17 - Jesus calling His generation "faithless and twisted"
20. Romans 8:28 - All things work together for good

Discussion Questions:

How does understanding that we were once 'dead in our trespasses and sins' change the way we view our current struggles and circumstances as believers?

In what specific areas of your life do you find yourself grumbling or disputing rather than working out your salvation with fear and trembling?

What parallels can you draw between the Israelites' murmuring in the wilderness and the complaints that modern Christians express about their circumstances?

How does Paul's joy while imprisoned for four years challenge our understanding of contentment and what it means to say 'to live is Christ and to die is gain'?

Why do you think grumbling and complaining spread like cancer through the body of Christ, and how can we actively prevent this in our communities?

What does it mean practically to 'shine as stars in the world' among a crooked and twisted generation without grumbling or disputing?

How does remembering that God chose us not because of our merit but simply because He loves us affect our response to difficult circumstances?

Small Group Guide: Amidst a Crooked and Twisted Generation

Scripture Focus: Philippians 2:12-18

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by thanking God for His Word and asking the Holy Spirit to teach and convict hearts as you discuss together.

Ice Breaker Question

Share about a time when you experienced God's faithfulness in a difficult circumstance. How did that situation change your perspective?

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. **We are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone** - not by our works
2. **We work OUT (not FOR) our salvation** - living out what God is working in us
3. **We are called to do all things without grumbling or disputing** - with a cheerful and willing mind
4. **We live between slavery and the promised land** - freed from sin's bondage, heading toward eternity
5. **Our circumstances don't determine our joy** - Christ in us is our joy and hope

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. **Read Philippians 2:12-18 together.** What stands out to you most from this passage?
2. What does it mean to "work out your salvation with fear and trembling"? How is this different from working FOR your salvation?
3. Paul uses the example of Israel in the wilderness. What parallels do you see between their journey and our Christian life today?

Personal Reflection

4. **The Grumbling Check:** Be honest - in what areas of your life are you most prone to grumbling or complaining? (Work, family, church, finances, health, etc.)
5. The sermon mentioned that grumbling "spreads like cancer through the body of Christ." Have you witnessed this? How does complaining affect those around us?
6. Paul was in prison for four years yet wrote about joy 13 times in Philippians. What circumstances in your life make it difficult to maintain a joyful attitude?

Going Deeper

7. **Read Deuteronomy 1:26-27.** The Israelites accused God of hating them despite His rescue from slavery. How do we sometimes question God's motives or goodness when facing trials?
8. The sermon stated: "If you doubt the love of God, just look at the gift of God that He gave for your redemption." How does remembering the cross help combat grumbling?
9. **Discuss this statement:** "We have nothing to whine about, nothing to complain about. You have salvation. You have eternity with God in Christ Jesus."

Application

10. What is the difference between honestly processing difficulty with God (like the Psalms) and grumbling/complaining?
11. How can we "shine like stars" in our crooked and twisted generation when we stop grumbling? What would this look like practically?

Practical Application:

The Weekly Challenge "SMASH THE GRUMBLING"

This week, commit to the following:

Daily Practice

- **When you feel like grumbling, STOP and praise Jesus instead**
- Remind yourself: "My God is a good God. I am blood-bought, redeemed. I belong to the King of kings and the Lord of lords."

Accountability

- Share with one person in this group who will check in with you this week
- Text or call each other when you catch yourself grumbling

Reflection Journal

Keep track this week:

- What situations triggered grumbling?
- How did you respond?
- What happened when you chose praise instead?

Scripture Memory

Memorize Philippians 2:14-15: *"Do all things without grumbling or disputing, 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."*

Group Activity Option

Gratitude Exercise:

- Give each person 3-5 minutes to write down specific reasons they're grateful to God
- Focus on His character, His faithfulness, and His salvation
- Share one or two with the group
- Discuss: How does intentional gratitude combat grumbling?

Prayer Time

Pray Together:

1. **Confession:** Confess areas where we've been grumbling instead of trusting God's goodness
2. **Thanksgiving:** Thank God for specific ways He's shown His faithfulness
3. **Petition:** Ask God to help each person "smash the grumbling" this week
4. **Mission:** Pray that we would shine as lights in our dark world through joyful obedience

Closing Thought

Remember: **"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Philippians 1:21)**

Either way, we win. Let's live as we believe it.

Before Next Week

- Complete the "Smash the Grumbling" challenge
- Read Philippians 2:19-30 for next week's discussion
- Share one testimony of victory over grumbling in your group chat

"You can shut down grumbling with just one sentence: My God is a good God."

Sermon Transcript:

If you have your Bibles with you, please open them to Philippians chapter 2.

And we're going to be making our way, hopefully, through two verses this morning.

We made it through almost two last week, and we're going to do our best this week as well.

Philippians chapter 2, verses 12 through 18 is where we're going to be.

It's good to see so many of you opening your Bibles up.

2 Timothy 3, verses 16-17

And so what we're going to do this morning is we are going to, together as a body of believers, open the Word of God up, and we're going to learn not what man thinks, but what God says to be true.

And so if you would, I think the verse will be up here.

You guys probably have it about memorized now, but let's begin with this, and let's say it together.

All Scripture.

is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Amen.

Let's pray.

Father God, thank you so much.

for your incredible love in demonstrating your love for us in the sacrifice of your son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Father, thank you for our salvation today, Lord.

Thank you for this free gift of amazing grace that you have provided for us, something that man cannot do for themselves, cannot earn, cannot merit.

cannot accomplish through our works.

In no way can we add to the finished work of Christ on Calvary.

Thank you for our salvation.

Lord, this morning as we hold in our hands your word, God, I pray that your Holy Spirit would be our teacher today and thank you in a world that is full of deception and gaining more and more by the day that we have the true one word of God right here in our hands and before us.

Thank you, Lord, that we don't have to wonder, but that we can know what we are to do in the world in which we're living in, how to live our lives.

Lord, you've given us instruction.

You've shown us what these days will be like as you're approaching.

comes closer and closer.

And Lord, we know that things, as we know as believers, are not falling apart, God, but they're simply falling in place according to your sovereign plan.

And Lord, thank you for the comfort we find in that.

Lord, we love you.

We pray these things in the mighty name of our Lord and our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Amen.

Y'all may be seated, and we're going to read here this few verses together, but let's read 12 through 18.

Paul continues, "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.

For it is God who works in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure."

"...do all things without grumbling or disputing, 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 the stars in the world, 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."

Of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.

Likewise, you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

Last time we learned what Paul meant when he told the Philippian believers in verses 12 and 13 what it was for them to work out, not work for, their salvation.

And that they were to do this with fear and trembling.

In other words, he's basically saying that, listen, you can't work for your salvation because Christ already did the work of the atonement for salvation.

You can't do that.

But you are to work out what God is working in you.

And he says, take it serious, Christian, the way in which you do this.

Because the word fear and trembling just simply is describing the serious nature of us working out in our life what God is working in us.

And by the way, is that not incredible to think that God is working in us both to will and to work?

Notice, for his good pleasure.

And that's why we should take it so serious.

We learned a little bit of the ramifications of why this mattered so much in the life of a believer and how it not only impacts the body of Christ and our life personally, but how it impacts a world that is lost and living in darkness.

And we know the importance of how we live out what God is working in us.

In Ephesians chapter 2, this is one of my favorite passages of Scripture, and we talked about this in detail last time.

But I want to read it one more time for you, just as we move into what Paul the Apostle is now teaching in these next few verses.

Paul writes to the church in Ephesus in chapter two, starting in verse one.

He says, and you were, notice past tense.

What we're gonna be looking at is the manner in which we live our life, how important it is, the manner in which we walk.

And Paul says, hey, make sure you live a life worthy of the calling that you have received of this incredible gift of salvation.

Live out your life in such a way that it honors God in the way that he's working in you

Being his workmanship, working our salvation plan out in our life.

God does all that, but we're to live out what he's doing in us.

And so Paul says, you once were this.

This is past tense.

And it's important that we get this.

He says, you were dead.

Notice something dead people can't do is they can't do anything that the living do.

Nothing.

And so when we look at a world that is lost without Jesus, we should expect them to be living as though they are dead men.

That's what they do.

And Paul reminds the Ephesians believers, and we need to be reminded of this often, is that that's what we once were.

We were dead.

You remember that time in your life when you were dead.

And he says that you were dead in your trespasses and your sins, in which you once walked.

And what we're learning here is now Paul is really teaching these Philippian believers, and he teaches them in Ephesians and many of his other letters, the practicality now of walking this out.

It's our life.

It's this new life in Christ.

But we also know that we have an old man that still lives and wakes up every single morning.

And that we have a responsibility to beat that old man down, if you will.

Paul says, crucify him.

And that's what we do on a daily basis.

He says, you once walked like dead men in your sins and trespasses, following the course of the world.

We once fit right into the whole world system, dead men, not spiritually alive.

We were living that way, following, he says.

This is who the world is following.

the prince of the power of the air, Satan, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all, Paul says, once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body.

By the way, the old man's still alive.

You have to crucify that guy or that lady, if you will, every single day.

and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

God, though, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ, and now we hear this, by grace you have been saved and

And this is going to be something we will experience for all eternity.

It will never end.

It will never come to a close.

We will constantly be learning and appreciating and being overwhelmed with the grace of God all throughout eternity.

For by grace, Paul says, you have been saved through faith.

Faith in Christ, in the finished work of Christ, his death, his burial, his resurrection.

Not placing faith in ourselves, in the law, in the religious system, not faith in a church, not faith in walking through steps of religion.

Solely, you're saved by faith alone, by the grace of God through faith alone, only in Christ alone.

That's how you're saved.

Period.

And the reason this is so significant, he says, this is not of your own doing.

It is the gift of God.

not a result of works so that no one may boast, no boasting in heaven when it comes to your salvation.

It's a work that God provided through Christ Jesus doing what man could not do, being dead, being an enemy of God, a child of wrath, a man or woman of the world, following the prince of the power of the air.

God in grace, what did he do?

Makes us alive in Christ Jesus.

The faith to believe the gospel, hearing the gospel, believing the gospel, and the faith to believe and put your trust in Jesus, repenting of your sin and your way of life, and now clinging to Christ.

He is your salvation.

Amen?

And then he says, for we are his workmanship.

We're God's workmanship.

That's what we are.

Created in Christ Jesus for good works, not by good works.

We want to lay that down every single time that we're speaking here.

I want you guys to get that in your heads, knowing some of you come from a background where you had to rely on a religious system to be saved, to make heaven, to be forgiven.

That's a bunch of hogwash.

That's what that is.

You need to keep this in your mind.

You are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

This is not of any work, none.

So you need to get that in your minds, Christians.

Knowing you come from different backgrounds and many different churches and so on and so forth with different theologies and different doctrines.

That's why doctrine is so important.

That's why the word of God is so important.

Because you are not saved by your works, period.

You need to know that.

You're saved by the grace of God.

What an incredible God we serve.

Amen?

So our focus this morning, now pounding that in our minds, because we like to work things out or work for things.

It's not how we're saved, but we're to work out what God is working in us.

And this is our sanctification, and this is living out before the world these attributes of the Spirit so that the world can see Christ living in us.

This is what we are doing in this new life in Christ Jesus.

Unfortunately, we often fail and fall short in these areas, and yet by God's grace, we still are being used by God to the glory of God.

Amen?

So our focus this morning is to continue with the practical reason and application of Paul's instruction to the Philippian believers in the working out of what God is working in them.

That's what we're going to be studying this morning.

Now, we're not entering a new thought here by the Apostle Paul.

When Paul wrote this letter, there were no chapters in it and there were no verses in it as far as numbers.

Man has gone through and broke it up, making it easier to find and locate things in our Bible, yes.

But when Paul wrote this letter, he wrote it just like you and I would today on a piece of paper.

Maybe not so much today.

You do it other ways now through email.

But nonetheless, there's no chapter verses.

And Paul's not entering a new thought here.

He's continuing on with what he has already said.

And we're going to study these things in context so we don't make a pretext out of what Paul's saying.

So he's expanding on this and Paul now exhorts these believers.

And listen to what he says.

He says, do all things, all things.

You know what all is in Greek?

Absolutely.

You guys are robust in your doctrine or in your Greek and Hebrew, right?

Yeah, we know it means absolutely what it says.

It means all things.

Paul says, do all things without, here we go, grumbling or disputing.

that you may be blameless and innocent children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation.

And that's the name of our title.

The title of our sermon this morning is Amidst a Crooked and Twisted Generation.

You and I are here.

We don't have to go into a lot of details how crooked and twisted the generation is that we're living in.

You don't have to look very far to see the truth of that matter.

But this morning we're going to focus on this very first part where Paul says do all things, absolutely everything that we do...

Each part, if you will, it means basically a sense of each part that applies.

The emphasis is on the total picture, but also focusing on one thing at a time.

And that's what it means with all things.

He says to do this without grumbling.

Don't grumble, he says, or disputing.

And let's see what the Greek word means here so we can have an understanding of what Paul the Apostle is talking about.

Remember, Paul has just shared with them this incredible...

exaltation, before that, the humiliation of Christ.

He's talking about how they need to be of one mind, be of one accord, working together for the gospel.

Paul's talking about humility among the body of believers, and then he gives the greatest example of humility in the fact that God in Christ Jesus left the glories of heaven, came all the way down, takes upon flesh.

He's even obedient unto the Father, even to the point of death, and death will
on a cross.

He says, if you want to know what humility looks like, just look at Jesus Christ.

He's the greatest picture of humility.

And then Paul is making his way now through all of these things.

And he talks about now, by the way, God is working in you.

So you need to work out with fear and trembling what God is doing in you.

And that's what Paul has been talking about.

And then he says to these believers in Philippi to do all things, number one, without grumbling.

And the word grumbling here is the Greek word gongousmos.

Gongousmos.

It's kind of fun to say that word.

You just say that this week.

Don't gongousmos.

They'll look at you like you're crazy.

It literally means muttering or murmuring in a grudgingly manner.

Have you ever murmured?

Have you murmured this week?

Okay, have you murmured this morning?

How's that sound, right?

Yeah.

It is really kind of an unwarranted grumbling and discontentment or displeasure.

it's an expression with kind of a low, dull tone.

It's not like you're screaming it at the top of your lungs, but you're just kind of just, you know, you could hear it, but you'd have to be close to hear it.

It's just that discontented dissatisfaction.

And if you've ever watched little kids, you've seen them do that a lot.

Boy, you tell them to do something, and boy, they're just doing their thing.

They're doing it, but they're not happy about it.

That's what they're basically saying.

The next word we have here, this word disputing, is the word we get dialogue from.

And it means it's dialogismos is how you say that word in the Greek.

And it's a dialogue.

The word grumbling here, the opposite of grumbling, is to work out what God is working in you with a cheerful and willing mind.

And to be happy about it, to be cheerful about it.

And if God is working in us, doing what he's doing in us, we should be working it out and be happy and cheerful to do so.

Not grumbling, not murmuring, not discontented.

You know, that's not how we are to do that, Paul says.

Paul says we need to do it with a cheerful and willing mind.

That's the opposite of what it means to murmur.

It's really mental in the sense of the grumbling.

The disputing is basically like a dialogue that's going on.

It is a back and forth reasoning that is self-based and is confused.

You ever do that?

My wife will say, John, you're talking to yourself again.

Sometimes I do it outwardly.

Sometimes I do it in my own mind.

It is a deliberating, a questioning about what is true.

about what is true, in reference to what ought to be done.

In other words, doing what ought to be done, but doing it with hesitation or with doubting.

And in fact, Lightfoot says, the intellectual rebellion against God.

How many of you know that the old man, he's good at murmuring and grumbling?

Especially when he's doing something that is not of the flesh, but you're doing something that's of the spirit.

Right?

Oh, that's so true.

And this dialogue that goes on, this rebellion against God, the old man rebels against God.

The new man in Christ Jesus wants to do what God wants for us to do.

And there is this back and forth that happens.

And Paul says do absolutely everything in a manner that does not involve grumbling and is not arguing back and forth in your mind over what is true and not doing it with hesitation and doubting.

But he says you need to follow through with what God is doing in your life.

And so Paul's use of the word grumbling, in order for us to have a little better understanding of what Paul's getting at here... In fact, this crooked and twisted generation is not only mentioned here by the Apostle Paul.

Jesus also talked about it in Scripture.

And then we know it comes from the Old Testament.

The first time we see this mentioned is in Deuteronomy 32 and 5.

And we read this, a crooked and depraved generation...

And so in the mind of Paul, as he's thinking about Deuteronomy here, when the nation of Israel was what?

Being led by God to the promised land.

And this takes us back to the nation of Israel in the desert between the slavery of Egypt and the promised land of Canaan.

Did you know that's really where we are?

We are, in a sense, we've left Egypt, which is the slavery and bondage of being lost in this world, under the slavery of Satan and bondage of the enemy.

That's where Israel was.

But in Christ, God has brought us out.

And what has he done?

He has set us free from the slavery of sin.

He set you free.

He's given us new life.

I'm no longer under the authority of the enemy.

I'm now under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But we're waiting for where we're going and we're headed to a place called heaven if we die and then course the millennial reign here upon the earth.

And we're in a transition between the two.

And that's where we pick up here in Deuteronomy 32 with the nation of Israel.

And for us to begin to understand how and what Paul is meaning here so we can apply it to our lives, let's look at this story of the nation of Israel first.

From their leaving of Egypt, going to the promised land in Canaan.

By the way, that's where the Jews are, many of them, today.

They are in Jerusalem.

They are in Canaan.

That's where they are.

And many of them have been gathering from the four corners of the world, coming back to Jerusalem, which we know that's going to happen in the end times.

In the end, end, end times, there will be a huge end gathering of the Jews coming back to their homeland, and that's happening in our own day, in our own time.

So let's look at this.

How good and gracious and loving and merciful and faithful and just was God toward the nation of Israel and the people of Israel?

Like us, he took them out of slavery and bondage, not based on any merit of their own.

They were slaves.

There's no merit here.

They can't free themselves.

You couldn't free yourselves from Satan and from the grasp he had on you.

You're dead spiritually.

Can't do that.

The Jews were the same way.

Pharaoh had a hard hand over the Jews, and they were slaves simply used by Pharaoh to build his kingdom.

That's what they were for.

They had no way in themselves to be set free, but God, who is rich in mercy, brought them out.

A people for himself.

Did you know that God brought you out for his purpose, for him?

You've been bought with a price, the blood of Jesus Christ.

And not only did he bring them out by his own power, in his own might, in his own way, God did, but also he cut off their oppressor of slavery, burying them in the depths of the Red Sea.

That's what Jesus has also done for us with our sin.

It's been buried into the depths of the sea, the Bible says, to be remembered no more.

Your sins have been forgiven.

They've been buried.

They're gone, absolutely gone.

Jesus did that for us.

God the Father did that for the nation of Israel.

And then now he's leading this newly redeemed, huge nation of Israelites.

to possess now the promised inheritance of what he told Abraham, reconfirmed it with Isaac, and reconfirmed it with Jacob.

And Jacob, we know, was the father of the nation of Israel with the 12 sons of Jacob, and his name was even Israel.

And God is now going to fulfill his covenant promise to do what he said he would do, and that's to bring them into the promised land.

So how did these Israelites, who were slaves to Pharaoh...

the taskmaster, who had a heavy hand upon them.

How did they show their appreciation to the one true living God for saving them and redeeming them out of Egypt?

Not only redeeming them out of Egypt, but cutting off the very one who had power and dominion over them.

He was gone.

They grumbled.

They murmured.

They disputed.

Constantly questioning God's motives.

Constantly.

They questioned God's motives, God's plan.

They questioned God's provision.

They questioned God's ability.

They were always doubting.

They were always hesitating.

And they were always trampling on the truth of God and the nature of God and the purposes of God, His mercy and His grace.

That's how Israel thanked God for setting them free.

Constantly having all kinds of grumbling going on among them.

Even in knowing the goodness of God in saving them out of Egypt.

There were some in Philippi, like those Israelites, who were grumbling and disputing not only with their fellow brothers, but also God's work and what God was doing in and through them.

In Deuteronomy chapter 1, if you wouldn't mind, just flip over there quickly.

This is a passage I didn't have up there for Eric, so I apologize.

But in Deuteronomy chapter 1, 26 through 27, Israel refuses now to enter into the land of promise.

They selected ten spies to go into the promised land of Canaan and to scout out the land.

God says, I've given it to you.

Go in and possess the land, God says.

They say, well, hold on.

Hold up before we go into that land.

Let's take ten, let's take these men and let's send these spies in.

And they send these spies in and only two of all the men they sent in came back and said, guess what?

All of them came back and said, man, the land is incredible.

The production of the fruit and the vegetation and the land is an amazing paradise, if you will. It is incredible, but the people are many and they're powerful.

There were two men by the name of Joshua and Caleb out of that entire group that said, hold up.

Quit discouraging the rest of the nation of Israel.

We know that God is true to his promises.

He's already proven that to us.

And he has not brought us here to leave us here.

He's taking us into the promised land.

We can do this.

Let's go in.

And you know what the nation of Israel did?

Instead of listening to the two men who trusted and believed in God, the one who brought them out of slavery, they believed the others.

And guess what?

They didn't go into the promised land.

not that generation.

And this is what God said here in verse 26.

He says, "...yet you would not go up but rebelled against the command of the Lord your God," speaking to Israel, "...and you murmured in your tents and said, because the Lord hated us."

Is that not completely messed up?

Oh, by the way, God redeemed us out of the slavery and the mighty hand of Pharaoh, who was the ruler of the world.

God brought us out here not to take us to the promised land.

God just brought us out here because his entire truth is that God hates us, and he brought us out of the land of Egypt to give us into the hands of the Amorites, to destroy us.

That's why God brought us out of the slavery of Egypt.

The sad thing is if you were to talk to some Christians, they almost sound like that.

God has set me free from all kinds of things in my life.

And yet they're over there kicking pop cans down the road complaining about the life they now have in Christ as if where they were was so good.

Christian, we need to remember where we came from and know who God is in our life.

We've got to stop murmuring and disputing and whining about what God is doing in us.

He's a good God.

Oh, He's a good God.

Thank you, Lord, for your goodness.

We should be able to worship God all the time.

We've got nothing to whine about, nothing to complain about.

You have salvation.

You have eternity with God in Christ Jesus, sir and ma'am.

Listen, life sometimes stinks.

It's the result of living in a fallen world.

And it happens on the righteous and the unrighteous.

What you ought to do is we have nothing to be murmuring or complaining about because we are in Christ.

The world has a lot to murmur and complain about.

We have nothing but to glorify the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in all matters, in all things in life.

No matter what we experience, no matter what we go through, it's simply that fast.

It's called temporary.

Temporary.

Temporary.

But these Israelites, man, they whined constantly to Moses.

Oh, my word, we're sick and tired of God's provision from heaven with manna.

I mean, this is ridiculous.

You go out of your tent, pick it up, and go home.

That's a rough way to get your food.

We at least had, guess what, meat when we were in slavery.

Are you kidding me?

Does this sound familiar?

I know this is going to step on toes this morning because it's stomped on mine all week.

It has for sure.

Do you not know what else grumbling and murmuring does?

It infects those around us.

And it will spread like cancer through the body of Christ.

And it won't even that.

It'll spread through your workplace.

It'll spread through Facebook.

Oh, sorry.

Mentioned that word.

In Numbers 14, 26 through 30, listen to this.

So listen, I know this is going to be a little toe-tapping this morning, but there's a reason for it, guys.

Oh, man.

Oh, man.

And of all your number listed in the census from 20 years old and upward, who have grumbled against me, not one shall come into the land where I swore that I would make you dwell, except for Caleb and Joshua.

Did you know that's exactly what happened?

So you know what they did?

God says, okay.

It's time for you just to walk in circles.

40 years, the Jews.

And every man who was 20 years and older, they died.

And not until that happened did God say, okay.

Joshua now, take these people in.

Joshua and Caleb both went into the promised land.

Caleb was a year, Caleb himself was nearly 80 years of age.

And Moses said that he and his people, the allotment they got was the mountain country.

And an 80-year-old man, you know what he said?

He goes back to Joshua and says, hey,

I was promised the mountain country, man.

I want to take the mountain country like God gave to me.

That's the kind of men we need to be.

Even at 80, I'm not looking for a recliner and a remote and a glass of sugar tea.

I'm looking for a mountain country that I can still possess.

Still possess.

In Deuteronomy 7, 6 through 9,

for you are a people holy to your God.

Listen to this.

The Lord God has chosen you to these Jews.

These are God's chosen people.

Did you know you've been chosen by God?

You're chosen by God.

He says, you are a holy people, that means consecrated, set apart for the work and the purposes of God.

Israel was to be that on the face of the earth.

They were to be separate.

That's why they were given circumcision.

It's one of the marks of setting aside themselves that they were separate unto God and they were to be his people.

And he would go before them and he would help them possess the land and do all that he said he would do.

God's faithful.

The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for, listen, his treasured possession.

You've been chosen for God's treasured possession.

Did you know that?

Oh, my word.

Out of all the people who are on the face of the earth, God chose the nation of Israel.

And this is the reason he did.

Listen to this.

It was not because you were more in number than any of the people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you.

In other words, Israel, it's got nothing to do with how numerous you were.

Not at all.

That's not why God did this.

He said, for you were the fewest of all the people.

Here's the reason.

But it is because the Lord, listen, loves you.

God didn't choose you because you're something super special in your ability or in some gift that you think you have.

Or because you're better than the rest of, no.

It's because he loves you.

Is that not incredible?

He loves you and he chose you, he said, for you were the fewest of people.

It's because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeeming you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

Know therefore that the Lord, your God, is God.

Listen to this.

The faithful God, your God, Christian, is faithful.

who keeps his covenant and steadfast love.

Did you know that he'll never break his covenant with you?

Oh, thank you, Lord, for that.

with those who love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations.

Now you would think that the Israelites would be so grateful for this incredible new life of freedom that they'd be joyful, that they'd be willing and loving God for all he had done and that he was doing and that he had promised to do in the future for these former slaves.

And he did it all by love, mercy,

It was for their gain and for God's glory.

But that's not what they did.

So let's go back here to where Paul is here to these Christians in Philippi.

At the time of this letter, we've learned this already, Paul has been jailed now for four years.

He's been in prison now for four years, waiting trials and so on and so forth, being moved now to Rome.

He's been there for two years now.

He's under house arrest.

So this is the Apostle Paul.

and he's now been imprisoned for four years.

Four years.

Many would say, Paul, you have every right to grumble and complain.

Sounds a little bit like Job's friends.

Man, if I was going through what you were going through, boy, I could see why you could whine and complain.

You got friends like that?

Yeah.

Woe is me mentality.

Paul, he had every right to be grumbling and complaining according to what the world would say.

He was in jail not because he had done something wrong in a criminal act.

He was there for the preaching of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and the testimony of Jesus.

That's why Paul was in prison.

Not because he had earned that in doing something like, you know, stealing or killing someone or whatever.

He didn't break that law.

He was there really in a way, if you could say, it was unjust.

And yet some 13 times in this book, this letter, joy or rejoice is mentioned.

In this letter from Paul, this is the letter of joy.

Now, that doesn't make sense to us.

I understand that.

In Philippians 1, 12 through 14, listen to Paul.

Now, listen.

He's learned some things, he writes back here in chapter 4.

I've learned some things about what it means to be content.

Paul says, listen, I've learned I don't need to grumble because I am in Christ Jesus, Paul says.

Listen to how he responds to this.

I want you to know, brothers, speaking about his imprisonment here, as he mentioned it earlier in chapter 1, that what has happened to me, what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel.

Guys, that's not human.

Being locked in prison for four years, and yet Paul says, guess what?

I know this to be true, that what's really going on here is serving to advance the gospel.

Yes, this has happened to me.

This is not something I looked at or ever planned and said, gee, I just want to go spend four years in prison.

No, Paul says, let me tell you something I've learned about my God.

My God is faithful.

He's up to something.

He's working in me to will and to work for his pleasure.

So wherever I'm at, whatever I'm doing, whatever I'm experiencing, it's gone through the hands of Almighty God.

Therefore, I know God is at work in whatever's going on.

That's what Paul's saying here.

It's incredible.

Oh, don't worry about this.

Guess what?

The gospel's going forward, Paul says.

Yes.

Just because I'm in prison, that doesn't stop the gospel, and it will not stop God and his faithfulness in my life nor in yours.

Not happening.

So that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard.

This can see Paul.

He's just almost, cheeks are just, he's got the dimples showing.

He's smiling so big here.

This is so good.

He says, and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.

And most of the brothers, he says, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment.

Do you see this difference in the way that he thinks?

Because he knows of the goodness, the faithfulness, the greatness of his God.

He sees this and knows this.

And Christian, we need to know this and understand this.

We belong to God.

He is faithful.

He is just.

He is holy.

And listen, you can say this, God is so good.

He's so good.

Thank you, kids.

Back there, three kids clapping.

That's pretty good.

Yes.

They know he's good.

He is so good.

Amen.

And not only have they been encouraged and becoming confident, he says, and much more bold, he says, to speak the word without fear.

What an unbelievable perspective.

Philippians 1, 19 through 21, listen to what Paul says, continuing on with this thought.

He says, yes, I will rejoice.

Yes, I will rejoice.

I've met people like this.

They're not many, but I've met them.

Christians who are endeavoring to pursue and to continue on in very difficult circumstances in their life, and yet they have the joy of the Lord, and they're rejoicing in spite of their circumstance.

What an incredible testimony.

For I know, Paul says, that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, this will turn out for my deliverance.

Hold on though, what does he mean by deliverance?

This is what Paul says.

As it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be ashamed, but with full courage, now as always, Christ will be honored in, here it is, Christ will be honored in my body.

This is the quest of every believer.

Jesus Christ, you and you alone, you be honored in my body.

No matter what I do, no matter where I go, no matter what I say, please, Jesus, be honored in my body, Paul says.

Listen, though, he says, whether by life or by death, he's delivered either way.

He is delivered.

And then he says, for to me, Paul says, to live is Christ.

And to die, it's gain.

It doesn't matter what we go through or experience in life in relation to those things because what?

Either way, for you to live, it's Christ.

For you to die, it's gain.

It's gain.

Galatians 2, verse 20.

Paul says, I have been crucified with Christ.

And I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.

The life I live in the body is

While I still have time, while my heart still beats, while I'm still here on planet earth, Paul says, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

If you doubt the love of God,

If you grumble and you murmur, if you dispute and dialogue in your mind about what to do not to truth, when the Holy Spirit gives you that in your heart to move forward with something and you're like, hold on, I want to argue about this for a while.

Or maybe this whole thing about murmuring under your breath, you know, man, it seems like the wicked just have it going on and having a whole lot more fun than I am.

You ever meet church people that way?

Christians?

Christians?

Well, man, jeepers, I had a lot more fun when I was addicted to cocaine and crack.

Are you kidding me?

That's the mentality, though.

No, that was death.

You've been given life.

Life.

If you doubt the love of God, the grace of God...

And the goodness of God, dear Christian, do like Paul says right here.

Just look at the gift of God that he gave for your redemption, for your salvation.

The truth is, we really don't have any reason to be murmuring.

We don't have any reason

to be doubting the goodness of God in our life.

Far too often I hear people say these things, well, if God was really loving, he wouldn't have allowed that to happen in my life.

Hold on, think about what you just said.

No, if God wasn't loving, he would have given you what you already merited, and that is called the lake of fire eternally, forever and ever.

Somehow, this false prosperity gospel has infiltrated the church into a self-man-centered gospel where it's all about why, oh, you, me, me, me, myself, and I. That is not the gospel.

That is another gospel, by the way.

God doesn't care if you drive an SUV, GMC, or whether you drive a bike.

Everybody says, oh, God wants me driving a Mercedes.

Are you kidding?

Really?

Really?

He wants me rich, he wants me healthy, and he wants me to prosper.

You've already prospered in Jesus.

How much more wealthy can you get than eternal life, man?

There's nothing greater.

Listen, Satan wants to discourage you, Christian.

He's out to rob you of the promised land living in Christ Jesus.

He wants you to wander around muttering in the desert of self-doubt and self-grumbling and focused on your own circumstance.

Dear Christian, do like Jesus.

Who, seeing the cross before him, he has joy in the cross.

He endures the cross, scorning its shame.

Why?

Because he knows what it produces and what it's about.

We need to remember, listen, if you could do one thing this week, this is only one homework that you've got to do.

This is going to be a hard one, though.

When you feel that grumbling, smash it.

And this is what you say.

My God is a good God.

I am blood-bought, redeemed.

I belong to the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

You need to remind yourself who He is and what He's done in your life.

And you want to stop grumbling amongst believers?

Oh, that's a real good way.

You can shut it down with just a sentence.

So Christian, if there's one thing that we can work on this week, and it's going to be a tough one because we live in the most negative culture in the entire world and it's everywhere around you.

Deception, lies, and all the garbage that goes into our eye gate, ear gate every single day is incredible.

This week, this is it.

Do everything without grumbling or disputing.

Why?

So you may be blameless, spotless, children of whose God and shine like the stars for a world that sees nothing but black.

They need the light of Christ living out of you in this world so that they might know Jesus Christ as you.

Terry, would you come and close us this morning?

So our homework for this week is smash the grumbling.

Smash it.

And when you feel like grumbling, praise the name of Jesus.

We'll see you all next week.

Terry.

Thanks, Gary.

I want to thank all of you for being here today.

We're so glad that you were here and pray that you will do as I need to do.

Stop grumbling.

I catch myself so many times.

It's easy to do.

But as John told us, we need to, the Word tells us, Paul told us, stop grumbling and complaining.

Don't do any good.

I'd like to remind you about the blue cards again.

If you're a first-time guest here, please fill one of those out.

Drop them off either at the welcoming station or in the offering buckets.

And also, if you would like to make an offering to this church, just drop it in the offering bucket there.

They're back toward the back.

Would you bow your heads with me and pray?

Father, we come to you today and we're so thankful, Lord, for your word.

Thankful, Father, that we have a pastor that will preach the word.

Father, that will not hold back but let us know what you have to say because that's what's important.

Father, we just pray that you'll be with us, lead and guide each one of us and help us, Lord, to smash that old man down because he's going to try to keep coming back.

Father, we just pray that we will allow the Holy Spirit to lead us and guide us and not grumble and complain, but just to worship you, Father, and to know that we have a good, good Father.

It's in Jesus' name that we pray.

Amen.

Amen.

Lord, lead me home

all my burdens are behind me I have prayed