

SHINING AS LIGHTS IN THE WORLD

Philippians 2:12-18

SERMON AIM

Because God is at work in His people, believers must live out their salvation with obedient reverence, gospel unity, faithful endurance, and joy so that Christ is clearly seen in a dark world.

PASSAGE FOCUS

“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... among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life...”

MAIN SERMON OUTLINE

1

Test your light (Philippians 2:12-13)

A genuine follower of Christ does not work for salvation, but works out the salvation God has already begun within him. Obedience reveals that God is actively changing both our desires and our actions.

My obedience today should show

God is working in me to will and to

2

Reflect the light (Philippians 2:14-15)

Grumbling and disputing dim the witness of the church. In a crooked and twisted generation, God calls His children to reflect Christ through humble, peaceful, blameless lives.

A complaint I need to surrender

One way I can reflect Christ this week

PERSONAL CHECK: IS MY LIGHT CLEAR?

Obedience

Where do I need to obey Christ even when no one is watching? _____

Attitude

What pattern of grumbling or arguing is weakening my witness? _____

Witness

Where has God placed me to shine as a light? _____

Dependence

Am I relying on my effort alone or on God working in me? _____

Ten Questions from 1 John for Examining Genuine Faith

First John was written, in part, so believers may know that they have eternal life in the Son of God (1 John 5:13). These questions draw from the repeated tests of faith throughout the letter: right belief about Christ, obedience to God, and love for God's people.

1. **Do I confess Jesus as the Son of God who came in the flesh?** 1 John 1:1-3; 4:2-3, 15; 5:1
2. **Am I walking in the light, or am I hiding and excusing sin?** 1 John 1:5-7
3. **Do I honestly confess my sin to God rather than denying it?** 1 John 1:8-10
4. **Do I seek to obey God's commandments as a pattern of life?** 1 John 2:3-6; 5:2-3
5. **Do I love other believers in practical, visible ways?** 1 John 2:9-11; 3:14-18; 4:7-12
6. **Is my heart becoming less attached to the world and its desires?** 1 John 2:15-17

7. **Do I continue in the faith rather than abandoning Christ and His truth?** *1 John 2:19, 24-25*
8. **Am I grieved by sin and growing in righteousness?** *1 John 3:4-10*
9. **Do I believe that eternal life is found in Jesus Christ alone?** *1 John 5:11-13*
10. **Do I have growing confidence before God because of Christ, not because of myself?** *1 John 2:1-2; 3:19-24; 4:17-18*

Summary question from 1 John: *Is my life marked by true faith in Christ, growing obedience to God, honest confession of sin, and genuine love for God's people?*

Biblical Evidence of Genuine Faith in Jesus Christ

The following evidence should be used carefully and pastorally. They are not a checklist for self-righteousness. They are biblical marks of the new birth and Spirit-produced fruit in the life of a believer.

1. Do you trust in Christ alone for salvation?

John 3:16 — Whoever believes in Christ has eternal life.

John 14:6 — Jesus is the only way to the Father.

Acts 4:12 — There is salvation in no one else.

Ephesians 2:8-9 — Salvation is by grace through faith, not works.

Philippians 3:8-9 — Paul rejects his own righteousness and clings to righteousness through faith in Christ.

Diagnostic question: *Am I relying on Christ alone, or am I trusting in myself plus Christ?*

2. Have you repented from your sin?

Mark 1:15 — Jesus calls people to repent and believe the gospel.

Acts 2:37-38 — The gospel call includes repentance.

Acts 26:20 — Repentance bears fruit in deeds consistent with repentance.

1 John 1:8-9 — Believers confess sin rather than deny it.

1 John 3:6-10 — A settled, ongoing practice of sin is inconsistent with being born of God.

Diagnostic question: *Do I grieve over sin, confess it, and turn from it?*

3. Do you love for Christ?

John 14:15 — Love for Christ expresses itself in obedience.

John 21:15-17 — Jesus presses Peter with the question, "Do you love me?"

1 Corinthians 16:22 — Paul speaks seriously about those who do not love the Lord.

1 Peter 1:8 — Believers love Christ though they have not seen Him.

Diagnostic question: *Is Jesus precious to me, or merely useful to me?*

4. Are you obedient to God's Word?

Matthew 7:21-23 — Not everyone who says "Lord" truly belongs to Christ.

John 14:21 — The one who keeps Christ's commandments loves Him.

Romans 6:17-18 — Believers become obedient from the heart.

1 John 2:3-6 — Knowing God is evidenced by keeping His commandments.

James 1:22 — Believers are to be doers of the Word, not hearers only.

Diagnostic question: *Is there a growing pattern of submission to God's Word in my life?*

5. Do you have a genuine love for other believers?

John 13:34-35 — Love for one another marks Christ's disciples.

Romans 12:10 — Believers love one another with brotherly affection.

1 John 3:14 — Love for the brothers gives evidence of passing from death to life.

1 John 4:7-8 — Whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

Diagnostic question: *Do I genuinely love God's people, even when they are difficult?*

6. Do you sense the presence and work of the Holy Spirit?

Romans 8:9 — Anyone without the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him.

Romans 8:14-16 — The Spirit leads believers and bears witness that they are God's children.

Galatians 5:22-23 — The Spirit produces His fruit in believers.

Ephesians 1:13-14 — Believers are sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.

Diagnostic question: *Is there evidence of the Spirit's transforming work in my desires, character, and conduct?*

7. Are you persevering in the faith?

Matthew 24:13 — The one who endures to the end will be saved.

John 8:31 — True disciples abide in Christ's Word.

Colossians 1:21-23 — Genuine believers continue in the faith.

Hebrews 3:14 — Believers hold their original confidence firm to the end.

1 John 2:19 — Those who finally abandon Christ show they were not truly of Him.

Diagnostic question: *Am I continuing to cling to Christ through struggle, suffering, and temptation?*

8. Is your life manifesting good works as the fruit of faith?

Ephesians 2:10 — Believers are created in Christ Jesus for good works.

Titus 2:11-14 — Grace makes believers zealous for good works.

James 2:14-26 — Faith without works is dead.

Matthew 5:16 — Good works glorify the Father.

Diagnostic question: *Is my faith visible in practical obedience, service, generosity, and holiness?*

9. Do you have a new relationship to the world?

Romans 12:1-2 — Believers are not to be conformed to this world.

Galatians 6:14 — The world has been crucified to the believer.

1 John 2:15-17 — Love for the world is incompatible with love for the Father.

James 4:4 — Friendship with the world is hostility toward God.

Diagnostic question: *Am I becoming less controlled by worldly desires and more shaped by God's will?*

10. Are you hungry for God's Word and truth?

John 10:27 — Christ's sheep hear His voice and follow Him.

John 17:17 — God sanctifies His people by the truth.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 — Believers receive the Word as the Word of God.

1 Peter 2:2-3 — Believers desire the pure spiritual milk of the Word.

Diagnostic question: *Do I want God's Word to correct, feed, and lead me?*

11. Are you willing to suffer for Christ?

Matthew 16:24-26 — A disciple denies himself, takes up his cross, and follows Christ.

John 15:18-20 — The world will hate Christ's followers.

Philippians 1:29 — It is granted to believers not only to believe but also to suffer for Christ.

2 Timothy 3:12 — All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

Diagnostic question: *Am I willing to follow Christ when it costs me something?*

12. Do you have assurance rooted in Christ, not self-confidence?

Romans 8:1 — There is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:31-39 — Nothing can separate believers from the love of God in Christ.

Hebrews 7:25 — Christ is able to save completely those who draw near to God through Him.

1 John 5:11-13 — John writes so believers may know they have eternal life.

Diagnostic question: *Is my assurance grounded in Christ's promises and finished work?*

SHINING AS LIGHTS IN THE WORLD - SERMON GUIDE

MAIN SERMON OUTLINE CONTINUED

3

Follow the light (Philippians 2:16)

The church shines by holding fast to the Word of life. God's Word guides our steps, guards our hope, and keeps our labor from being empty in the day of Christ.

Truth from God's Word I must hold fast

A place where I need Scripture to guide me

4

Trust the light (Philippians 2:17-18)

Paul could rejoice even if his life was poured out like a drink offering because Christ was worth the sacrifice. Gospel faith produces glad, shared joy even in costly service.

A sacrifice Christ may be calling me to make

A reason I can rejoice in gospel service

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does Paul connect our obedience with God's work in us?
2. How do grumbling and disputing damage a church's gospel witness?
3. What does it look like to "hold fast to the word of life" this week?

4. Where do you most need to shine differently at home, work, school, or church?
5. How does Paul's joy challenge the way we think about sacrifice?
6. What step of obedience should I take before next Sunday?

NOTES

THIS WEEK I WILL

Test my light by

Reflect the light by

Follow the light by

Trust the light by