

5. Learning to Let God Complete His Will in Us

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to have the mind of Christ. We saw that Christ wants us to esteem others more than self. That means that we have to choose to humble ourselves. Christ gave us the greatest example of what it means to humble ourselves when He humbled Himself and became obedient to death on the cross. In our topic today, we want to learn how to help our children learn to let God complete His will for their lives.

Christ humbled Himself and suffered the most brutal death that the Romans could devise. He did that to pay the penalty for our sins. As a result, we see the response of the Father to Christ. Philippians 2:9-11 says, “Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” This exaltation was based on the fact that Christ had become 100% God and 100% man. As the God-man who had lived on the earth with mankind, Christ is now able to pray for us as our High Priest.

We see the Father has exalted Christ and given Him a name that is above every name. The day will come when every knee will bow at that name. This will include those in heaven, those that are on the earth and those who have gone to eternal judgment. 1 Peter 3:18-19 and 22 says, “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison...who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.” Here, we see that even those in rebellion will be forced to bow before Christ and admit that He is Lord even though they experience eternal judgment because they chose to reject Jesus Christ as Lord.

The day will also come when every tongue will confess and acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord. This will also bring glory to the Father who has exalted Christ by giving Him a name that is above every name. Jesus was the name that was given to Christ at his birth. Matthew 1:21 says, “And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.” Lord was the name that was given to Christ when He rose from the dead. In the Old Testament, the Father is called Lord. Psalm 2:11-12 says, “Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish *in* the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed *are* all those who put their trust in Him.” Here, in Philippians, we see that the Father gave the name Lord to Christ as He exalted Him.

We see that the fact that the Father has exalted Christ and given Him a name that is above every name will bring glory to the Father. The Father personally exalted Christ several times while He was on this earth. The first time was in Matthew 3:17 where we read, “And suddenly a voice *came* from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’” However, we also see that Christ will exalt the Father. 1 Corinthians 15:28 says, “Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him,

that God may be all in all.” Here, we see that Christ will also give glory to the Father.

Philippians 2:12-13 goes on to say, “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now 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 do for *His* good pleasure.” Paul had a great relationship with the Christians in Philippi. They had listened to him and had followed his instructions in the past both when he was present and when he was in other places. After giving the example of Christ giving Himself for the sake of others, Paul now returns to the topic of how the Philippians can complete the will of God for their lives.

First, Paul reminded the Philippians to work out their own salvation. He reminded them that they were able to do this because they had the power of God working in their lives. The word that is translated “work out” means *to continually work to achieve what God had designed their lives to do*. We can also accomplish what God has designed us to do because He has worked in our lives and is continuing to work in our lives. 2 Corinthians 5:5-7 says, “Now He who has prepared us for this very thing *is* God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So *we are* always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight.” God is working in our lives and through our lives to prepare us for our eternal life. A few verses earlier in 2 Corinthians 4:16 Paul wrote, “Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day.” Here, we see that the Holy Spirit renews us day by day so that we can do the ministry that God has prepared for each one of us.

Philippians 2:14-16 says, “Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.” Second, we see the attitude that the Philippians and we are to have as we work out our salvation. We are to do all things without complaining and disputing. The word that is translated “complaining” means *to grumble or complain in a low voice*. The word that is translated “disputing” means *to question, criticize or argue*. These are normal characteristics of people who are not Christians so we are to become something different. The word “become” speaks of the process that is involved in changing from our former attitudes to new attitudes as we grow in Christ.

As we develop new attitudes, we see what the Lord is helping us to become. The word that is translated “blameless” means *a life that cannot be criticized by others*. Paul used this same word in 1 Thessalonians 3:13 where he said, “So that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.” God is the One who gives us His strength to develop lives that are holy. The word that is translated “harmless” means *a mind that is innocent and free from evil*. Here, we see that we are to develop a life that is pure in both actions and thoughts. The word that is translated “without fault” is used one other time in the New Testament. 2 Peter 3:14 says, “Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless.” Here, the word is translated “blameless” or “without spot”.

As our lives are being transformed by the Lord, we realize that our lives are becoming very different from the world around us. We see that the world around us is described as crooked and perverse. The word that is translated “crooked” means *curved, wicked or evil*. The word that is translated “perverse” means *one who turns aside or who opposes the purposes and plans of God*. The word is used in Acts 13:8 where we read, “But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.” Here, the word is translated “to turn away”. As a result, we see that the world around us is evil and there are many who work hard to oppose the purposes of God.

The darker and more sinful the world becomes, the brighter our lights will shine. Matthew 5:16 tells us, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” Even a small light will shine brightly when it is very dark. We also see how we shine as lights. We are to hold forth the Word of life. 1 Peter 2:9 says, “But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” The Word of life is the message of the Gospel. We are to hold out or share that message with the people of the world around us so that they will have the opportunity to come to Christ who is the true Light. Paul told the Philippians that as they held out the Word of life to others and gave them the opportunity to come to Christ that he would know that his effort and hard work in sharing the Gospel had not been in vain. The same is true in our own lives as we help our children learn to share the Word of God effectively.

Philippians 2:17-18 says, “Yes, and if I am being poured out *as a drink offering* on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me.” Paul viewed his life as a drink offering. In the Old Testament, a drink offering was poured on top of a sacrifice and the liquid would rise in steam to God. Paul said that he wanted his life and ministry to be a sacrifice to God which would make it possible for other Christians to carry out faithful service to the Lord. Paul said that his life would be filled with great joy if the Lord chose to use his service in that way.

Paul also wanted the Philippians to be glad and rejoice with him because the Lord was allowing his life to be such a sacrifice. Here, we see the attitude that the Lord wants each of us to have as we help our physical and spiritual children learn how to serve the Lord effectively. We can be filled with gladness and rejoicing for the fact that the Lord has chosen us and allowed us to have the privilege of equipping our children to serve the Lord effectively. We also want them to be able to rejoice with us as they learn to share the message of the Gospel. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to let God carry out His will through their lives.