



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Philippians, Colossians, Philemon Sermon Series
Supports Session 3: Joy through Humility
Sermon Title: Be a Star for Jesus
Passage: Philippians 2:12-15

Connection to Philippians 2:1-15

The believers in Philippi were called to live humbly by following the example of Jesus. Humility puts other first through service. Jesus put aside the privileges of heaven, came to earth, and was obedient to the point of death on a cross. Believers are to be examples for lost humanity and other believers by humbly shining as stars in the darkness of a sinful world.

Introduction/Opening

A star is an exceptional performer who stands out. Stars are brilliant and distinctive, not ordinary. Stardom become the goal for others to reach. Glenn Campbell defined this ambition in terms of “riding out on a horse in a star-spangled rodeo” (from the song “Rhinstone Cowboy”). We can envision a mounted performer glimmering in the spotlight of a darkened arena. Paul urges the believers in Philippi to be standouts for Jesus and sparkle through humble service.

Outline

1. Stars shine in the darkness.
 - a. Our world is in moral darkness because it is a “crooked and perverted” world (Phil. 2:15).
 - b. Paul described his generation as “crooked” (Greek *skolios*). In English, “scoliosis” is a crippling curvature of the spine. As a twisted spine disables an individual, twisted conduct dissembles an individual and society preventing its fulfillment and achievements.
 - c. “Perverted” translates the Greek term *diastrepho*. “Dia” intensifies “strephe” or “to turn” indicating something normal being twisted or perverted into something alien to its intended design.
 - d. Darkness also suggests the common or ordinary. In the dreariness of the commonplace, we are attracted by standouts. When the crowd is singing off-key, we are attracted to the star ensemble with sweet harmony. Darkness and brokenness make us hungry for something better.
 - e. In the darkness of twisted perversion, our communities are drawn to a brilliant uprightness.

2. Stars use exceptional gifts.
 - a. Some of us dream of being a speedy running back breaking tackles and drawing cheers as we head for the goal line to score for our football team. We may dream of being the person stealing the show with a guitar solo. Then we take look at our ability to run or keep a beat, and we realize we do not have the gifts to make either happen.
 - b. Though our natural abilities may be common, our individual spiritual gifts are spectacular. Each believer receives a spiritual gift to employ in the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:7). These gifts are diverse and suited for our generation by the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:11). The body of Christ is only complete when our gifts are employed.
 - c. Our giftedness is determined by the grace and will of God. We do not earn our spiritual gifts or receive them by chance; they are a capability granted from eternity to be used in the plan of God for the ages.
 - d. As believers our abilities are unique and carefully suited by our Creator to serve Him. The Word of God informs us that we are standouts, and our spiritual giftedness equips us to be unlike others and exceptional.
 - e. Joy comes when we discover our capabilities and put them to work in the kingdom of God.

3. Stars hone their skills.
 - a. There is a warning in the verses of joy that Paul shared with the church at Philippi. He urged the fellowship to help two ladies, Euodia and Syntyche, to get along (Phil. 4:2). In the moral darkness and dysfunction, the Philippian community would be open to embracing the light of stars, but the stars had to cooperate. The church needs to exhibit a loving unity.
 - b. Though the believers at Philippi had everything they needed for their salvation in the grace of God, they were called to effort. They were to “work out” (Greek: *katergazomai*) or to finish and complete their salvation (Phil. 2:12). Their effort would not secure nor improve their forgiveness and familial relation with God. That was already secured by their faith in Jesus. But clearly, they were to bring something to the equation.
 1. We bring our obedience (v. 12).
 2. We bring humility, putting others first (. 4)
 3. We refrain from complaining and arguing (v. 14)
 4. We seek unity through love and tenderness (v. 1)
 - c. As we bring these attitudes to the table, we appear with our offerings, not appearing before the Lord empty-handed (Deut. 16:16). And as we do, we shine as stars in the darkness creating a desirable goal for a broken world.

Conclusion

At the time of Jesus’ birth, the wise men observed a special star and followed it. The star led them to Jesus (Matt. 2:2,9). As the wise men were attracted to the star of Jesus, so the lost and those seeking maturity in Christ need a reference point for their life journeys. Paul urged the

disciples of Philippi to shine by reflecting the light of Jesus so others could find their way to abundant life.

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