

**Remnant Life Church**  
May 22, 2022  
**The Church of the Philippians – Part 14**  
**Working for a Change**  
Philippians 2:12-13

**READ** – *Philippians 2:12-13*

It has been said that the only constant in life is change.

- This is a variation on a quote by Heraclitus of Ephesus in around 500BC
- This sentence is what is known as an oxymoron
  - A statement or figure of speech in which apparently contradictory terms appear in conjunction with the other
  - We use them all the time in our everyday speech
    - Original copy
    - A one-man band
    - An open secret
  - So too when we speak of constant change

Change is necessary in our lives for there to be growth and for us to be healthy

- Perhaps it is changing toward a healthier lifestyle
  - That might involve changing my eating habits
  - Reducing the unhealthy foods I eat with more healthy choices
  - Becoming more active and less sedentary
- Perhaps it is a change in your appearance
  - That might involve a new style of clothing
  - An effort to lose or gain weight
  - Of course that can become in and of itself unhealthy if it goes to far or becomes an obsession
- And then there is the challenge to change the way we think
  - Tolerance is a word that has become a part of our everyday language and thinking
  - Unfortunately, it is not in a positive way
  - You could, not that long ago, be tolerant of someone else yet fully disagree with them
  - Today tolerance means you must accept and in essence approve of what anyone wants to say, do, or believe
  - To be labeled as intolerant today is to become a social pariah
  - This is because there is no longer right or wrong because truth, as we have examined here, is relative and no longer absolute
- In spite of the potential negatives, change is important and most often for the good

The Bible also tells us that change is important and we see that ever-growing need all around us  
*Ezek 18:31-32 - Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, people of Israel? For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live!*

In our text this morning, Paul begins by commending the people of the Philippian church with their behavior both when he is there with them and when he is not

- This is what we mean when we say that you can not be living effectively for the kingdom if your behavior is one way on Sunday and a completely different way the other six days of the week
- I have played many a softball tournament when, after finding out that I was a preacher, the language on the team changed dramatically

But the change that we want to consider this morning is not an easy one to make

- Because it pits two forces against each other that are both a part of you
- It is the flesh (or sinful nature that entered in through Adam and Eve) and the spirit (the new life given to us by Jesus Christ when we accept His as our Lord and Savior)
  - When you hear those two terms it is important to know exactly what they mean
  - The flesh is your nature apart from the goodness of God in your life
    - It is the nature that gives in to temptation and acts in ways that the world embraces and encourages
    - It is selfish, prideful, greedy, unkind, and in every way possible only concerned about one thing – ME
  - The spirit is the presence of God, through the Holy Spirit, in your life
    - It is seen, as Paul writes in [Gal 5:22-23](#), in our *love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*
    - The flesh nature and spirit nature are always in conflict with one another
    - It requires constant attention and effort to live by the spirit and not the flesh

This is why Paul says to the Philippian church in the second part of v 12, *continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling,*

The working out of our salvation involves two parts

- The first is what was done for us on the cross
  - It is described by the word justification
  - It is the work that was done on our behalf by Jesus by paying the death penalty of sin on our behalf
    - Our sins were taken away, paid in full
    - There is nothing else that needs to be or can be done
    - Nothing is lacking it is a finished work
  - There is nothing for us to work out in this first part of salvation
  - We simply receive it in faith
- The second part of our salvation does directly involve us
  - It is described by the word sanctification
  - This is the growth process for every Christian
    - It involves choice
    - The words we speak, the things we do, the control of our tempers, our desires, our will, and our pride are all in need of our attention every single day
    - This is the working out that Paul speaks of
    - And it means things need to change

How does this change take place?

- As Christians we believe and say that God has changed our hearts when we surrender our lives to Him
- But we hear many conflicting things
  - On the one hand we hear people say that you must wait on the Lord
  - Others go by the mantra “if its going to be its up to me”
  - What about the old standard, “The Lord helps those who help themselves?”
  - Which, by the way, is NOT in the Bible
    - It is most often attributed to Benjamin Franklin and that is a rephrasing of an ancient Greek proverb

Notice two word pairs in these verses – work out and work in

- To work out your salvation is your part of the process
- To work in, is God’s part
  - IOW – Paul is saying that you must work out what God has and is working in you.
  - Now do not confuse this with earning your salvation
  - You are not working out anything that was not first given by God in the person of His Son Jesus Christ
  - Paul writes in **Eph 2:8-9** – *For by grace you have saved through faith, and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*
- But why does Paul use the words *with fear and trembling*?
  - Surely it is not fear of God – no it is not
  - It certainly is because of the danger of sin
    - Sin and wrong doing have become so commonplace that we hardly seem to notice
    - We explain things away, justify them, and allow ourselves to embrace things that are not of God and His Word
    - There should be fear when we sin since it always carry consequence
    - This type of fear should help us to avoid falling into temptation and sin
    - But it always a choice we are given

But we do not have to attempt our part of the changes alone – we are given help

- We are given God’s Word
  - Paul writes in **2 Tim 3:16-17** – *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*
  - That word ‘profitable’ means useful, beneficial, and important for our learning of what is true and what is not.
  - It also corrects, instructs, and encourages us
- We are given the Holy Spirit
  - When you accept Jesus Christ as the Lord of your life, the Holy Spirit comes and lives within your heart
  - Jesus said that the disciples would receive power

- That word power in the original language is dunimas
  - It is the root of the word dynamite, dynamo, and dynamic
  - We have been given power by God to resist temptation and choose to be obedient to God's Word just as the church in Philippi was doing
- Finally, we are given the circumstances of life
  - God is permissive in allowing challenges, trials, even troubles to come into our lives
  - Each one of those is an opportunity for us to learn, grow and embrace the changes necessary to live a life that is a reflection of the presence of Jesus Christ
    - CS Lewis once wrote that the problems, difficulties, trials and tribulations and suffering in our lives were often God's megaphone to get our attention.
    - Hear this...God is not as interested in our comfort or happiness as He is with our living and becoming more like His Son.

Finally, there is one thing left to understand and embrace

- The battle between the flesh and the spirit as well as the need for change is a life-long process that you will never complete in this body
  - The flesh will always be present
  - No one ever arrives!
  - Those that think that they somehow have, are now living in spiritual pride

Let me give you an illustration of what this means and with this I am done

- There is a 1959 western movie called "The Hanging Tree." It starred Gary Cooper, Karl Malden, and George C. Scott. Cooper plays a doctor and he saves people's lives in the town of Skull Creek. In one early important scene, a young man gets shot; and he is dying. Gary Cooper pulls out the bullet and is able to save the man's life. The man, grateful for having been rescued, asks what he can do for the doctor. Gary Cooper says, "Well, you know, I've always needed an assistant, so why don't you assist me. I'll teach you what to do." When the young man asks how long the doctor wanted his help, Gary Cooper replies, "Well, for the rest of your life, because that's how long you would have been dead if I hadn't saved you."

The choice, every time the flesh is pulling you toward sin, is yours to make

- **Eph 4:22-24** - *You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self (the flesh), which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness (the spirit)*
- **Rom 12:2** - *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

It has been said that the only constant in life is change.

The only constant in your life should be to continue changing into the image of Jesus Christ.