

Philippians 10-06-04a

This is Friday the 4th of June 2010 and we continue our study in the book of Philippians. We are in chapter 2 and we will resume at verse 14. Take a moment as we begin to go to the Lord in prayer and ensure that we are susceptible to the ministering presence of God's Holy Spirit, which is, as you well know, essential for both me and you, for us to have a successful study.

Shall we pray? Father, what a privilege it is for us to gather and spend time together receiving the blessings and the benefits that come from fellowship with believers who recognize how important it is to cultivate our relationship with you through prayer, through Bible study, and through time spent with believers of like mind. We thank you for the passage that is before us tonight in the book of Philippians and we ask your blessing on us as we study it. May each one of us find in it those necessary truths that will motivate us, will enable us and transform us so that we can live a life that is pleasing in your sight.

We pray it in Jesus' name, Amen. Well this is such an interesting passage in the light of coming to understand the flow of thought that we have traced through beginning in chapter 1. I think in the introduction I mentioned to you that one of the great themes is rejoicing and the joy of our Christian faith and that it is our birthright, our spiritual birthright. It is a heritage and it is an oft-mentioned aspect of our life.

But the more we study and translate and trace Paul's thought, the more I am convinced that at least if that is a theme, probably the theme is eudokia or the good will of God, the good intention of God. And in the same way that we are to be like God, we are to recover the image of God in which we were created through our edification, our spiritual up-building, because we don't start out reflecting much of God's character or God's thinking. But as we grow in grace and knowledge of the Savior, as we become like-minded with Christ, we ought to be more God-like, not in the creative, powerful, sovereign sense necessarily, but specifically in the area of selflessness.

We are born selfish. We are born self-centered. We are born with an incredibly strong ego.

We are out for number one and it is probably the central core, it is the center of mass in our fallen nature that most needs moving. The fundamental essential transformation for us as believers is to put off the old man with his selfish desires and put on the new man that reflects and is made in the image of Christ. And as we have seen in the argument of the first portion of Philippians, the essence of the Lord Jesus Christ in his humanity is selflessness.

Everything he did, all of his accomplishments of the Father's purpose reflects selflessness. He emptied himself. He took on the form of a slave.

He came in the likeness of men. He humbled himself. He was obedient.

All of these things are possible for us. We can humble ourselves. We can be obedient to God's

plan.

We can let go of self-centeredness to the extent that we can enter into this perspective and this attitude. So, I would suggest, I would argue that certainly in the portion of this letter that we have studied thus far, a central theme is eudokia because when you turn away from selfishness, when we turn away from egocentricity and the first person singular pronoun and everything we think and do, what do we substitute? There are people who spend themselves in a worthy cause, as Theodore Roosevelt put it. The man who is in the arena spends himself in a worthy cause, spends himself, sacrifices himself.

And there are people who will be devoted to a great cause. There are people who are probably personally devoted to ending global warming or feeding the poor or stamping out a particular disease. Maybe their wife succumbed to it and now they have formed a foundation and they are championing research.

I think the Susan G. Komen Foundation was started by her husband and people who were close to her. So there are people who will enter into a selfless devotion to a cause. And this is an echo, it is a reflection, the instinct is there but this finds its natural and full and proper expression when we direct that instinct and that attitude toward God and His plan and that is the eudokia.

When we turn away from selfishness, the proper object of our devotion as believers, not to say that we can't also have other causes and other endeavors, these things are great. I am all in favor of being a blessing to others in any ways that God gives us the opportunity to do so. But the fundamental shift is to the good will of God, the good intention of God.

It is translated kind intention in some translations when you run across eudokia. And this is a reminder, it harks back to what we saw in Hebrews chapter 6. Not laying again the foundation of change of mind away from dead works and of faith toward God. When we turn away from a thing, we turn toward something else.

This is the recipe for success. If you are going to stop a bad habit, the easiest and best way to do it is to substitute something good. If you eat pretzels and they are bad for you, you substitute melon balls or celery sticks or something that is ostensibly good for you.

It's not enough to sit there and say, I won't eat that pretzel, I won't eat that pretzel, I refuse to eat it. Just sit there and all you can think about is pretzels because you are trying not to eat them. Change of mind away from one thing and toward another.

So fundamentally, this first chapter and a half of Philippians is talking about change of mind away from self and change of mind toward God and others. Because it is a part of God's eudokia that we be devoted to one another, that we put one another's interests ahead of our own. That's the essence of the second great commandment, to love others as we love ourselves.

And, you can almost paraphrase that, love your neighbor instead of yourself. All of that love that you were going to lavish on yourself, all of that interest that you were going to devote to your personal betterment, transfer that to your neighbor. When it says love your neighbor as yourself, begin loving your neighbor the way you have been loving yourself.

It's a movement, it's a transfer and it is only possible through God's power. We can't will this to happen. And that's where the Spirit of God and the Word of God is necessary in our souls, in our hearts, and a commitment to those things.

That's how we fulfill Romans 12, 1 and 2. Present yourselves a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. It's your reasonable service. Don't be conformed to the world, which is inherently selfish.

Be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you may prove, so that you can identify and live out the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. That good, acceptable, and perfect will of God is the *eudokia*. Remember that? The *eudokia*.

So that, when we left off last time, we were looking at the statement that Paul makes in verses 12 and 13, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, as you have always served. Not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence. You need to be self-starting.

No spiritual life is going to succeed that depends on somebody else to poke us in the ribs and get us moving. To slap us in the head and say, go to class, get up, do your meditation, memorize your verse, have you prayed lately, have you thought at all about your spiritual life. It cannot be externally produced.

And this is the great flaw in mentoring and discipleship that depends on, and I'm qualifying that there, I'm sure there's good mentoring and discipleship somewhere, but if it depends on you attend our group and we will ensure that you hew to the straight and narrow, it's going to fail. Because Paul says, you need to obey in my absence. You need to obey without a mentor.

You need to be motivated. You need to grasp the big picture without an external influence guiding and pushing. This is a mark of maturity.

Children who grow up and leave home, or even if they're at home, they take charge of their schedule and their duties and their responsibilities, their deadlines, their commitments. That's maturity. I don't need my mother reminding me.

I don't need my father nipping at my heels to get me to do these things. Mature people don't need that. Mature believers don't need that.

We have an individual relationship with God. He is our Father. We are His child.

And I don't need a Pope. I don't need a rabbi. I don't need a, what do they call those Catholic

guys? I don't need a bishop.

I don't need, what's the lower down guy? I don't need a priest. I don't need, what do they call them? Father so-and-so. I don't need Father Guido.

I don't need Father Bill or Father anybody, right? You have obeyed in my presence, Paul says. But you're growing up, you're learning, and much more in my absence. You need to obey.

Obey from the heart. And that's true of all of us, and it's true in a lot of different contexts. We will stand alone before the judgment seat of Christ.

And we can't say, well, you know, I would have been a much better Christian if my dad had just gotten after me a little more, if my mother had just prayed for me more and agonized with me more and encouraged me more. I would have been better. That's not going to wash.

In the absence of anybody else, a teacher from the past that many of us heard at one time used to say, if you want to know what you are really like, look at yourself when you're alone. What are you like when you're alone? Are you living your life to be seen by men, and in the absence of men when you're not being seen, different things happen? What are you like when you're alone? What are you like when your guiding influences are absent? That's who you truly are. What are you like when you're alone? Are you faithful? Are you motivated? Are you consistent? Do you exhibit character? Do you stick to principles? Do you abide by standards when you're alone and nobody is looking and nobody is there to encourage or exhort or chastise? What are you like when you're alone? That's who you really are.

That's who you really are. Much more in my absence, Paul says. Work out your own deliverance.

Work out your own solutions. Work out your own spiritual life in fear and trembling, remembering that it is God who is in your midst for the willing and the doing of eudokia. His is not there in the Greek.

Of course, it's God's plan and purpose, but it's the eudokia that pertains among you in your one another situations. What would please God? What is God's kind intention? What is God's good will? I didn't really give you a full study on eudokia last time, but I do want to point out a couple of additional passages. If I covered some of these last time, just count it as review.

In Romans 10, verse 1, you remember the Romans 9, 10, and 11 section where Paul breaks off this great theological treatise, this wonderful exhortation, this great explication of righteousness by faith for believers. Abraham lived by faith. God declared him righteous by faith.

He believed God. He was credited for righteousness. We are sons of the free woman, not the bond woman.

We lay hold of righteousness by faith. That's the theme of the book of Romans. This is what

Israel has missed.

This is what we learned under the law, that you can't get it by rote. You can't get it by repetition. You can't get it by habituation.

You can't just try to be righteous and be righteous. He starts in Romans 9, 10, and 11 talking about Israel. In Romans 10, he says, Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them, for Israel, is for their soteria, their salvation, my eudokia for them, my kind intention, my good will toward Israel.

Paul wasn't bitter that he'd been cast out by the Pharisees, that he'd been denigrated and actually persecuted and imprisoned and beaten and subjected to all kinds of ill treatment by the Jews, by the religious leadership in Israel. He said, my eudokia and my deesis, my prayer, my request for them, is that they be saved. And it's actually the eudokia of my heart and the deesis before God on their behalf, eis soterion, is with a view toward salvation, with a view toward deliverance, eis.

In the non-material world, it always means unto, with a view toward, looking in the direction of a thing. That's why Peter in Acts says, be baptized eis, the remission of sins. Repent, and remember, there's people that think you've got to be baptized to be saved because Peter said, repent and be baptized for the remission of sins.

It's repent and be baptized eis, with a view toward, looking in the direction of the remission of your sins. And in that day, that great symbolic act of baptism was reflecting your understanding of the remission of sins. Dead to the old way of life, raised to a new way of life, united with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection, no longer a slave to sin, with a view toward.

And here, Paul says, the eudokia of my heart, and notice how selfless this is. He's taken a lot of abuse at their hands. You want to talk about somebody who has fulfilled the scriptural injunction from the Lord Jesus to love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who despitefully use you.

That's exactly what Paul is reflecting here. He is praying for those who have despitefully used him. He is loving those who are acting as his enemies, who are trying to kill him.

Remember, some of those Jewish zealots took a vow that they wouldn't eat any food until they had killed Paul. There were like 70 of them. Took a vow.

We will eat no food. No morsel will pass our lips until Paul is dead. And he says, my eudokia, my good thought, my kind intention, it's intrinsically selfless.

It's intrinsically interested in the well-being of others. That's what eudokia is. God's eudokia, when he sent the Lord Jesus, we looked at that last time in Luke chapter 2. When the angels say, peace on earth, it's 2.14 of Luke, glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace among men of eudokia, men who get what God is up to.

This is one of God's great selfless acts, in sending his own son, the suffering servant of Isaiah, knowing he is going to be bruised for our sins and wounded for our iniquities. By his stripes, we are going to be healed. It's the eudokia.

And men who recognize that see the peace, see the reconciliation, the mediation between God and men through the man, Christ Jesus, and they celebrate. That's what Simeon had tears in his eyes over. That's what Anna understood.

That's what the shepherds figured out, is that this is God's selfless act, eudokia. The passage in Matthew chapter 11 and verse 26, and there is a parallel over in Luke chapter 10, but Matthew 11, verse 26, Jesus has been teaching and he is talking about the signs that had been given to Israel in Jesus' earthly ministry, and he said, if the miracles that had been done in your midst had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. God has leaned down from heaven, he has extended himself, he has reached, he has done everything possible to try to communicate his gracious purpose, and he has authenticated it and manifested it through these miracles.

And Jesus said, Chorazin, Bethsaida, if the miracles that had been done in Tyre and Sidon, if they had been done there the way that they had been done for you, they would have repented in sackcloth and ashes, and it's going to be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. Says the same similar thing about Capernaum. So then he says, he prays to the Father right after that, in Matthew 11, verse 25, he says, I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.

Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in your sight. And you can probably already anticipate that this is because it was eudokia before you. That the humble, that the motivated, the receptive people would understand things that are opaque to the scholars and the learned and the high and mighty, that was a part of God's eudokia.

God resists the proud, God gives grace to the humble, and it's a part of eudokia. It's a part of God's selfless benefaction to those who are seeking him, those who are looking to him, those who depend upon him in faith. It is used in Ephesians chapter 1 by Paul two times, verse 5 and verse 9. Paul is given a great doxology in Ephesians chapter 1, verse 3, he says, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And by the way, the reason I am belaboring eudokia is we have to understand it to get the next part of Philippians. Certainly to understand this part. I think we saw last week how essential it is to understand what Paul is saying when he says, God is at work.

People like to say, well, God is at work in you to will and to do for his good pleasure. It acts like, well, God has put us on like a sock puppet. He is inside us and he is going to make us do his

good will and his pleasure.

It's not what it's talking about at all. God is making these opportunities and making the provision and giving us everything we need, revealing his eudokia and allowing us to enter into it. We can be a blessing to each other.

God's blessings, God's eudokia can flow through us when we put the interests of others ahead of ourselves. It doesn't have anything to do with sovereign overruling of volition or any of the nonsense that the Calvinists read into this passage. And that's the hazard of ripping things out of context is you can make it say almost anything if you take it out of its home.

But, as we move forward now, when he's going to talk about complaining and disputing, if you want to really get away from complaining and disputing, understanding what eudokia is, is the key. This is what's going to make that happen. It's one thing to say, I wish I wasn't so gripey.

I wish I wasn't so critical. I wish I wasn't so negative all the time. But it's like a lot of other things, wishing you weren't doesn't empower you to not be that thing.

I wish I could run a seven minute mile, but I'm not going to get there by wishing it. I need to go run. I'm only at an eight minute mile if I do three of them.

Right now, my old man time is eight minute miles. If I want to get any better, I have to do something. I can't just sit around wishing or hoping or thinking it ought to be a way.

You can think of things that you would like to be different than what they are, and particularly in our areas of sin, in areas where we are not a blessing to one another. We are not a, oh, let me go get next to him or her because that will be a blessing. We're not that way.

We're kind of negative, or way negative in my case. Well, where is the power to change? It is not Deepak Chopra, and it's not the bald guy that comes on PBS twice a year to do his little H. Wayne Dyer or whatever his name is. It is not Tony Robbins.

It is not any of these self-help guru types. The lady that does the money seminars, she'll tell you that getting your finances under control will make you happy, productive, and a blessing to everyone around you because it's all about getting your money straightened out. This is like the yoga of dollars, if you listen to that gal.

I forget her name. Suze Orman, S-U-Z-E, looks like something from ancient Persia, but it's Suze Orman. If you seriously listen to her seminars and read her books, this is the key to all aspects of your life.

Every possible facet that you can think of is going to be better once you get on a budget and so on. She invests finances with a spiritual component. It's one of the more unusual things I've run across.

I think being financially responsible is great, but I'm not saying mantras over it and basing my happiness on it. Anyway, what is it? How do you get out of this? We have to understand what eudokia is. Let me say this.

If you don't understand eudokia, you cannot fulfill these commands. It's just that simple. When he says, do all things without grumbling and complaining, put the interests of others ahead of your own.

If you do not understand eudokia, you cannot do this because this is how it is done. It's like you can't drive your car without gas in the tank and a steering wheel bolted to the tie rods. You cannot fulfill these commands without it.

That's why I'm belaboring eudokias, just so you know. If you go to Ephesians 1, and he says this doxology, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. This is God selflessly.

God has other stuff he could be doing, right? What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him? David asks. Remember that? Psalm 8, I believe. What is man? Why would you bother? It's a God thing.

It's eudokia. God is selflessly, and for reasons of his own, interested in us. We don't earn it.

We don't deserve it. We're not worthy of it. The saying they have, Jesus got what we deserve, and we end up getting what he deserves.

How good a deal is that? I heard somebody saying the other day, you want to be careful out running around saying, I'm not getting what I deserve. If we got what we deserved, we wouldn't be here. But here's the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ, chose us in him before the foundation of the world.

And that's a sermon unto itself. In choosing Christ, and then placing us in Christ, we enter into God's favor of him, and God's choosing of him, in eternity past. We didn't exist in eternity past, but Christ did, and God chose him in eternity past.

We are entered into Christ, and we get grandfathered into this choosing, this favor of God the Father on God the Son. We're grandfathered in. That's what this means.

It's all of the election stuff that you've heard is just wrong. He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, so that we could be holy and blameless before him. There's no way we can be holy and blameless before God the Father unless we are in Christ.

He is our righteousness. He is our peace. He is our sanctification.

Entered into him, we enter into all of the things that God had already assigned to him in eternity

past. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am eudokia. That's the word.

This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased, eudokia. God is expressing his selfless good intention in and through Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ totally fulfilled and lived out God's eudokia.

That statement is multi-dimensional, as is everything God says. God says, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am expressing my eudokia, and this is my beloved Son, with whom I am eudokia, because he has accomplished my will. Predestined us to adoption, the praise and glory of his grace.

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, verse 7, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished on us, made to abound toward us, in all wisdom and prudence. It used to be a great name that they gave girls back in colonial days, prudence. But it's fronesai, this is one of our words in Philippians, froneo, to think.

Taipeino frosune is humble thinking, humble intention, which he made known to us, in verse 9, having made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his eudokia, which he purposed in himself. Everything having to do with Jesus Christ, everything having to do with that doxology, every concept in those verses that we just read is a part of God's eudokia. You cannot abide in selfishness looking at these truths, you can't.

If you comprehend what God has done in Christ for us, if you enter into that, the redemption that we have through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace, when we don't deserve it, we have no way to escape our sin, we have no way to escape our fallen nature. And God's grace has abounded toward us in all wisdom and in all thoughtfulness. This is sophia and fronesai.

Having made known to us the mysterion of his will, and this is derived from fellow, which we've also seen in Philippians. According to kata, tein, eudokion, according to eudokia. Remember what they call the Lord's Prayer, the model prayer that Jesus gave the disciples? And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Remember that? There is a necessary humility, there is a necessary self-sacrifice in forgiving others. We have to give up an investment. You should have and you didn't, you shouldn't have and you did, you've wounded me, you've hurt me, you've cost me, you have sinned against me, and I feel the need for recompense, I feel the need for justice, I feel the need for retribution, for the scales to be balanced.

I want to have the eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, and a life for a life. The lex talionis, and the Lord Jesus said, when you pray and you ask God's forgiveness for your sins, you remind yourself that his forgiveness of your sins should be at the same extent and at the same level as your forgiveness of others, and Jesus told that parable about the servant that owed the great debt to his master and the master forgave it, but then he had an underling servant that owed him a

little bit, and he was harassing and persecuting that guy and saying, you've got to pay me every penny, and when the master found out, he said, guess what, I have just unforgiven your forgiven debt, and he put him in prison until he should pay every farthing, and that's a sobering thought, but what does it reflect? How can you truly and from the heart forgive someone, let go of that investment, let go of that feeling of injustice, and that desire for retribution and recompense? How? You can't do it by looking at the situation, you can't do it by trying to find some redeeming quality in the sinner. How could one do that? We have to look at the redemption through the blood of Christ, the riches of God's grace, which he made to abound toward us in wisdom and in prudence, revealing to us, here we are sinners and enemies of God, lost and dark and cut off from everything, God not only rescues us and delivers us and pays our penalty, but he invests himself in us, he reveals himself to us, he blesses us with the mystery of his will, because that's his eudokia, it's according to his selfless love toward us, his selfless kind intention, that's eudokia.

In order to, now here's the point of application, this is the summary of everything we've covered in the last 30 minutes, to escape the sin that so easily besets us, to not wound and wrong the people around us, and to begin to live out the one another commands, love one another, forgive one another, encourage one another, remind one another, speak the truth to one another, in order to fulfill those, which is half of our entire Christian responsibility, love the Lord your God, love your neighbor as yourself, in order to fulfill that second great command, the way to do it, the way to make it happen, is to look, and it sounds kind of trite, sounds kind of corny and like a refrigerator magnet, look to the Lord Jesus. What are we specifically looking at? Look at God's eudokia, look at God's example of selfless placing of our interests ahead of his own. It would have been far easier for God to throw us in a lake of fire and forget and say, well you know, I'll just rip out this universe, make a new one, start out with some different creatures, this whole sin thing is just kind of a problem, I'll just wipe out the whole flood, I won't have anybody make an ark.

Start over. Angels going astray, just think a thought and they'll be gone. God didn't.

God has stretched himself, God has extended himself, God has sacrificed himself. The sermon for Dr. Criswell's Sunday night radio broadcast this week is the church he purchased with his own blood. And in that sermon Dr. Criswell talks about how important it is to recognize that Jesus Christ represents a sacrifice on the part of God the Father.

God the Father is Abraham on the mountain raising the knife over Isaac and it's too often forgotten how difficult it was for the Father. The Lord Jesus sacrificed himself in the act of going to the cross and drinking the cup that the Father asked him to drink, but we don't always remember to meditate on what it cost God the Father. It was his eudokia that is exemplified and represented and manifested and expressed in the Lord Jesus.

In him the Lord Jesus dwells all the fullness of deity in bodily form and that willingness to sacrifice that Jesus reflected reflects the Father. It was equally hard for the Father to send Jesus to the

cross as it was for Jesus to go. God was willing to do that for us and if we can keep that in mind, if we can remember in the moment when our besetting sin begins to be set, when the entanglement begins to hamper us and slows us down from running our race is there.

What is the mechanism, what is the means to fulfill God's command to not sin and instead to do the right thing, do the selfless thing, do the God-like thing, do the Christian thing, to love our enemies, do good to those who hate us, and to be kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you. Not clinging to this sense of, well, I'm right and this is how it ought to be and this thing that besets us, because it's in the one another realm. God is at work in your midst for the willing and the performing of eudokia.

He has certainly done it. God the Father has done it. God the Son has done it.

God the Holy Spirit has done it. And God is giving us the means, and this is the means, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father. Whatever our besetting sin is, whatever our failure is, maybe it's just apathy, maybe we just kind of forget we're a Christian and we go bumbling through our days acting like any unbeliever or any uninformed believer, and we waste our time and we waste our opportunities, and we miss the chance to fulfill the potential that God has given us in Christ.

Maybe that's our besetting sin, it's just not paying attention. Whatever it is, the way to fix that, the way to be obedient, the way to fulfill the joy that Paul expresses, the way to rejoice the way that Paul describes it here, is to focus on that kind intention, that good will of God. That's why we're here.

That's why we exist. It's why we were blood-bought with the work of Christ on the cross, is to live that life. We are not here to evangelize the world by the year 2020.

We are not here to get that guy across the fence to live a better life. That's not why we're here. We are here to live a better life.

We are here to be conformed to the image of His Son. What kind of attitude would we have in terms of selflessness if we were conformed to the image of His Son? We would have that same thinking that was reflected in Christ, right? Just as Paul described it. That's what the eudokia is.

We're going to pause here and take our break. When we come back, we're going to start forward in verse 14. Do all things without complaining and disputing.

It's one thing to say it. It's another thing to do it. But this is the how.

With this as background, we're going to see that it is actually possible to do everything without that grumbling and complaining spirit. That's where we'll pick up when we come back.