

Philippians 10-06-04b

Let's pick up our study now in Philippians chapter 1 and we're looking at eudokia. I have one more passage to cover and we'll return to verse 14 of Philippians 1. But in 2 Thessalonians chapter 1, Paul uses this same term in a very enlightening context, it has kind of a foreboding element to the surrounding text here, but the Thessalonian church was enduring a great deal of opposition and persecution and so Paul is comforting them and he's saying God is going to recompense, he is going to repay those who afflict you. And we have different situations where we struggle with our attitude, sometimes we're just mean spirited and we do harm to those around us and they don't deserve it, we're just rascals, we do bad things and it's all on us, it's not that person's fault, they don't deserve abuse from us and we sin against them and that's on us.

Other times there is some justification, at least in our minds, for having a bad attitude and engaging or at least being tempted to engage in bad treatment to somebody because they are in fact wronging us or doing wrong in some way. What's particularly difficult is if someone wrongs a loved one. If you're a man and someone wrongs your wife or your child or your parents or somebody, you just get this righteous indignation and you want to go load the weapons and rectify the thing and so there are sort of two different scenarios where we are tempted to act out of ourselves and not submit ourselves under the mighty hand of God and watch and wait for his provision and his justice and this is the second case, this is the case where someone is actually doing harm and doing wrong and persecuting and being an enemy to the Thessalonian believers and Paul says that God is going to take note of your perseverance and your dedication to his plan under this pressure.

Now we in this age and in this country, we really don't get much by way of persecution. We get a little bit of resistance, a little bit of opposition, very little discrimination for being Christians. We still have enough leftover vestigial momentum of the days when this really was a largely Christian nation that there's not a lot but there is a hostility of a more subtle form and that is the undermining and the undercutting of Christian values in our society.

It's done in the classroom, it's done in the culture, it's done in the legislation where there is this great erosion of fundamental pieces of our society and our culture and even our government in the name of progress that is actually regress. It is stepping away from the high ideals of the founding fathers who wrote our constitution and our laws in the light of the word of God and that's just a given and anybody that doesn't understand that our country was founded by Christians on Christian principles out of a biblical world view doesn't know history and they've been fed the brainwash and the hogs will of modern day history. Anybody who knows anything about the founding fathers, all they can do is try to find Jefferson or Franklin and say, oh look he was a deist and they ignore the 80 some odd guys who were seminary graduates and pastors, ordained ministers who were the crafters of our earliest legislation.

They don't want to talk about that. How many of those guys could put reverend after their names?

They don't want to talk about that. But the erosion of that is an attack but it doesn't put us in physical danger, it's much more of a spiritual battle and our warfare is not against flesh and blood nearly so much as it is in the realm of the principalities and powers.

Not so with the Thessalonians who were in the Greek culture and the Roman empire, the Roman world in the days where being a Christian could cost you your life if the wrong sort got a hold of that and trumped up a charge that you were disloyal to the Caesar or to the government or whatever, you could be killed. You could be turned into, you know, the earliest form of a Roman candle was a Christian set ablaze and there were crucifixions, there were imprisonments, there were devastations where everything you had was confiscated and you were run out of town. The apostle Paul participated in some of that against the early Christians, that's why he says, of all sinners I am chief, because of his participation in that kind of persecution.

So he's talking about that, here's where you're genuinely being wronged and your test is not to respond in kind, not to sink to that level, not to go negative and be depressed and be discouraged and be full of bitterness. We're easily led into this and he says, look, we speak, verse 4, 2 Thessalonians 1, we speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your endurance, your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure. We applaud you, we speak of you as an example to these newer, younger churches and we say, if you think you know what it means to serve Christ and to love the Lord God, let me tell you about the people in Thessalonica and what they're going through for the cause of Christ and for the sake of the Lord Jesus.

And they're holding to their faith despite of the fact that it costs them. This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God for which indeed you are suffering. We might think we're suffering because somebody has it in for us.

We might think we're suffering because the culture has just become godless. We might think we're suffering because somebody just decided to give us a really raw deal. Paul says, no, this is by design, it has been woven into God's plan and it is with a view toward the kingdom.

It is preparation for the kingdom. Now let me ask you something. What kingdom? What's the next kingdom that's coming up? Rapture, tribulation, second advent, millennial kingdom comes in.

Is that the kingdom for which we are being prepared? Are we going to live in millennial Israel? Are we going to live on planet earth as church age believers, body and bride of Christ? No. Are we going to serve and rule and reign with Christ, if we're qualified, during that period? Yes. Do we need any sort of preparation to be able to serve and minister and reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus during that thousand year period? Yes.

So the point of that series of questions is to remind us all that we're not off the hook in terms of being ready for the kingdom. Just because we're not living in it, doesn't mean we're not being

prepared for it. If anything, our preparation and our calling is higher.

It's one thing to live in a nice place, it's something else to be responsible for running and governing and ensuring that that nice place runs the way it's supposed to. And we will be, the easiest way, the way I think of it is, there's going to be sort of a promotion. The angels are going to get promoted to some new thing in God's plan and purpose.

We are going to get bumped up to, in some way or shape or form, fulfill the role that the angels currently do as watchers and overseers and national guardians and individual ministers and so on. He makes his angels spirits and his ministers a flame of fire. And we, apparently, are going to step into that role for those who are in the earthly millennial kingdom.

We will be with Christ. And he is going to have a supervision role. He is the king of the kingdom.

But there is an earthly Davidic king, David and his sons will be raised and ruling. And so there's kind of an invisible and a visible component of the millennial kingdom. And we are going to be a part of that higher, largely invisible component, as near as I can tell.

That's my understanding. And, if anything, it is incumbent on us to dedicate ourselves even more fervently to being ready. It's one thing if you mess up and you just hurt yourself.

It's something else if you're in charge of something and when you mess up you hurt everybody under you. So Paul says to the Thessalonians, your suffering and your endurance under persecution is preparing you for your role in the kingdom, in the kingdom age. You are suffering so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God.

Some believers will be considered worthy to rule and reign with Christ, to walk with him in white, to sit with him on his throne, right? Others will not. Which do you want to be? Do you want to be pleasing in God's sight or do you want to be a ne'er-do-well? Do you want to be useful or do you want to be useless? Do you want to be a bright star reflecting God's glory in the firmament or do you want to be a dim bulb? Well, nobody in their right mind is interested in being a dim bulb in the darkness which is outside, cut in two and portioned their lot with the hypocrites. What kind of gratitude is that to the Lord Jesus who bought us with his own blood, who fulfilled the Father's eudokia in ransoming us? You are not your own.

You are bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body, in your life. We are purchased possessions and there is a sense in which we owe it to our Redeemer to get with the program.

We don't have the luxury of being apathetic and indifferent and it will cost those who go down that road dearly at the judgment and in the ages to come there is a severe penalty for apathy and indifference. If God did not spare the angels who sinned, if God did not spare the Israelites that he redeemed and purchased out of Egypt, what is he going to do with us who have been given so much if we don't avail ourselves of his grace? The Thessalonians did. They persevered.

They endured in their afflictions which are far worse than anything any of us have ever seen or experienced for ourselves. Paul says, look, your perseverance and faith in the midst of your persecutions and afflictions which you endure, this is an indication that God was right in judging you worthy to suffer in preparation for the kingdom. You will be considered worthy because of your endurance.

That's what Paul is telling them. Cheer up. It's hard now, but think of the result.

Think of the opportunities you're going to have. Think of how great it's going to be to stand before God in that day and be approved and have God say, well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord. What else do you want? What are we pursuing that's better than that? There is nothing better than that.

There cannot be anything better than that. Why would we waste our time doing anything else? It is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you. How can you be selfless? How can you face with equanimity and with peace injustice and wrongdoing and getting the short end of the stick and being messed over in things and being ill-treated, not being dealt with fairly, suffering at the hands of others? How can we face that with inner peace? You don't have to be happy in a jocular and giddy kind of way, but it doesn't cost us any sleep.

We don't stress. It doesn't raise our heart rate or our mile quotient. We say, well, there it is, but God is in his heaven.

I'm aiming for the kingdom. This is something that will help me grow and develop patterns of thinking and understandings and experiences that will qualify me and enable me to serve my God and my Savior in the ages to come. If this is what he has for me by way of training, fair enough, let's do it.

How can we maintain that attitude, knowing that God is in his heaven? God will repay. God is keeping track of these things. He will perpetrate justice on these persecutors, on these who are returning evil to us when we're trying to do good.

You can be misunderstood. You can be misapprehended. You can be doing something good, and everything is misconstrued, and you're accused of all kinds of things, and it was never your intention.

Leave it to God. Commit your way unto him, the psalmist says, and he will bring it to pass. It is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

That word retribution, by the way, is a pretty scary word. It is relatively rare, but it comes from a

verb that means, in fact, this is the word that is used. You remember the blood on the doorposts, and we talked about God standing between the destroyer and those who were inside the house.

Remember, it wasn't God going around killing the firstborn. The destroyer was going through. The name destroyer is this word, the retributor.

It's all from the same word group here. It is eternal olethron, o-l-e-t-h-r-o-n, and olethros is often translated destruction. Remember in 1 Thessalonians 5.3 when people are saying peace and safety, then sudden destruction will come upon them.

It's olethron, it's olethros. 1 Corinthians 5.5, the guy that was shackled up with his stepmother or whatever that was, and Paul says, I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. The word for the destruction of his flesh, olethros.

This is a severe retribution. This is what happened to the people that didn't have the blood on the doorpost. This is very close to death, but it's not death per se.

It just means severe retribution. In 1 Timothy 6.9, those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and olethros. People that get caught up in materialism and wind up in ruin over it, it's olethros.

It's not necessarily utter obliteration and destruction, but it's a severe consequence. God is going to deal out retribution to those who do not know him through the Lord Jesus in the day of his revelation from heaven. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power.

Olethron Ionian, when he comes in his glory to be glorified in his saints on that day and to be marveled at among all who have trusted. In verse 10, this is from Pistuo and it is the participle, all of the ones trusting. All of the faithful would be a great way to translate this.

Among all the faithful, for our testimony to you was trusted, was believed. Then you get to the part that we're after here, to this end also, we pray for you always, Paul says, that our God will count you worthy of your calling. Remember when he said up above that your suffering under this persecution is a demonstration that God is going to find you worthy of the kingdom, worthy of service and honor.

We pray for you always that God will count you worthy of your calling and fulfill every eudokia, and in this case it is eudokian agathos sunes. Do you recognize the first part of that, agathos, the good? All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to his purpose. God will count you worthy of your calling and fulfill, and this is from Pleroo, that God might find you worthy, might count you worthy, and this actually says might make you worthy.

This is the Aristacte subjunctive from axiao. You know we have an axiom, which is like a law or a rule. Axiao means to judge a thing to be so.

If something is axiomatic, it is true. If you could axiomize a thing, you would say this is worthy of being followed, this is the truth of the thing. So the Greek verb here for axiao means to make, it's not exactly make true, but it's make worthy, to treat as worthy, to count as worthy, to worthyize a thing, to make worthwhile or to declare worthwhile.

An axiom is a law that works, it's a mathematical formula that works. And you say well this is worth using because I get the right answer when I'm trying to figure out the area of a triangle. Here's my axioms, here's my rules, I apply these in a formula and I get the right answer.

So I'm going to depend on this, this is a good thing, and I declare it to be valuable. That's what axiao is. And so Paul says I pray that in the day when Jesus comes and is glorified in his saints, we pray for you that God will axiomize you, will axiao you of your calling, and these are two subjunctives, two things he's going to do.

That he will find you worthy of your calling and that he will fill every eudokia of goodness, that's that agathosune, fill or fulfill, and work of faith in power. So what's Paul saying here? And this is really the point of this whole passage. There's going to be a fate assigned to people when the Lord Jesus comes back.

These persecutors, these ne'er-do-wells and bad guys are going to be, they're going to suffer that oleathros, that destroyer destruction, that wiping off the map thing. What about these Thessalonians? Paul says I pray that you're going to continue to persevere and endure, that you're going to get your head into eudokia, so that in that day God will count you worthy of the calling, that you fulfilled your calling and that you fulfilled the eudokia and the faithful work. It's ergon pisteos.

What are the things that we are called to? We are called to enter into God's good pleasure, God's good will, his kind intention, his eudokia, that we get a hold of that. It's not living for self, it's living for the plan and purpose of God. What did Jesus say in the garden? Not my will, but thine be done.

That's eudokia. And with that, once you've adopted that attitude, you've got to apply it, you've got to implement it, you have to live it out. It's one thing to approve what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God, like it says in Romans 12.

But the other thing is, present yourself. It's an action. It's a positive implementation.

It's a practical application. You figure out what the right thing is to do and then you do it. I'm running an 8-minute mile, I want to run a 7-minute mile.

That's a worthy goal, at least for the moment. I may not be the older I get, I may have to scale that back. But it would be a worthy goal to get my time down, let's say.

So I have found the eudokia. I have found what the good plan is. Maybe you want to be healthier and drop some weight.

You say, I want to lose 15 pounds. Maybe you say, I want to get organized and clean out my closet, clean out my garage. I want to do something that needs doing.

That's the eudokia. That's the good plan. And it's hopefully going to benefit others.

My example is not too good because it really ought to be something that benefits others. I'm going to be less of a pain in the hindquarters to the people around me. I'm going to be more of a blessing in some way, shape, or form to those around me.

That's a great eudokia. That's part of God's kind intention reflected in and through us. How do you do it? Where is the work of faith that makes it happen? Paul says, I pray that you're going to enter into both of those things.

That you're going to fulfill the eudokia and the faithful work that makes it happen. That's what this passage says. Does that make sense? It's the same kind of context as what we have in Philippians.

So now, back to Philippians. And by the way, if you look at verse 12 there in 2 Thessalonians 1, So that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in him. So that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ will be glorified among you, in your midst, as a group.

It's a plural you. And you in him. According to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

It all redounds to the glory of the Lord Jesus. It is a part of his victory. It is a part of the vindication of his work on our behalf.

That it produces that kind of fruit. It was worth it to go to the cross. Because he is now the firstborn among many brethren who are going to inherit.

It's all part of reflecting the glory of God. Okay, so back to Philippians now. God is at work in your midst.

In the identifying of what that will be. And the doing of the work. Both the willing and the working.

With a view toward entering into eudokia. Right? It's not ace, it's huper. But it's in behalf of.

In the interest of. Eudokia. Verse 14.

You have now an imperative. It is the second word in the verse. It is a present active imperative.

Keep on doing. This is poieo. To make or to do.

Second person plural. You all keep on doing. Panta.

Which is actually the first word in the verse. Everything. Panta.

Everything. Do. Without.

Gonguzmon. Kai. Dialogizmon.

Gonguzmon. Gonguzmos is one of those onomopoetic words. It kind of reminds me of.

We talk about a little device. A little contraption. A little gizmo.

Well, you becomes why when it comes over into English. This is a gongizmo. But it comes from the verb.

Goguzmo. And this appears in passages like. Matthew 20.11. Where Jesus is giving the parable of the vineyard.

And you remember there were guys. There's a land owner that goes out in the morning. And hires laborers for the vineyard.

And he agrees to a denarius for the day. Denarius is a day's wage. So these guys start early in the morning.

And they're working. Well, about three hours into the day. Some more guys show up.

And he hires them. Sixth hour. And the ninth hour.

More people show up. And he makes the same deal with all of them. Work until the day is over.

And I'll give you a denarius. So at the eleventh hour. He finds some.

And he says. Why have you been standing here idle all day? They said because no one hired us. He said.

You go into the vineyard too. Well, evening comes. The owner says to his foreman.

Call the laborers. Pay them their wages. Beginning with the last to the first.

And when people study this parable. They don't note that little detail. Why does the land owner say.

Take the last guys and pay them first. Wouldn't it have been easier. To take the guys that have been laboring all morning.

Pay them first. And let them leave. So that they're not aggravated by what he's about to do.

And he says. No, I want them to see this. Get the real sweaty guys that have been out there.

For twelve hours. And make them stand there. While this guy that hasn't even broken a sweat.

Because he's only been out here an hour. Give those hour guys their denarius first. The land owner tells his foreman to do this.

On purpose. So naturally. When those hired first came.

They thought they were going to get more. Well, if these guys that just worked an hour. Got a denarius.

I've been here twelve times as long. I'm really going to make out. And when they receive a denarius.

In verse eleven. They gongoozmoed at the owner. Now let me ask you.

Having really done a pretty in-depth study. Of the concept of eudokia. Is this similar to selfless interest in goodwill for others? Or is this pretty much the opposite end of the spectrum? Of course that's a rhetorical question.

Are they thinking. Wow, what a good deal for these guys. That didn't have to work too long.

And nobody would hire them. And here this guy has graciously given them a day's wage. So that they can feed their families.

So that they can get back on their feet. So that they can become productive people. Are they thinking at all.

About what a blessing it would be. What if I was the guy that didn't get hired. And was unfortunate enough to have to stand out there.

Remember these guys stood out there all day long. Waiting to get hired. And they said nobody would hire us.

They are unfortunate. This guy out of the goodness of his heart says. Well it's not your fault that nobody hired you.

You were out here trying to get work. I'll give you a day's wage. Even though you haven't done a day's work.

What a blessing for them. What a gratuity. What a graciousness on the part of the landowner.

So like God himself. To give us what we don't earn or deserve. Instead of rejoicing and saying.

Wow what a great landowner. And what a blessing for these guys. These people go guzmo.

Carp and complain. Hey I was expecting more for myself. Based on what you did for them.

Right. Exact opposite. And so you can see in the flow of Paul's thought.

When he says look. Now that I've explained to you about God's kind intention. And his good will.

And how he is at work. So that you can not only identify what that good will is. And what it is to put the interest of others out of yourself.

But to do the work of faith that makes it happen. He's at work both to will and to do. This eudokia.

He's given you everything. All you've got to do is keep your eyes on Christ. Remember the perspective.

It's kind of like that forgive as you are forgiven thing. If you do that. Now comes the imperative.

See how he has built this great teaching section. Given us the material in the soul to shift our thinking. And change our perspective.

And give us the internal motivation and means and opportunity. Now we get the command. Here's the imperative.

Everything. Do. Without.

Grumbling. Gongusmos. You don't need to.

I was listening to somebody discuss whether it was better to have abortion laws at the federal level or at the state level. Who should do these laws. And should we work more to get the federal government to take an active role.

Should we work more to have our state government to both or neither. And in that discussion it has merits of its own in various ways. But the thought that occurred to me as I listened to the discussion and people calling in and giving their views was.

Isn't it a shame that there are issues of right and wrong. That we have to try to enforce by legislation. Where if there was a true change in the heart.

You wouldn't need the law. You wouldn't need laws against stealing. If people had a heart to respect the property of others.

And to only take what is rightfully their own. You wouldn't need laws. You wouldn't have to legislate.

You wouldn't have to try to impose standards from the outside. If there was internal change. And

this is what Paul has done.

He has given us the ability to change on the inside. So that when he says do all things without grumbling. Does he say now you church leaders.

If you've got somebody in your congregation that is constantly grumbling and complaining. Here are the procedures for reprimanding them. And here are the degrees of discipline.

And after two or three chastisings when they keep on grumbling and complaining. Here is how you can throw them out of your fellowship and excommunicate them from your church. He doesn't say let's make a law to get rid of grumbling and complaining does he.

He says here is the truth. Here is the perspective. Here is the life-changing alive and powerful word of God.

That will change your heart so that you can do all things without self-interested grumbling. And Genghis Mas is always self-interested grumbling. You can look at it in its various contexts.

In Luke chapter 5 and verse 30 you find this used. The Pharisees and their scribes began Genghis Masing at Jesus' disciples. Saying why do you all eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners.

What business is it of theirs where Jesus and his disciples spend their time. Well Jesus' teaching is popular. The crowds are starting to follow him.

He doesn't engage in the same behavior that they do and it makes them look bad. If you are going to act like a teacher and you are going to get into our province of being a spiritual leader. Then how come you are not acting like we do.

And eschewing and naysaying tax collectors and sinners. You are making us look bad. Genghis Mas.

In John chapter 6. Jesus. You remember that chapter. Chapter 6 is the bread of life chapter in John.

And Jesus said I am the bread that comes down out of heaven. He had been talking about the manna that came down and that was temporary. But the bread that comes out of heaven is permanent.

And they said well give us this bread always. And he said I am the bread of life. Everyone who beholds the son and believes in him will have eternal life.

I will raise him up at the last day. Therefore the Jews verse 41 of John 6. Were Genghis mowing about him. Because he said I am the bread that came down out of heaven.

They were saying isn't this Jesus the son of Joseph whose father and mother we know. How does he now say I have come down out of heaven. Genghis Mas.

I find fault with you. I find you offensive. You are elevating yourself above me.

I come from your town and you are saying you came down out of heaven. I know who your parents are. This is this carping.

I don't want to be elbowed off of center stage here. I just find fault with you. Jesus said in verse 43.

May is the negative. Don't complain. Don't grumble.

With one another. In 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 10. We have a passage that has two of our words in it.

Talking about the Israelites in the wilderness. Don't let us act immorally as some of them did. And 23,000 fell in one day.

Nor let us try the Lord as some of them did. And were destroyed by the destroyer. That's verse 10.

1 Corinthians 10. Nor Genghis Mas. Genghisate.

As indeed some of them. Agoguzan. And were Apollia.

Apolluo. Here it's Apollanto. By the Olothrutu.

Remember the Oluthras we were talking about. Getting wiped out in Thessalonians. That's the destroyer.

They were Apolliaed by the destroyer. Why? Because they were grumbling. God resists the proud.

God doesn't like self-centered grumbling. This is very sobering for those of us who are inveterate grumblers. God hates it.

God destroyed many of the Israelites in the wilderness for carping and complaining and grumbling and finding fault in a needless and godless way. And isn't it interesting? The destroyer, the Olothrutu here, is originally the angel of death, as a lot of people like to say, that went through Egypt and nailed all the firstborn that didn't have blood on the doorposts. Here, Paul says, those who were grumbling in the desert and were eliminated, who sort of died the sin unto death, it was the destroyer who wiped them out.

The destroyer. That same angel that went through and killed the firstborn in Egypt, killed the

Israelites for grumbling. Now, if that doesn't wake us up, I don't know what will.

God does not tolerate the arrogance that is inherent in this self-centered, self-interested, grumbling attitude. It can be circumstances. It can be the actions of other people.

They were grumbling and complaining because they ran out of water. They were grumbling and complaining because they ran out of food. They were grumbling and complaining about the leadership of Moses.

Remember, Miriam was complaining about Moses, and God struck her with leprosy. God has a dim, dim view of grumbling and complaining. The destroyer of Egypt has disciplined people for grumbling.

That's what you get out of the Corinthians 10 passage. The passage in... This is the primary sin of the scribes and Pharisees against Jesus, over and over again in the Gospels. They are complaining.

You find it again in John. We saw it in John 6. It's again in John 7.32. The crowds started muttering and complaining about Jesus in John 7.32, and so the Pharisees directed that he be seized. And the idea that we have here, do all things without grumbling and disputing, it's a great goal.

It's a nice objective to have for us personally, just like a lot of other things that we wish we could do and wish that we acted a better way and lived a better way. But the wonderful gift that we have here in this portion of God's Word is here is the way. Here is the how to get it done.

God doesn't just give us empty imperatives. You can listen to these philosophizing people, that Dyer guy that's on and all these others, talk a great fight about, oh, live in serenity, and think about the words of the great spirit masters, and meditate and say your mantra, or stick your heels up above your knees and do a yoga thing. I was reading some of the Vedic hymns this past week.

The Bhagavad Gita is full of all kinds of great stuff that Krishna has given this guy on the eve of battle. And he's telling him all these wonderful attitudes to have. It's great to talk about that stuff, but the power to do it is not there.

It's not within us. You can't turn yourself into a non-grumbler if you're a grumbler. You can't turn yourself into a non-downcast and negative person if you are downcast and negative.

Where is the power? Where is the mechanism to make this fulfillment of God's command happen? It is in this passage. We have to consciously direct our thoughts into eudokia. Think about what God has done.

Think about God's generosity in Christ. Think about the manifestation of God's eudokia in Christ.

Think about the forgiveness of our sins, and that we are only forgiven to the extent that we are able to forgive others.

Think about God's retribution on anybody that has done wrong. God is just, and he is already not giving us what we deserve, because his justice has been largely executed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who took our place and bore our penalty. We are recipients of tremendous undeserved favor from God.

How can we possibly stand there and act selfish when we have the opportunity to reflect a small portion of that kind intention of God toward one another? Why should I grumble and complain? I am fortunate to be here. I am blessed to have an opportunity to endure, to persevere, and to be counted worthy of the kingdom, and worthy of spending the future with the Lord Jesus Christ. That perspective, if we consciously direct our thoughts into it, is where the power lies to actually be and live differently.

To be different. To be transformed by the renewing of our mind. That is how it happens.

That is how it is done. That is what Paul has given us in his first chapter and a half in Philippians. So with that, we are going to see that in verse 15, becoming 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.

It is our memory verse. You know what is coming up next. All of that is automatic at the point that we reach the work of faith stage.

He says, look, I have explained to you, I have illustrated for you three different ways what God's eudokia is for you. Now, your work of faith is, do everything without that self-centered, complaining, grumbling attitude. That is what is going to make you blameless and harmless.

Children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked, perverse generation. You will shine as lights in the world. It just flows naturally out from the very beginning.

Paul in prison with the praetorium, different people preaching Christ, he is shining as a light out of those prison bars. He is shining like a light in the midst of all those godless, heathen Romans because he is latched on to that good intention of God and that is his motivation. That can be our motivation as well.

Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the clear and powerful way that it is expressed for us here. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will minister it to our hearts so that we can fulfill these commands and these potentials that you have put before us.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.