

G'Day saints!

There are Bibles in front of you and there's an outline in the bulletin for you to take down notes if that helps you concentrate

Let me pray for God's help and understanding. Let's pray...

### Point of Clarification from last week

Just a point of clarification from last week

In Philippians 1:21-23 - the Apostle Paul said this:

<sup>21</sup> For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. <sup>22</sup> If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know!

Paul was saying he would love to die now and be with Jesus forever - but he feels there's still more work to be done for Jesus. When he says "What shall I choose?" - He's not suggesting he has a choice in when he dies, that's up to God. He's saying, if he had a choice, he wouldn't know what to choose. This Paul was not suggesting that we have a choice in our death either - just that we have the same dilemma as Paul - that it would be fantastic to be with the Lord now- and also great to stay living and tell more people about Jesus.

### Intro/Recap

So this is our 3<sup>rd</sup> week looking at this series of Paul's letter to the Philippians.

[PowerPoint 1-Recap]

In week 1 - we said - just like Paul - we have a church family that we love very much - and we should be praying for each another

In week 2 - last week - we said we are a family because we have the common bond of faith in Jesus - and we said - in fact - **the meaning of life is Jesus**

[PowerPoint 1b-How?]

So - If the meaning of Life is Jesus

How should we live our lives?

That's our task this morning [this evening]

From our passage - Philippians chapter 1 - verse 27 to chapter 2 verse 18

We can see 3 ways we should live

1. Live - as citizens of Heaven
2. Live - imitating Christ's Humility
3. Live - in unity

**As Citizens of Heaven (Philippians 1:27-30)**

So let's look at living as citizens of Heaven

Picking up from v27

[PowerPoint 2-v27]

V27 - Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ

The Greek word for *conduct yourselves* literally means *to behave as a good citizen*

And we know from Philippians 3:20 - that as Christians, our citizenship is in Heaven

So our conduct must be worthy of being a citizen of Heaven

So we might need to define: worthy of the Gospel of Jesus is

### [PowerPoint 3-Worthy]

Showing the qualities and character in your life that means you deserve to be a follower of Jesus

Illustrations:

[To represent Australia at Commonwealth Games – need to be worthy

To represent Australian Cricket Team – need to be worthy – code of conduct

To join Australian Army – can't have criminal record]

In the same way as a Christian - whose citizenship is Heaven - it's not just our words that are a witness that we belong to Jesus - our behaviour or conduct should show we are citizens of Heaven - so there is no mistake who we belong to. If we are in a situation where our actions alone have to do the talking, let's make sure they are coming through loud and clear for Jesus

What does a life worthy of the Gospel - living as citizens of Heaven - look like?

Paul goes on to tell us in rest of v27 through to v30.

### [PowerPoint 4-Stand firm]

It looks like v27 - *Standing firm in one Spirit* - literally persevering - and we can because we have the same Holy Spirit - working inside each of us - guiding and encouraging us to keep going

### [PowerPoint 5-Striving together]

Living as a citizen of Heaven looks like v27 - *Striving together as one* for the faith of the Gospel - it literally means working together as a team to promote

Jesus - cooperating with one another - not going it alone - thinking we don't need any help or support - thinking we can do Gospel work on our own. Together we are stronger. Satan's tactic is to divide and conquer - divide us and then conquer us individually.

### [PowerPoint 6-Without fear]

Living as a citizen of Heaven also looks like v28 - not being afraid of people who are against the Gospel of Jesus

Let's face it - we're living in a time - where our religious freedoms to speak up about our faith in Jesus - are being trampled on. It seems everyone can have their say - except Christians. [[Ask Margaret Court - Israel Folau](#)]

But Paul is saying being a citizen of Heaven - we should not fear - what this world throws at us - we have an awesome God on our side - if God is for us - who can be against us (Romans 8:31)

And with God with us - we can be bold and speak out about Jesus and speak out against moral issues of the day!

At some point - as Paul goes on to say at the end of v28 - those who oppose God will be destroyed - and we as Christians and citizens of Heaven - will be saved!

### [PowerPoint 7-Believe and Suffer]

In the meantime - living as citizens of Heaven

We must not only believe in Jesus - in v29 - we are called to **suffer** for Jesus. Jesus never promised His followers an easy time - he spoke often of the cost of following Him and that we would have to take up our cross - and sacrificially follow Him

Sometimes the path God takes us seems to lead away from what we perceive as for our good, causing us to believe we've missed a turn and taken the wrong road. That's because most of us have been taught to believe that if we're on the right track - God's goodness will always translate into a life free of trouble.

But that's a pipe dream far from what the Bible says. God's love often leads us down roads where we endure trials. When we come to the end of all our dark valleys, we'll understand that every circumstance has been allowed for our ultimate good.

### [PowerPoint 8-Same Struggle]

In the meantime - let's take heart and stand firm - as Paul says in v30 - the Philippians, the Apostle Paul and us - we're all going through the same struggles - we're not on our own - so don't quit when it gets tough  
(pause)

### Imitating Christ's humility (2:1-11)

#### [PowerPoint 9-Blank]

The one danger which threatened the Philippian Church was **disunity**

Something that threatens every healthy church

Disunity comes about when pride steps in

When we think we've arrived as a church or as individuals

The opposite of pride is **humility**

## [PowerPoint 10-Humility]

Humility - having or showing a modest or low estimate of one's importance – not proud – no tickets on ourselves

It's particularly difficult to have humility if people are praising us.

Perhaps an example from Corrie Ten Boom might help us. She says:

*[When the donkey went into Jerusalem with the Lord on his back, and they put garments on the ground before the donkey. The donkey was not proud. He knew it was not done to honor him, but to honour Jesus, who was sitting on his back. When people honor us - we can say to ourselves - I know it is not me, but the Lord, who does the job.]*

Why should we have humility?

## [PowerPoint 11-why humility]

See chapter 2 verses 1 to 11 - starting at verse 1

Because we are united to Jesus - we have His love - and we share in the Holy Spirit

All this is only possible because of Jesus - not because of ourselves

How can we have pride in our selves when Jesus is the one who bought us back to God - through His death on the cross?

How can we have pride in our selves - when Jesus is the one who showed his love for us on the cross?

How can we have pride in our selves - when Jesus is the one who sent the Holy Spirit to us?

(pause)

No - we are called to show a life of humility

So what does a life imitating Christ's humility look like?

[PowerPoint 12-selfish/vain]

Well - let's first say what it doesn't look like - see v3

Humility is not selfish ambition or vain conceit

Humility is never about us - and always about Jesus and others.

*[Illustration: Missionary Doug Nichols was a patient in a tuberculosis ward in India in 1967. Patients and staff saw him as a rich American taking up space in their hospital. Their hostility was obvious as they refused the gospel booklets he offered them.*

*One night, a very sick Indian man struggled to get out of bed to go to the bathroom, but he was too weak to make it. Soon the stench from his bed filled the room. Other patients yelled at him. Nurses showed their anger for having to clean up his mess.*

*The next night the old man tried again to get up, but again he couldn't. He began to cry. Doug, the missionary, even though weak himself, went over, picked up the old man, carried him to the bathroom and back to his bed.*

*What a change came over that hospital ward! Patients, nurses, and doctors asked Doug for Christian booklets. And several eventually came to believe in Jesus.*

*What changed their attitude? Doug had imitated the Lord Jesus, who "made Himself nothing (v7)" and took "the very nature of a servant" and "humbled Himself" (v8)]*

We are called to do the same. Sometimes loving is unpleasant, but that's when it speaks the loudest

### [PowerPoint 13-like-minded]

We are called to be like-minded (v2), have the same love as Jesus (v2) and be of one spirit and one mind (v2)

Valuing others above our self (v3) - not looking for our own self-interests- but the interests of others (v4)

The bottom line is we are to have the same mindset as Jesus - v5

What did Christ's humility look like?

### [PowerPoint 14-Christ's humility]

It looked like - even though He is God - Jesus didn't use His equality with God to His advantage - otherwise He could have taken himself off the cross (v6)

No He made himself nothing (v7)

Took the nature of a servant (v7) - a servant king

He became a lowly human - leaving His glorious place in Heaven to save us

What a servant He was

When Jesus' disciples were arguing over leadership positions - Jesus washed their feet

Jesus behaved as a servant to combat the hotshot attitudes of the disciples. He hoped they would recall and imitate His humility.

When the world needed someone to pay for sin...

Jesus humbled himself (v8) - even to an obedient death on a cross - always doing the Father's will - not His own

[PowerPoint 15-v9-11]

The whole point of us imitating Christ humility is to attract and gather people for Jesus

So that as Paul says in v10 and v11

One day - every knee will bow and every tongue confess - Jesus is Lord

Paul is not suggesting here - that one day everyone will believe in Jesus

Although it would be great if everyone did

No - what Paul means is that ultimately every human being

Will bow and confess Jesus is Lord - EITHER with complete joy knowing they're with Jesus forever in Heaven - OR with complete despair because they've missed out!

[Is Jesus your Saviour and constant companion? If He isn't, He can be. Call on His name in faith and invite Him into your life today. Then the name of Jesus will become to you the most precious of names

No other name can save us]

In a world where evil prospers and lies seem to triumph over truth, don't be discouraged. When we are treated unjustly, don't despair. Paul's words in [Philippians 2:1-11](#) assure us that the God we serve in humility will have the final word. The righteous will one day be vindicated

In the meantime:

Can we live a life like Jesus? Can we have the same mindset as Jesus?

Loving, servant-like, sacrificial, and humble,

That's what we are called to do - imitate Christ's humility

You see humility means we don't ever get ahead of ourselves

Humility leads to togetherness and unity - instead of division and disunity

### **In Unity (2:12-18)**

Which leads us into our third way to live our lives

Living a life in *unity* - verses 12 to 18

[PowerPoint 16-v12-13]

Paul acknowledges the Philippians obedience to God - whether he is there with them or not?

If we are all obedient to God - this will bring unity

But if some of us are disobedient to God - this will bring disunity - because we are no longer all on the same page - Jesus' page

So Paul encourages us in V12 - to continue to **work out our salvation with fear and trembling** - *Work out our salvation* - means bring to completion - Paul is saying don't stop half way

See V13 - God is working in us - achieving His purposes

Salvation is from God - but at the same time we have a responsibility to listen, learn and obey - & cooperate with the teacher. Just like a doctor prescribes a course of treatment to cure the illness - if the patient won't take the treatment they won't get better.

**Fear and trembling** in v12 does not mean having fear of being punished by God like a slave might have fear of their master. Fear and trembling - means 2

things here first) a reverent fear coming from sense of how finite we are in comparison to how infinite and awesome God is - and second) a fear of disappointing God - when we really love someone we don't want to let them down or disappoint them -- so it's the fear of wounding God by our disobedience and crucifying Jesus all over again!

Obedience to God leads to unity between us and God - and unity with each other

### [PowerPoint 17-grumbling]

So Paul warns the Philippians to live a life **without grumbling or arguing** - V14

What's the problem with grumbling and arguing anyway?

Well - again - it brings disunity and disharmony - and can lead to groups and factions.

How come we *grumble* so much?

Perhaps because we only see the negatives - and not the positives:

*A doctor once said that he had lots of patients who he examined that had nothing wrong with them - but they said they "just felt no good". The doctor said "In my opinion, it was all imaginary. It seemed to me that if they would only start to count their blessings they would soon forget their troubles"*

*In comparison the doctor met a very old woman, penniless and weak, and when she was asked, "How's your health?"*

*She replied "Oh, I have so much to be thankful for. I have only two teeth left, but praise God, they are opposite each other!"*

Perhaps our grumbling would be less, if we stopped and counted our blessings

How come we argue so much?

Perhaps because it's more important for us to get our own way or to always be right - than to show a bit of grace

*Maxwell Perkins, the famous book editor, once wrote, "One of my deepest convictions is that the terrible harms that are done in this world are not done by deliberately evil people. They are done by the good—by those who are so sure that God is with them. Nothing can stop them, for they are certain that they are right."*

In our OT passage today from Psalm 95 - we see a classic example of what happens when people grumble against God and argue - and think they know better than God - it leads to complete disunity

The people of ancient Israel majored in grumbling. Psalm 95 verses 8 to 11 refers to a time when the Israelites had just been delivered from slavery in Egypt ([Ex 14:30](#)), and they should have been thankful. Instead, they started to complain to Moses and Aaron, "Oh, that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt!" ([16:3](#)). Their complaining escalated into a quarrel. In reality, their complaint was with God, but they picked a fight with Moses because he was the leader. They said, "Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" (v.3). The people even began questioning if God was really with them (v.7). Yet He always met their needs. If we're honest, we would have to admit that we sometimes complain when God isn't coming through for us the way we want. We accuse Him of being absent or disinterested. But when our heart is concerned **with God's purposes rather than**

**our own**, we will be patient and trust Him to provide all that we need. Then we won't develop the bad habit of complaining.

The result of the Israelites complaining was a 40 year walk around the desert!  
In other words - **no progress!**

That's what can happen in a church if - grumbling and arguing become a habit.

(pause)

So to combat grumbling and arguing

Paul suggests an alternative

**[PowerPoint 18-blameless and pure]**

See v15 - he suggests being blameless and pure

In other words being obedient to God - basically incorruptible

*[Illustration:*

*The people of ancient China built the Great Wall of China to stop other nations invading. The massive wall stretched for 1,500 miles. It was 12 to 40 feet wide and 20 to 50 feet high. The wall was too high for the enemy to scale, too thick to tear down, and too long to go around.*

*In the first 100 years of the wall's existence - there were many invasions. How? The enemies simply bribed a gatekeeper and then marched through. The fatal flaw in China's defense lay in spending its wealth to build a wall but paying much less to build the character of the gatekeepers]*

Our character has to be blameless and pure - incorruptible

Which Paul says will make the Philippians (and us) into children of God

As opposed to the warped and crooked generation - the Philippians lived in - and we live in today

You see as Christians - we are meant to be like shining stars in the dark sky

[PowerPoint 19-shining lights]

Just as the stars at night are so bright and stand out in the sky

So we are to stand out as Christian lights shining in a dark world - showing the way to Jesus - the light of the world

And the way to be shining lights for Jesus is

To hold on firmly to the word of life - in v16 - Remember Jesus is the Word - and He is the one who has life eternal in hands for us to enjoy

[PowerPoint 20-Paul's boast]

Living lives like that - means Paul can boast when Jesus returns - that his Gospel work wasn't in vain - v16

In fact he'll be glad and rejoice with all of them - v17

[Powerpoint 21-Rejoice]

V18 - And we can rejoice too with Paul - if our lives are lives of humility like Jesus - full of sacrifice and service - living in unity with one another

## Challenge

[PowerPoint 22-Heading]

So I'd like to leave us with 3 challenges this week:

[PowerPoint 22a]

1. If we were arrested for being a citizen of heaven would there be enough evidence to convict us?

[PowerPoint 22b]

2. Is what we are doing at church or in our personal life - is it humbly advancing the work of the Gospel or merely advancing ourselves?

[PowerPoint 22c]

3. Have we got into the habit of grumbling and arguing - which is causing disunity in our home life or in our church life? Paul tells us to be blameless and pure

Let's pray