

## Lights in the World; Philippians 2:14-16

- I. Grumbling
  - a. I think humans have cornered the market on complaining
  - b. We can complain about anything, anytime, and anywhere
    - i. Have you ever made your children go outside and play?
    - ii. My oldest daughter complained about eating ice cream (it was her first time trying it)
    - iii. We have even coined the phrase, “first world problems” to make our grumbling seem justified
  - c. What about arguing (or disputing)?
    - i. We have created debate teams so we can hone our arguing
    - ii. We even have people argue on the side they disagree with just to further perfect their arguing
  - d. If we are to be the “lights in the world” then our grumbling and disputing has got to stop!
- II. Blameless
  - a. Philippians 2:14–15 (ESV) <sup>14</sup> Do all things without grumbling or disputing, <sup>15</sup> that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,
  - b. Blameless means ‘without defect’
    - i. This term was used in the Old Testament to refer to animals for sacrifice
    - ii. It was also used metaphorically for people
      1. Noah was blameless, Genesis 6:9
      2. Job was blameless, Job 1:1
      3. Christ was blameless (without blemish), Hebrews 9:14, 1 Peter 1:19
    - iii. We are a broken people with many defects, so this is not some call for us to be perfect
    - iv. This is God’s call for us to be transformed into the image of His Son
    - v. 2 Corinthians 3:17–18 (ESV) <sup>17</sup> Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. <sup>18</sup> And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.
    - vi. We are conformed to His image, Romans 8:29
    - vii. God’s desire for us is to be more like His Son (without blemish)
  - c. Innocent means pure, (literally) ‘unmixed’
    - i. In this case we are admonished to leave evil behaviors behind
    - ii. Do not mix our Christlike character with evil actions
    - iii. It is interesting to note that God is contrasting evil (grumbling and disputing) with Godly (blameless and innocent)
    - iv. Romans 16:19 (ESV) <sup>19</sup> For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil.

- d. The whole point is for us to be ‘lights in the world’ because the world we live in is a crooked and twisted one
    - i. Crooked means Immoral (morally bent or crooked, dishonest) <sup>1</sup>
    - ii. Twisted means depraved (to depart from an accepted standard) <sup>2</sup>
    - iii. There is no doubt that our society is morally bent and has departed from the acceptable standard
    - iv. We have come to the point that any behavior is acceptable as long as it is beneficial to the particular group (that says it is acceptable)
    - v. Our political representatives (not leaders) are justifying evil behavior because it is beneficial to them (not just the riots and not just in this decade)
  - e. We must stop grasping the standards of society and hold fast to the word of life!
- III. Holding Fast
- a. We become lights by holding fast to God’s word
  - b. Philippians 2:16 (ESV) <sup>16</sup> holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.
  - c. To maintain a grasp on someone or something <sup>3</sup>
    - i. If my children get out of hand at the store, I make them hold on to the cart
    - ii. It keeps them planted in my view so I can monitor them
    - iii. Likewise, our grasp on God’s word keeps us planted so we can monitor ourselves
    - iv. When we let go of God’s word, we tend to drift away
    - v. Acts 5:20 (ESV) <sup>20</sup> “Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life.”
    - vi. Galatians 2:11–14 (ESV) <sup>11</sup> But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. <sup>12</sup> For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. <sup>13</sup> And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. <sup>14</sup> But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?”
    - vii. Colossians 1:3–5 (ESV) <sup>3</sup> We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, <sup>4</sup> since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, <sup>5</sup> because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel,
  - d. Our grasp must be on the Gospel, the only thing that gives us Salvation!
- IV. Lights in the World

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<sup>1</sup> William Arndt et al., [\*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature\*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 930.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 237.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 362.

- a. We have been entrusted with the Gospel, to share it with those around us
- b. Matthew 5:14–16 (ESV) <sup>14</sup> “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.
- c. We must shine!