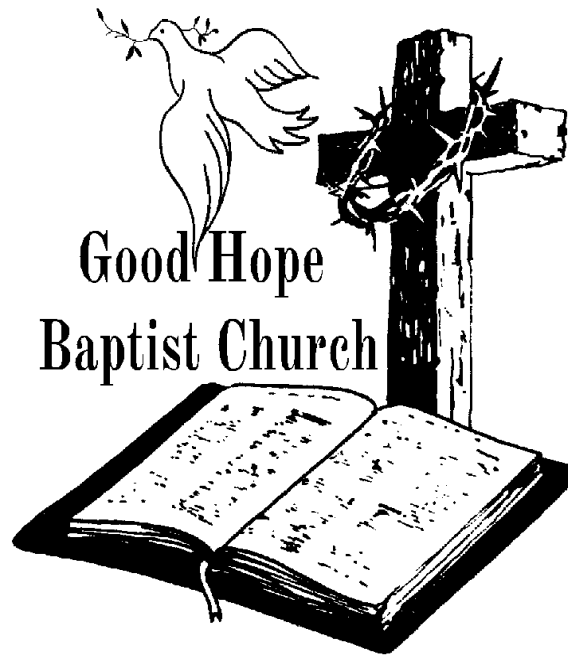


# Harmless, Blameless, Sons

Philippians 2:14-16



Good Hope  
Baptist Church

Living Together In The Love Of God

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**FOCAL Read Together** Philippians 2:14-16 Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain.

A young girl passed me as I left the supermarket the other day, and what was written on her shirt really caught my eye. In red letters across a pink shirt were the words "I hate people". If you hate people, then isn't it true – since you are a "people" - that you also hate yourself? This child – not much past a teenager – is already soured on people and on life. How sad! Then I thought to myself, "What if this young girl came to THIS Church? Would she find what she needed to draw her away from such low self esteem and such anger?"

What could THIS Church offer this young lady? You might be sitting there thinking, "We offer salvation by faith in Christ". That's wonderful - but most people - especially young people - don't know that they're lost. To them:

**Their body is a toy.  
Sex and the partner you choose is a choice.  
Pregnancy is an inconvenience, and the fetus but  
tissue to be removed.**

If a person came to THIS Church, what would they find that would look better than what they have? Would they

find - as the Apostle told the Church of Philippi - **murmurings and disputings**? Would they find a group of people fighting amongst themselves, holding grudges and arguing over every small point? Would they find two *political parties*, each beating one another up? **That young person in the pink "I Hate People" T-shirt would have no reason to want what we have, if what we have is the same as what the world *already* has.** There's no selling point there. If every fast food restaurant sold exactly the same fast food, what selling point is there.

Many Churches in recent years have *lowered themselves to the world in their behavior* in order to be more "attractive" to it. The answer, dear friends, is not to lower standards from what the Bible says, but to *start following God's standard*.

**What we as Christians have is BETTER! It is BETTER because the Lord and Creator of all that you see is our Savior!** Jesus said:

**John 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.**

We who are saved - first of all - have peace with God. We who are Christians have **heard His Word, focusing on the Lord Jesus Christ**. There was a time in my life when I heard the Kingdom of God preached. **There was a time when I hated people**. I was like that young girl, and so were many of you. I saw the cruelty and meanness

of people as I grew up and went through Garner Senior High School. I saw how the bullies picked on me and others like me. I saw how those richer than myself had much, whereas I had little. Not being a star pupil or a great athlete, I had been let down many times by people. I banded together with others who hated people. Darkness was my driving force.

I knew something was wrong in my life as I shoplifted, did drugs, and ran with the wrong crowd. Rebellion was in my heart. I was constantly moving, seeking, grasping, but *never satisfied*.

**I was not satisfied until the day I met the Lord Jesus Christ.**

The Lord told me, "**David, there's a payday coming someday. This life is not all there is. The path you are on leads to death, for "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).**" The Lord showed me that my life apart from Him was all wrong, offensive to Him. You see, sin is anything that is separate from God, and I was totally separate from God. Even the so called "good things" I did were not good, for the Lord Who made us says "**There is no one right in My sight, no, not even one" (Romans 3:10).**" I heard that glorious Gospel Promise of our Lord:

**John 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.**

I didn't take myself from death to life - the Lord Jesus did. You see, the Lord has made us several promises. He said if we would **believe on Him that sent Christ we would have everlasting life**. God the Father has provided only one way to Him, and that Way is the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said:

**John 14:6** <sup>(KJV)</sup> ... **I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**

Jesus Christ is *exclusively* three things: the WAY or the path to the Father, the TRUTH in a world filled with lies and deception, and the LIFE, the only way to live. The Father has said "**whosoever believes on my Son shall not perish, but have everlasting life**" (John 3:16).

Every Christian's calling and every Christian's business is to **hold forth the Word of Life. We need to not just SAY it with our lips, but LIVE IT with our bodies.** That is our business!

I had finished eating at a pretty nice restaurant a few years ago, and went to the register to pay my tab. On the register I saw a neat sign. It read:

**We have made a deal with the bank. We will not cash checks, and the bank will not make pizzas.**

I love that! They know what their business is. What is OUR BUSINESS? What does the world need to see when they come see us as His Church?

## **1. The Watching World *Doesn't* Need To See More Of Itself In Us**

**FOCAL** Philippians 2:14 "Do all things"

You're not saved by imitating Christ, but once you're saved you are called to be like Christ in all things.

**No Test Required** I am so thankful that I didn't have to take a test to get into God's Family! When I graduated High School my principal stuttered over my name when he handed me my diploma! I hated tests. I've still not figured out things like Algebra and Calculus, and I respect those who not only understand but excel in mathematics, history, and other great subjects. The thing is, I am not saved because "**I do good**" or because "**I did good**". I'm saved because God loves me, and He gave an invitation to me and to every person in this room. He said:

**Titus 3:5-7** **Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; {6} Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; {7} That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.**

Let me put this another way. He said "**You don't have to be good enough to be saved, but you do have to believe that you need Jesus Christ as your Savior. When you give yourself to Him believing, God Himself comes to us and washes us and renews us and**

**brings us into His eternal family."**

We who are Christians are **heirs - inheritors of God**. We are adopted into His Family. We are **children of God by faith in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26)**.

Christians are saved by Grace, and *empowered by Grace*. God walks with His Children. God empowers His Children. God uses His Children to reach others so that they, too, might enter His Kingdom as His Children.

**FOCAL** Philippians 2:14 **Do all things without murmurings and disputings:**

If we are His Children then we are to **do all things without murmurings and disputings**. Another version says "**without grumbling or arguing**". Think about those two words for a moment, "**grumbling**" and "**arguing**".

"**Grumbling**" is a sign of discontent. It says to a watching world, "**I am not happy with my life as it is**". "**Arguing**" is a sign of misdirection. It says to a watching world, "**I am not happy with my companions in this life**".

**Grumbling and arguing** cost God's Old Testament people. God saved them with a mighty hand. He brought them out of Egypt. He destroyed their enemies in the Red Sea. God led Israel to a Promised Land, a Land that "**flowed with milk and honey**" (Numbers 13:27). God

told His people "**the land is yours - just go and do what I say**". But Israel spent so much time **grumbling and arguing that they lost sight of God**. Grumbling and arguing takes our eyes off of what the Lord has done for us. He has said that we have **eternal life**. We are **Children of God**. If I have nothing else - no lands - no possessions - no goods to my name - I HAVE JESUS and I HAVE ETERNAL LIFE. I belong to the GREAT I AM. This life is not all there is, nor this place all that I shall have.

I belong to God my Father, and so do you if you have been saved by the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible tells us who are Christ followers to be like our Savior. We are to:

**1 Peter 3:8-12 (HCSB) .... be like-minded and sympathetic, should love believers, and be compassionate and humble, not paying back evil for evil or insult for insult but, on the contrary, giving a blessing, since you were called for this, so that you can inherit a blessing. For the one who wants to love life and to see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit, and he must turn away from evil and do what is good. He must seek peace and pursue it, because the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are open to their request. But the face of the Lord is against those who do what is evil.**

God our Father is against the evil - even when His children are evil. We remember the first generation of

Israel dying in the desert, locked out of the blessing that should be theirs. We as God's Children do not want to die in the desert, being "**condemned with the world**". We are therefore to **do all things without grumbling or arguing**.

**God is the One Who made "all things" (Proverbs 16:4)**

**And "all things" work together for the good of those who love the Lord (Romans 8:28)**

**Therefore I am to glorify My Father, For He is in control!**

**Illustrate** During World War 2 at the height of the German Holocaust, there was a dear Dutch Christian girl by the name of **Corrie Ten Boom**. Corrie and her family were confined to the Nazi Concentration Camp called *Ravensbruck*. A good friend of Corrie was **Catherine Marshal**, who talked about Corrie's "Flea Story" in her book *Something More*:

"At one period in their imprisonment Corrie and (her sister Betsy) were transferred from crowded cells to Barracks 28. Within the hour they discovered that their reeking straw bed pads were crawling with fleas. **"How can I live in such a place!"** Corrie wailed softly. Without answering, Betsy immediately began praying. **"Show us, Lord. Show us how."** Then a moment later (she said) excitedly, **"Corrie, He has given us an answer! I read it in the Bible this morning. Here - read that party again."** It was in 1 Thessalonians:

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (KJV) Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.**

**"That's it, Corrie! We're to thank Him for every single thing about the new barracks. ... Such as (our) being together here ... and having managed so far to hang on to that Bible ... and for the fleas ... fleas are a part of this place where God has put us. 'In every thing give thanks' it says. Not just pleasant circumstances."**

So the two women thanked God for the fleas. As the days wore on the prisoners in Barracks 28 discovered that there was an astonishing lack of supervision or interference. Corrie and Betsy used the unprecedented freedom to talk to the other prisoners, read the Bible to them, minister in myriad ways. Then one day a supervisor tipped her hand as to why they were given so much latitude. Some of the women had called through the grill door to ask the supervisor to come and settle a dispute. She refused, as did the guards. **"That place is crawling with fleas"**, the supervisor said. **"I wouldn't step through the door"**.

**2. An Unlit Light Bulb Does Nothing Against The Darkness**

**FOCAL** Philippians 2:14-15 **Do all things without**

**murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;**

God does not call us who are His Children to be like the world. What does God say of the world around us? That it is a "**crooked and perverse nation**". There is no light in the world. The world is a fallen place that resists light. In the opening of the Gospel of John we read:

**John 1:1-4** <sup>(KJV)</sup> **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.**

We find out that this "**Word**" that John writes about "**Is made flesh and dwells among us**" (John 1:14). That's a picture of Jesus Christ. He is the Son of God and God the Son. He came to this earth, and reflected the light of God where ever He walked. As Light **Jesus shined in the darkness, but the darkness did not comprehend Who He was (John 1:5)**. The world is a fallen place filled with fallen, dark people. Jesus came into the world, but was rejected by many. The Bible says that ...

**John 3:19** <sup>(KJV)</sup> **... light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.**

Darkness doesn't like light, because light chases

darkness away. Jesus Christ was light and was hated by those who love to do evil. Darkness warred against Light, but Jesus *had to reflect light without compromise, or else He would be an unlit bulb.*

God calls us Who are His to *not be dim bulbs - but to be Light*. Christ was Light when He walked this earth because He kept the Father at the center of all that He did. "**If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father**". Jesus Christ reflected the love and purpose of God where ever He went.

The moon has no light of it's own, but reflects the sun which it orbits. We who believe orbit Jesus Christ. He is Who we keep our eyes on, and in so doing we are not dim bulbs but we are Light!

**1** **As THE Son of God followed the Father, WE sons of God follow THE Son.** We are His *disciples*, His students. Jesus tells His disciples:

**Matthew 4:19** <sup>(KJV)</sup> **... Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.**

We will not draw souls out of the dark ocean of sin that is this world by being like the fish trapped in it. We are to **follow Christ**, then He will **make us**. We are to turn from the ways of the world and turn fully to Him.

A young man came to Jesus one day and asked, "**What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?**" Jesus said:

**Matthew 19:21** <sup>(KJV)</sup> .... **If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.**

Perfection is not in what we have, but in Who has us.  
If you want **treasure in Heaven**, follow Jesus.

**2** Being Light requires that I have a steady Source of Power. You take a light bulb out of its socket, and it does nothing against the darkness. You put the light bulb in its socket, but unless the lamp is plugged in to the power source it does nothing against the darkness. In my illustration "The Flea Story" you heard earlier **Betsy and Corrie Ten Boom had light because the Lord their God spoke to them through His Word. They consistently turned to God in prayer and in reading His Word so they could be light.**

When our Lord Jesus was tempted of the devil in the wilderness (**Matthew 4**) how did He reply to the devil? He said, **"It is written"**, and He didn't quote the Quran, the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, or even the Baptist Press. He quoted **SCRIPTURE**, the Written Word. Throughout the Gospels we see that Jesus' favorite statement was **"It is written"**. He told Satan **"It is written"** (**Matthew 4:10**). He told Judas Iscariot **"It is written"** (**Matthew 26:24**). As Jesus headed toward the Cross He told His disciples **"It is written"** (**Matthew**

**26:31**). When He called the Pharisees *hypocrites* He said **"It is written"** (**Mark 7:6**). As the Word of God was the filter through which Jesus lived His life, so must it be the filter by which we live our lives.

Dear Christians, the Bible says of us that we are:

**"Saints"** (Ephesians 1:1)  
**"New Creations in Christ"** (2 Corinthians 5:17)  
**"Precious in the sight of the Lord"** (Psalm 116:15)  
**"Chosen"** (Ephesians 1:4)  
**"Royal Priests"** (1 Peter 2:9)  
**"Born of God"** (1 John 5:1)  
**"Adopted by God"** (Ephesians 1:5)  
**"Children of God"** (1 John 3:1)  
**"Forgiven"** (Ephesians 1:7)  
**"Declared Righteous"** (Romans 5:1)  
**"Are Being Perfected"** (Hebrews 10:14)

Unless you keep yourselves attached to His Word, reading it daily, assembling in love with other believers faithfully, you will detach and starve yourselves. Your potential is there - but you must consistently follow Christ!

**3** Being Light, I will cooperate with my other brothers and sisters and therefore be a greater light.  
We read again:

**FOCAL** Philippians 2:14-15 **Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without**

**rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;**

The more we work with Jesus and with one another, the greater our light will be. God's people belong *together*. When the Prophet Moses came down off the mountain and saw - to his astonishment - Israel dancing around and worshiping a golden calf he cried out:

**Exodus 32:26 ... Who is on the LORD's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him.**

It is significant that gathered around Moses were (a) his blood kin, and (b) every one priests before God. If you are Christians then the Bible says:

**Revelation 1:5-6 <sup>(KJV)</sup> {Unto Jesus Who} loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.**

What a blessed promise God has made unto us. We are **loved**. We are **washed from our sins**. He did this **by His own blood**. We are **made kings - sons of the Most High - and priests unto God**.

And dear friends, **to Him is glory and dominion forever and ever**.

night as if it were day!

The great preacher **C.H. Spurgeon** wrote:

**“Remember, O Christian, that thou art a son of the King of kings-even God himself. Soil not the fingers which are soon to sweep celestial strings; let not those eyes become the windows of lust which are soon to see the King in his beauty — let not those feet be defiled in miry places, which are soon to walk the golden streets — let not those hearts be filled with pride and bitterness which are soon to be filled with heaven, and to overflow with ecstatic joy. As “the sons of God” remember that the eyes of all are upon you; more is expected from you than from other men, because ye have a higher pedigree, for ye are descended from the very Highest himself, and therefore should be the highest and best in the world.”**

May God touch your hearts with His Word!

Who is on the Lord's side? Let them gather together. One light chases darkness, but many light makes the

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John 5:24; Romans 6:2; John 5:24; John 14:6; John 3:16 \_\_\_\_\_  
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Every Christian's calling and every Christian's business is to hold forth the Word of Life. We need to not just SAY it with our lips, but LIVE IT with our bodies. That is our business!

**1. The Watching World *Doesn't* Need To See More Of Itself In Us**

Philippians 2:14; Titus 3:5-7; Philippians 2:14; 1 Peter 3:8-12 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**2. An Unlit Light Bulb Does Nothing Against The Darkness**

Philippians 2:14-15; John 1:1-4; John 3:19

The moon has no light of it's own, but reflects the sun which it orbits. We who believe orbit Jesus Christ. He is Who we keep our eyes on, and in so doing we are not dim bulbs but we are Light!

**1** As THE Son of God followed the Father, \_\_\_\_\_

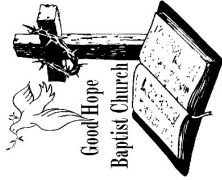
Matthew 4:19; Matthew 19:21

**2** Being Light requires that I have a steady \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 4; Matthew 4:10; Matthew 26:24; Matthew 26:31

**3** Being Light, I will \_\_\_\_\_

Philippians 2:14-15; Exodus 32:26; Revelation 1:5-6



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**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

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