

Philippians 2.12-18

12

BGT Ὡστε, ἀγαπητοί μου, καθὼς πάντοτε ὑπηκούσατε, μὴ ὡς ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ μου μόνον ἀλλὰ νῦν πολλῶ μᾶλλον ἐν τῇ ἀπουσίᾳ μου, μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου τὴν ἑαυτῶν σωτηρίαν κατεργάζεσθε.

NET So then, my dear friends, just as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence but even more in my absence, continue working out your salvation with awe and reverence,

NRS Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

KJV Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

DRA Wherefore, my dearly beloved, (as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only but much more now in my absence) with fear and trembling work out your salvation.

NAU So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;

NIV Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

NJB So, my dear friends, you have always been obedient; your obedience must not be limited to times when I am present. Now that I am absent it must be more in evidence, so work out your salvation in fear trembling.

NLT Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important. Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.

MSG What I'm getting at, friends, is that you should simply keep on doing what you've done from the beginning. When I was living among you, you lived in responsive obedience. Now that I'm separated from you, keep it up. Better yet, redouble your efforts. Be energetic in your life of salvation, reverent and sensitive before God.

- Note that the word Paul uses for his “presence” (παρουσία = *parousia*) is also used as a technical term for the second ‘presence’ of Jesus.
- Note the other uses of φόβος and τρόμος in Gen. 9:2; Exod. 15:16; Deut. 2:25; 11:25; Jdt. 2:28; 15:2; 1 Ma. 7:18; 4 Ma. 4:10; Ps. 2:11; 54:6; Odes 1:16; Isa. 19:16; Dan. 4:37; 1 Co. 2:3; 2 Co. 7:15; Eph. 6:5; Phil. 2:12. It connotes fear of (military) power, but it also is used to talk about respect in how one is to interact with a superior. To whom are the Philippians to act with “fear and trembling”? **to each other in service**
- Is ἑαυτῶν singular or **plural**? What difference does this make in your understanding?
- Note the tense of κατεργάζεσθε! **PRESENT** > Which translations do the best in capturing its nuance? **NET, NIV, ~MSG**
- How does the last phrase of this verse stand in relation to Romans 7:18; 15:18; 2 Cor 5:5 (where κατεργάζομαι is also used)? How does it relate to the next verse in Philippians (where ἐνεργέω is used)?

13

- BGT θεὸς γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ ἐνεργῶν ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ τὸ θέλειν καὶ τὸ ἐνεργεῖν ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐδοκίας.
NET for the one bringing forth in you both the desire and the effort—for the sake of his good pleasure—is God.
NRS for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.
KJV For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.
DRA For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to his good will.
NAU for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.
NIV for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.
NJB It is God who, for his own generous purpose, gives you the intention and the powers to act.
NLT For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.
MSG That energy is God's energy, an energy deep within you, God himself willing and working at what will give him the most pleasure.

- Note the tense of ἐνεργῶν! **PRESENT** > Which translations do the best in capturing its nuance? **NET, NLT, ~MSG**
- Whose εὐδοκία does Paul have in mind: God's or fellow Philippians'? (Cf. the use of εὐδοκία in 1:15.)

14

- BGT Πάντα ποιεῖτε χωρὶς γογγυσμῶν καὶ διαλογισμῶν,
NET Do everything without grumbling or arguing,
NRS Do all things without murmuring and arguing,
KJV Do all things without murmurings and disputings:
DRA And do ye all things without murmurings and hesitations:
NAU Do all things without grumbling or disputing;
NIV Do everything without complaining or arguing,
NJB Let your behaviour be free of murmuring and complaining
NLT Do everything without complaining and arguing,
MSG Do everything readily and cheerfully—no bickering, no second-guessing allowed!

- This verse is to be understood in conjunction with verses 12-13.

- BGT ἵνα γένησθε ἄμεμπτοι καὶ ἀκέραιοι, τέκνα θεοῦ ἄμωμα μέσον γενεᾶς σκολιᾶς καὶ διεστραμμένης,
ἐν οἷς φαίνεσθε ὡς φωστῆρες ἐν κόσμῳ,
- NET so that you may be blameless and pure, children of God without blemish though you live in a crooked and perverse society,
in which you shine as lights in the world
- NRS so that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation,
in which you shine like stars in the world.
- KJV 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;
- DRA That you may be blameless and sincere children of God, without reproof, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation:
among whom you shine as lights in the world.
- NAU so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation,
among whom you appear as lights in the world,
- NIV so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation,
in which you shine like stars in the universe
- NJB so that you remain faultless and pure, unspoilt children of God surrounded by a deceitful and underhand brood,
shining out among them like bright stars in the world,
- NLT so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God,
shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people.
- MSG Go out into the world uncorrupted, a breath of fresh air in this squalid and polluted society.
Provide people with a glimpse of good living and of the living God. Carry the light-giving Message into the night

- Note how the various versions translate γένησθε < γίνομαι. Which one most literally renders the Greek (though noting that γίνομαι can have a range of meaning)? **NIV**
- Note other uses of ἄμεμπτοι in Phil. 2:15; 3:6; 1 Thess. 3:13.
- Paul describes their “generation” as σκολιᾶς καὶ διεστραμμένης. Cf. Matt. 17:17; Lk. 2:40; 9:41; Acts 2:40.
- ἐν οἷς φαίνεσθε ὡς φωστῆρες ἐν κόσμῳ - φωστήρ is more generally “luminaries” and refers to suns, stars, and moons as in Gen 1:14,16. Does Paul mean that they shine in the (i.e., this) world like luminaries? Or that they shine like luminaries in the cosmos/universe? Also cf. Daniel 12:3.

16

BGT λόγον ζωῆς ἐπέχοντες, εἰς καύχημα ἔμοι εἰς ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ, ὅτι οὐκ εἰς κενὸν ἔδραμον οὐδὲ εἰς κενὸν ἔκοπίασα.
NET by holding on to the word of life so that on the day of Christ I will have a reason to boast that I did not run in vain nor labor in vain.
NRS It is by your holding fast to the word of life that I can boast on the day of Christ that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.
KJV Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.
DRA Holding forth the word of life to my glory in the day of Christ: because I have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain.
NAU holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.
NIV as you hold out the word of life-- in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing.
NJB proffering to it the Word of life. Then I shall have reason to be proud on the Day of Christ, for it will not be for nothing that I have run the race and toiled so hard.
NLT Hold firmly to the word of life; then, on the day of Christ's return, I will be proud that I did not run the race in vain and that my work was not useless.
MSG so I'll have good cause to be proud of you on the day that Christ returns. You'll be living proof that I didn't go to all this work for nothing.

- Note how the translations render ἐπέχοντες. In biblical Greek, ἐπέχω usually has the sense of “hold firmly,” but in classical Greek it may also be understood as “hold forth, hold out.” Which makes better sense in the context?
- Paul’s language here anticipates his description of his striving in the faith in 3:13f.

17

BGT Ἐὰν εἰ καὶ σπένδομαι ἐπὶ τῇ θυσίᾳ καὶ λειτουργίᾳ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν, χαίρω καὶ συγχαίρω πᾶσιν ὑμῖν·
NET But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice together with all of you.
NRS But even if I am being poured out as a libation over the sacrifice and the offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you--
KJV Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.
DRA Yea, and if I be made a victim upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and congratulate with you all.
NAU But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all.
NIV But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you.
NJB Indeed, even if my blood has to be poured as a libation over your sacrifice and the offering of your faith, then I shall be glad and join in your rejoicing-
NLT But I will rejoice even if I lose my life, pouring it out like a liquid offering to God, just like your faithful service is an offering to God. And I want all of you to share that joy.
MSG Even if I am executed here and now, I'll rejoice in being an element in the offering of your faith that you make on Christ's altar, a part of your rejoicing.

- σπένδομαι is both a pagan and biblical term for pouring out a drink offering. Note the dynamic renderings of the NLT and MSG.
- What does ἐπὶ τῇ θυσίᾳ καὶ λειτουργίᾳ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν mean? I.e., how is the genitive of πίστεως functioning?
- χαίρω – A theme of the letter: 1:18; 2:17f, 28; 3:1; 4:4, 10

18

BGT τὸ δὲ αὐτὸ καὶ ὑμεῖς χαίρετε καὶ συγχαίρετέ μοι.
NET And in the same way you also should be glad and rejoice together with me.
NRS and in the same way you also must be glad and rejoice with me.
KJV For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me.
DRA And for the selfsame thing, do you also rejoice and congratulate with me.
NAU You too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.
NIV So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.
NJB and in the same way, you must be glad and join in my rejoicing.
NLT Yes, you should rejoice, and I will share your joy.
MSG But turnabout's fair play--you must join me in my rejoicing. Whatever you do, don't feel sorry for me.

- As elsewhere in the letter, what Paul does, the Philippians are to do, and they are to do it together!