

# right where He wants us

*The People of God in Times Like These*

## Brightly Shining

"... 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 ...**"

Philippians 2:15

### Several presuppositions:

- 1) The world is \_\_\_\_\_ and getting \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2) The only hope for a dark world is a brightly shining \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3) Our brightness is far from a \_\_\_\_\_. It must be \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4) It's only going to get \_\_\_\_\_ to shine brightly.
- 5) There is \_\_\_\_\_ to be found in this struggle.

**2** So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, <sup>2</sup>complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. <sup>3</sup>Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. <sup>4</sup>Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. <sup>5</sup>Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup>but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup>And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup>Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup>so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

<sup>12</sup>Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup>for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. <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, <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. <sup>17</sup>Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. <sup>18</sup>Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

Philippians 2:1-18

## **We shine brighter when we ...**

... don't lose our \_\_\_\_\_.

*The biblical appeal to joy is always \_\_\_\_\_, not \_\_\_\_\_.*

... are \_\_\_\_\_.

*The greatest barrier to our unity is our \_\_\_\_\_.*

... keep our \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ to Christ (and His \_\_\_\_\_) is the essential key to any meaningful influence in this world.

*If we are going to be castigated, maligned, accused, persecuted, etc., let it be for this:*

... don't \_\_\_\_\_ in our \_\_\_\_\_ to Christ.

## **Keeping\* our shine requires ...**

<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. <sup>17</sup>Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. <sup>18</sup>Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

... a conviction that you are living for something \_\_\_\_\_ (and that it's worth it!).

... a deeply rooted \_\_\_\_\_ because you are familiar with \_\_\_\_\_.

... a certainty that \_\_\_\_\_ for the sake of God's honor is the key to \_\_\_\_\_ now and \_\_\_\_\_ forever.

"... what does hope mean for Christians in this life? First of all, it means believing that, in Christ and for his glory, we are able in this world to make a difference. Our lives are not mere accidents of history. God has a purpose for us—here and now.

One of the more interesting verbs in the Old Testament comes from the prophet Jeremiah, who spoke to the people of God even as they were under severe oppression. As God spoke through Jeremiah, he told the people not to lose heart, and to get busy. The instructions to Israel were these: "Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce" (Jer. 29:5).

That is amazing and is so incredibly helpful to Christians today. What do we do in the face of a secular age? We build houses and live in them. We get married and have babies and grow families and plant churches and make a difference in the world ...

But Christian hope works in another important dimension. It frees us from putting ultimate hope in anything or anyone other than Christ. It even prevents us from expecting final resolution of any problem on earth. There are no final victories—there is a realistic understanding of the world as it is. For the Christian, we know both victory and defeat—over and over—and no defeat or victory is final.

National elections come every few years. Every economic plan and tax policy is eventually replaced by another. Judges retire and die. Parties rise and fall.

The Christian worldview can alone explain why all these things are really important but never ultimate. Our ultimate hope is not in the world but in the world to come. The kingdom of God is coming in its fullness—and Jesus Christ is Lord. In Christ we place our utmost hope, not as an attitude but as a conviction."

- Mohler, R. Albert, *The Gathering Storm* (pp. 197-198).