

Shining like stars

sermon discussion guide

based on **Philippians 2.12-30**

which can be accessed at www.stjamesbythepark.org/current-sermon-series

This is part of our series looking at Philippians ("church: family on mission")

Intro: What's your favourite memory of looking at stars in the night sky?

Read Philippians 2.12-18

Dan spoke about the temptation for Christians to 'blend in' rather than 'stand out'. Does that ring true for you? If so, in what ways?

v12 What's the difference between working *for* our salvation and working *out* our salvation?

Why should we work out our salvation 'with fear and trembling'? What would that look like in practice?

v13 How does this verse encourage you?

v14 How have you seen 'complaining and arguing' be destructive at work and in church (bearing in mind Paul's appeal for unity within the church eg 1.27, 2.2-4)?

When might complaining and arguing be legitimate, and how might it be done constructively?

v15 Give some examples of where you think you've seen Christians shining like stars in their workplaces or communities.

v16 could be translated as 'hold out the word of life' or 'hold on to the word of life'.

Why do we need to do both?

Dan encouraged us to sit down and 'work out our salvation' – ie work out what it looks like for us to be followers of Jesus in our relationships and workplaces, with our time and money, in the way we treat the environment, the way we're part of the church etc. Which of those areas might be helpful for you to sit down and 'work it out' in at the moment?

Read Philippians 2.19-30

Paul gives a couple of examples of people who live the sort of lives he is encouraging the Philippians to live – lives lived out in service of others (2.4-5), as exemplified by Jesus (2.6-11).

In what ways did Timothy put himself out for other people and for the sake of the gospel (see also Acts 16.1-3)?

In what ways did Epaphroditus put himself out for other people and for the sake of the gospel?

It can be easy to think of Paul as a lone-ranger. How do these verses speak to the need to do mission together?

How does this passage speak to our desire to be a God-dependent, grace-filled, Bible-based, mission-focused, authentic community?

Up (love God): praise God for his work in your life (v13).

In (love each other): how can you help each other to 'work out our salvation'?

Out (reach the world): Continue to spend time discussing the 7 mission priority areas and your individual / collective response to them – so that we can shine like stars together [clusters of pin-pricks of light if you heard the sermon picture].