

“Work Out Your Salvation!” Philippians 2:12-18

God calls us to grow in the likeness of His Son; to "work out" our sanctification. But in the midst of a world as sinful and rebellious as ours, and with a heart as sinful and rebellious as mine, how do I do it? How do I grow up in righteousness? Fortunately, God doesn't leave me alone in this process. My part is to consistently choose to obey Jesus Christ in every area of my life out of a healthy sense of fear, for I will be judged by Him. God's part is to both empower my obedience today and transform my desires so that I want to obey more tomorrow. As He works to empower my work, I become a witness for Christ to the world and my obedience becomes a sacrifice of worship to God.

Paul is absent. Philippians are doing well, but there are some issues beginning to surface. He wants to see these issues addressed and see them honoring the Lord, even if he is not around.

Read 2:12-18

What do you think about when you are completely unmotivated spiritually?

I. The motivation: Jesus

- A. Grace – where would I be if God had not revealed Himself to me? A love I cannot lose
- B. Reward – I could hear “well done”
- C. Fear –

Fear not necessarily bad. Fear of right things (a snake).

2:12 (“so then” points to 2:9-11); Logical response: fear and trembling; 2 Cor. 5:10

Ps. 2

Ex. 20:20

II. The command: "work out your salvation" – 2:12

A. What is the meaning of "salvation"?

"salvation" = "deliverance" (rescue)

- From sickness – Mt. 9:22
- From enemies – Acts 7:25
- From physical danger – Acts 27:20; Heb. 11:7

- Penalty of sin (justification) – Eph. 2:8-9
- Power of sin (sanctification) – Phil. 2:12
- Presence of sin (glorification); eternal relationship with Christ – Rom. 13:11; 1 Peter 1:5
- All 3 of the above – Rom. 11:11

Ex – unwrapping a gift. Entire gift is yours. Enjoy its contents.

B. How do I work it out?

Philippians 2:12-13 (most succinct statement of sanctification)

"...work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."

1. Our work: Obey – 2:12
 - "as always" – at all times
 - "in my absence" – in all circumstances

2. God's work:

Empower: "to work"

Motivate: "to desire"; "will" with the intention of action

Framework for understanding "spiritual disciplines" = making myself available to the Spirit

Legalism = thinking spiritual activity is spiritual maturity; trusting in myself for transformation

3. Apply

Specific areas of sanctification; personal; church-wide

"without grumbling"

Grumbling = to express a complaint not openly for all to hear, but privately, behind-the-scenes; personal discontent

BDAG: "utterance made in a low tone of voice"

Israel speaking among themselves against God (Ex 16:1-3)

"without disputing"

Disputing = to argue or quarrel; personal became corporate

Grumbling = I don't trust God – He is in control; He is good; He is able

Led us to wilderness to die; God's motives; God's ability to provide

Look at wilderness (nothing here) rather than at God (Creator of all)

Conclusion: I don't have enough. Therefore, if you have a need, I can't give. If you take from me, I will be angry. If you have more than I have, I will be jealous. Leads to quarrels.

Go to God; go to the person; believe the best; seek to understand

SO WHAT? WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Testimony to the world that comes from our relationships

One purpose; working through our conflicts; compare to workplace

III. The Result – 2:14-16

A. Witness to the world – 2:14-16 (= "stars"; Gen. 1:14, 16)

B. Worship to God – 2:17-18

Drink offering was the final touch

Offering made by Philippians

Application

Examine your hearts – any grumbling against the Lord? Any disputes with others? Anything distracting you from shining for Jesus Christ in this world?

Any other barrier to sanctification in your life?