

Subject: *Work Out Your Own Salvation*

Scripture: *Philippians 2:12-18*

The Bible does not say we must work for our salvation, but it does say that we must work out our salvation. To work out our salvation means to keep on working out what God has worked in. To work out something means to work it out until it is completed, working out a math problem until it's solved. You keep working at it. As long as we are in this world, we are working out our salvation. This is our job until our life on earth is done.

Salvation is an event followed by a process. Salvation is something God does for us, something God does in us, and something God does through us. The Lord has put something in us, and it is our responsibility to work it out. It's like a gold mine. God puts the gold under the earth and miners dig it out. As one believer said, "It's up to me to mine what is mine." We sometimes speak of the "ups and downs" of life, but this text speaks about the "ins and outs of the Christian life."

Work out your salvation in obedience to God

Look at verse 12 and the example of Christ in 2:5-8. Christ obeyed the Father and carried out His plan even to the death of the cross. We need to have the same mindset or attitude that Christ had. To work out our salvation we must be humble and obedient.

Work out your salvation even when no one is watching you

Paul was not present with the believers at Philippi, but he knew that made no difference. They were obedient if he was with them or away from them. Some people seem to be a little more committed when the pastor is around. The old saying is "When the cat's away, the mice will play." The true test of character is what you are when no one is looking.

Work out your salvation with a sense of gratitude and reverence

Notice the text, "work out your own salvation." Salvation is the greatest gift God could ever give you. Have you thought much about what Jesus did for you when he saved you? If nobody else wants to live for Jesus we should, because of what He's done for us. Salvation is by grace, through faith, apart from good works. It is eternal and personal. It is revealed in God's Word and received in our heart. Salvation is something that no man can give you, and no man can take away. Jesus is the only one who can give it because He is the only one who bought it. ***Galatians 2:20** I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

We work it out with "fear and trembling." This is not the fear that you might lose your salvation, but the concern that we might misuse your salvation. ***Hebrews 12:28** Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.* We should work out our salvation with a deep appreciation and a desire to please our Lord.

Work out your salvation by allowing God to work in you

The only way to do this is through God and His power in us. Salvation is a work that God begins and will continue until He's done (see Phil. 1:6). That finished work is glorification.

Here in 2:13, Paul refers to the process of sanctification. “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” “Worketh” is related to our English word, “energize”. God is energizing and enabling us to live for him. God first works on you, and then once you are saved, He works in you and through you. This is God’s good pleasure.

Too many people are trying to live by pressure from the outside rather than by power from the inside. God empowers us in two ways. He gives us the desire and the ability to do what He wants us to do. Living the Christian life is not only our responsibility, but it is our response to His ability. **1 Corinthians 15:10** *But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.* **Colossians 1:29** *Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.* F. E. Marsh said, “I used to work for Christ with one hand and hold Him with the other, but now I let Christ hold me, and I work with both hands.”

Hebrews 13:20-21 *Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

Work out your salvation with the right attitude

There should be no murmuring (grumbling) or disputing (arguing) either among Christians or with God.

Work out your salvation as a witness to the world

We must live right in a crooked world and we must shine bright in a dark world. The word “blameless” means above reproach and does not mean sinless. “Harmless” means pure or unmixed. It was used to describe precious metal that was refined and without impurity. Jesus told his disciples they were to be “harmless as doves.” This world is crooked and “perverse” or permanently distorted. This world is not getting better.

We must shine bright because this world is dark and getting darker. The darkest places need the brightest lights. Jesus said, “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” And He said, “You are the light of the world.” **Ephesians 5:8** *For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:*

Light does what it does because it is what it is. Light shines, penetrates, and exposes because that is the nature of light. We are to hold forth the word of life so others can have eternal life. We hold forth the truth of God’s Word so others can have eternal life and find God’s will. God’s plan is to use His Word to bring life to those who are dead and give light to those in darkness.

Work out your salvation because the Lord will reward you

Paul looked forward to the day of Christ (vs. 16), the day of judgment when the Lord evaluates our Christian life and our service for Him. Paul lived so he would rejoice in that day. He would have joy because he had not run “in vain” (without purpose). He was running with a purpose and with a goal in mind. He had not labored “in vain,” but he was working with a purpose and a goal in mind. We’re not just biding our time and spinning our wheels.

We are in a race that has a destination called heaven. We are working for a time of rewards. The same thing is true not only for Paul, but for all believers (vs. 17-18).

1 Corinthians 15:58 *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

Paul reminds us of the reward we have in working out our salvation, the sacrifice involved in doing it (vs. 17), and the joy of doing it together. If the saints in glory could speak to us today, they would say it is worth it all to live for Jesus and serve Him.