

WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION PHILIPPIANS 2:12-16

Text: Philippians 2:12

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¹² 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.

Introduction:

This letter was written about some of those expectations. The church in Philippi was a good church! It was the first Christian church established in Europe. It had been founded by Paul. Now, it is ten years later! This church had proven to be a blessing! Paul, their founder, was prisoner in Rome.

The Philippian Christians are reaching to help Paul. They send a man named Epaphroditus to Rome with a gift for the Apostle. Epaphroditus tells Paul about all that is going on at the church in Philippi.

Paul finds out that the church is in danger! Not from without, but from some disunity within. It seems that there were some quarrelsome people there in Philippi! They were murmuring and complaining.

From reading the book it is plain to see that this hurt Paul and it hurt the cause of Christ!

It is never right for God's people to be at odds with one another! It is never Christ-like for people to grumble and argue with one another. We are commanded in the Word of God to walk in unity, openness and humility.

Philippians 1:27

²⁷ Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

Ephesians 4:3

³ Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

This second chapter was written to deal with this divisive spirit that had invaded the church at Philippi! In verse 1-4, there is a **Plea** for self-denial, humility, and unity. In verses 5-11, Paul tells of the perfect **Pattern** of all these things, Jesus Christ. Then, in the verses we have read and are going to consider this evening, he gives us the **Process** whereby we can become more Christ-like in our daily lives.

Someone has said one of the best ways to keep from bickering is to stay busy. That was Paul's advice as well.

Notice Paul didn't say, work for your salvation, or toward your salvation, but work out your salvation. According to verse one of this book, he is writing to those who are already saved.

The Bible teaches us that our salvation comes only by God's grace and mercy, not by any of our works.

Ephesians 2:8-9

⁸ For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: ⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Titus 3:3-9

³ For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another. ⁴ But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, ⁵ Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; ⁶ Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; ⁷ That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. ⁸ *This is* a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou

affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men. ⁹ But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

The phrase "work out" means to carry to out to the goal, or to carry to its ultimate or final conclusion

As a student works out a math problem, we are to bring our salvation to its ultimate conclusion: being like Christ.

As a miner works out the silver or gold buried deep in the mine, so we are to work thru all the difficulties of life to bring our life like Christ! As a farmer works out his fields to bring about the goal of a bountiful harvest, so we are to labor faithfully t become like Christ!

1. WORK IT OUT WITH COMMITMENT (VS. 12) – “OBEYED”

Philippians 2:12

¹² 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.

- Paul was aware that obedience to Christ was the key to living the Christian life.
- William Bradford, the governor of the Plymouth Colony of pilgrims, insisted, "Those who believe in the Holy Scriptures are bound to observe its teachings. Those who do not are to be bound by its consequences."
- These Christians were obedient not only in Paul presence, but also in his absence.

2. WORK IT OUT WITH CAUTION (VS. 12) – “FEAR AND TREMBLING

Philippians 2:12

¹² 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.

- Paul doesn't mean that they might lose their salvation, but that they must use it in the proper way to honor God, and respect Him.

Illustration:

A little boy who got saved, said to his friend, I got a new heart? His friend said, let me see it?

- The world is looking for the same thing. If we say we are saved, and have a new heart, they want to see some changed actions in our lives. They should see our living like Christ, not the world and the Devil.
- For us to do this, we must have an awe or respect for God.

Illustration:

I read a story about C.T. Studd told by his roommate. His roommate woke to find him in the corner of the room reading the Bible by candle light. He asked him why he was doing this at such a late hour. He replied, “I felt like I was not close enough to God, so I was reading His Word to see if I had disobeyed any of His commands.”

3. WORK IT OUT WITH CONFIDENCE (VS. 13) – “GOD WHICH WORKETH IN YOU”

Philippians 2:13

¹³For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

- Our confidence is not in self but in God
- It is God that works through us

- It is God that gives us the strength or the power to walk the Christian life
- Before we were saved God worked on us

John 16:7-11

⁷ Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. ⁸ And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹ Of sin, because they believe not on me; ¹⁰ Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; ¹¹ Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

- After we are saved, He works within us

John 16:13

¹³ Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

- God saved us to work, and He has equipped us for that work

Ephesians 2:10

¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

1 Corinthians 12:7

⁷ But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

1 Corinthians 12:11

¹¹ But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

4. WORK IT OUT WITH CONTROL (VS. 14) – “WITHOUT MURMURING AND DISPUTING”

- We are not to be controlled by the flesh or the old man and get involved in debating or complaining.
- Many would not like Paul 's preaching, for sometimes it is negative, as he is here

Illustration:

You cannot crank you car up unless you have a negative and positive cable connected to your battery. In our Christian life, we need both the negative and the positive.

5. WORK IT OUT WITH CONSECRATION (VS. 15) – “BLAMELESS AND HARMLESS”

Philippians 2:15

¹⁵ 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;

- We are called to be “*blameless*”. This means “*free from fault or defect*”. “*Harmless*” means “*unmixed*”. It carries the idea of “*sincerity; or of having no pretense.*” In other words, a “*harmless*” person is just what he claims to be.

6. WORK IT OUT WITH COMMUNICATION (VS. 15, 16) – SHINE

Philippians 2:15-16

¹⁵ 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; ¹⁶ 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.

- The Christian is to shine. We were just told how dark the world is. Believers are to shine! We are to be lighthouses, warning men of the

dangers of sin and pointing them to the Saviour.

- The Christian is to share. We are to “hold forth the word of life”.
- The phrase “hold forth” means to “present, or to offer”
- We are take the faith we have been given and we are to share it with others.

Close:

Are you allowing the Lord to work out His salvation in you?

Is there anything hindering your spiritual growth?