

Sermon Notes: Working Out Your Salvation

Text: Philippians 2:12-18

Philippians 2:12-18 (NLT) - ¹² Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important. Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. ¹³ For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.

¹⁴ Do everything without complaining and arguing, ¹⁵ so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people. ¹⁶ Hold firmly to the word of life; then, on the day of Christ's return, I will be proud that I did not run the race in vain and that my work was not useless. ¹⁷ But I will rejoice even if I lose my life, pouring it out like a liquid offering to God, just like your faithful service is an offering to God. And I want all of you to share that joy. ¹⁸ Yes, you should rejoice, and I will share your joy.

Main Idea: Because God is at work in us, we are to humbly and joyfully live out our salvation in blameless obedience, shining as lights in a dark world by our actions and by proclaiming the Gospel.

I. Work Out Your Own Salvation (Phil 2:12)

- This passage connects to Christ's ultimate humility and obedience described earlier (**Philippians 2:5-11**), urging believers to follow His example.
- *"Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important"*
- Paul highlights the Philippians' consistent obedience, emphasizing that it was genuine, not just for his benefit. This is a call for us to be consistently obedient in God's will, in the presence or absence of spiritual leaders.
 - Integrity – obedience when no one is looking...
- *"Work hard to show the results of your salvation"*
- "Working out" salvation means actively living out what God has placed within us (sanctification), not earning salvation (justification). Salvation is a gift of God's grace, not by works (**Ephesians 2:8-10; Romans 3:19-30**).

- **Ephesians 2:8-10** - For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.
- Good works are EVIDENCE of your FAITH...
 - **John 15:5,8** - ⁵ “Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing... ⁸ When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.
 - **James 2** - ¹⁴ What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don’t show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? ...¹⁷ So you see, faith by itself isn’t enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless....¹⁹ You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror. ²⁰ How foolish! Can’t you see that faith without good deeds is useless?²⁶ Just as the body is dead without breath, so also faith is dead without good works.
- ***“obeying God with deep reverence and fear”***
- Doing this "with fear and trembling" signifies a humble, awe-filled reverence for God and a reliance on His power, not a fear of damnation (**Psalm 2:11**; **2 Corinthians 7:15**).
 - **Psalm 2:11** - Serve the Lord with reverent fear, and rejoice with trembling.
 - **Deuteronomy 10:12-13** - And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³ and to observe the Lord’s commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?
 - **Psalm 111:10** - Fear of the Lord is the foundation of true wisdom. All who obey his commandments will grow in wisdom. Praise him forever!

II. It Is God Who Works In You (Phil 2:13)

- ***“For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him”***
- We are enabled to "work out" our salvation because God is "working in" us, providing both the desire ("to will") and the ability ("to act") to please Him.
- The Christian life is lived through the power of the Holy Spirit, not personal strength (**Colossians 1:29; John 15:5**). Apart from Christ, we can do nothing.
 - **Colossians 1:29** - I work hard with all the strength of Christ. His strength works powerfully in me.
- God's work in us is for His "good pleasure" or benevolent purpose, which ultimately aligns with our good (**Romans 8:28**).

III. Shine as Lights in the World (Phil 2:14-16)

- ***“Do everything without complaining and arguing so that no one can criticize you.”***
- Believers are instructed to avoid complaining and arguing, which can indicate a lack of trust and gratitude towards God. Grumbling is a serious sin, as seen in the example of Israel in the wilderness.
 - **Proverbs 20:3** - It is to one's honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel.
- By living blameless and innocent lives, we demonstrate our identity as God's children in a corrupt, "crooked and twisted generation".
- ***“Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people”***
- We are called to shine as lights, both through our transformed lives (**Matthew 5:14-16**)
 - **Matthew 5:14-16** - You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let

your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

- ***“Hold firmly to the word of life; then, on the day of Christ’s return, I will be proud that I did not run the race in vain and that my work was not useless”***
- By proclaiming the "word of life" (the Gospel).
 - **John 1:1-5** - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.
- Our conduct should be worthy of the Gospel of Christ (**Philippians 1:27**).

IV. Joy: A Shared Sacrifice (Phil 2:17-18)

- ***“But I will rejoice even if I lose my life, pouring it out like a liquid offering to God, just like your faithful service is an offering to God”***
- Paul views his service and potential suffering (even execution) as a joyful sacrifice, like a "drink offering" poured out on the altar alongside the Philippians' "sacrifice and service" of faith (**2 Timothy 4:6-8; Romans 12:1**).
 - **II Timothy 4:6-8** - As for me, my life has already been poured out as an offering to God. The time of my death is near. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful. ⁸ And now the prize awaits me—the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the day of his return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to his appearing.
- ***“And I want all of you to share that joy. Yes, you should rejoice, and I will share your joy”***
- He encourages them to share in this joy, emphasizing that Christian joy is communal and transcends difficult circumstances, focusing on the advancement of the Gospel.
- This joy is the "fruit of the Spirit" (**Galatians 5:22**), rooted in our relationship with Christ, not our circumstances (**John 15:11**).

- **II Corinthians 6:10** - Our hearts ache, but we always have joy. We are poor, but we give spiritual riches to others. We own nothing, and yet we have everything.

Key summary application:

- **Embrace your role in sanctification (spiritual growth):** While salvation is a free gift of grace, you are commanded to actively "work out" the evidence of that salvation through ongoing spiritual growth and obedience, relying humbly on God's strength, not your own ([*Philippians 2:12-13*]).
- **Silence complaining with thankfulness and trust:** A primary way to live out your faith authentically is to stop grumbling and arguing. Choosing gratitude and peace demonstrates trust in God's sovereign plan to a skeptical world ([*Philippians 2:14*]).
- **Live as a distinct moral light:** Your life should stand out as blameless and innocent against the backdrop of a "crooked and twisted generation." Your changed life acts as a beacon, guiding others toward God ([*Philippians 2:15*]).
- **Combine action with proclamation:** You are called to shine both through your good deeds and by actively "holding fast" and "holding forth" the Word of life (the Gospel message) in your sphere of influence ([*Philippians 2:16*]).
- **Find joy in sacrifice for the Gospel:** Following the example of Paul and Christ, find joy in sacrificial living and service that builds up the faith of others. Christian joy can and should transcend difficult circumstances ([*Philippians 2:17-18*]).