

“Work Out Your Own Salvation”

Int.

1. Aim: To explain what Paul teaches about working out our salvation.
2. Text - Phil. 2:12 “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.”
3. Work Out Your Own Salvation
 - a. Does not mean that each person decides what they want to do to be saved
 - i. Matt. 7:21 “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”
 - ii. We must be obedient to God's will to have salvation
 - b. Does not mean we earn our salvation
 - c. It is not referring to the works of the Old Law of Moses
 - d. It is talking about the works of righteousness revealed in the Gospel
4. 1 Cor. 15:58 “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”
6. What does it mean to “Work out your own salvation”?

Discussion**I. WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION** - Phil. 2:12

A. What salvation is Paul referring to?

1. They were already Christians -- Acts 16:11-34
2. They were the people of the church in Philippi
3. In this context Paul is talking about their ultimate final salvation - not about their becoming a Christian.

B. In what way are works related to our salvation?

1. EPH 2:8-9 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."
2. No one can earn their salvation by their works
 - a. Either in Becoming a Christian
 - b. Or in living the Christian life
3. Salvation is possible by the Grace of God
 - a. Grace is unmerited favor from God
 - b. We are saved by the Grace of God
4. But notice it says "saved by grace through faith"
 - a. Grace is God's part
 - b. Faith is man's part
5. Working out our own salvation means that we obey God because of our faith in what He has promised us
6. In this context in Philippians Paul was admonishing or exhorting these Christians to live a faithful Christian life.

II. SALVATION INVOLVES THE WORKING OF BOTH MAN AND GOD

A. MAN HAS A ROLE TO PLAY IN HIS SALVATION

1. He must "work out" his salvation
 - a. As Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost - Acts 2:40 "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation."
 - b. Man is not totally passive (or helpless) when it comes to his salvation!
2. Without man's willing acceptance and complete cooperation God will not save anyone.
3. He must also have "fear and trembling" in working out his salvation
 - a. There is a place for the right kind of fear in the life of a Christian
 - (1) The "fear of the Lord" is the beginning of knowledge - Prov. 1:7
 - (2) The "fear of the Lord" will cause one to hate evil Prov. 8:13
 - b. Prompted by the "fear of the Lord" to hate evil, depart from it, and turn to God where they will find wisdom, life and honor, they will also come to find that love which dispels any improper kind of "fear" - .
 - c. 1 Jn 4:17-18 "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. 18. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."
 - d. But many have never experienced such love from God because they have not had the "fear and trembling" in the first place!
 - e. Man obey's God with fear and trembling

B. BUT GOD IS ALSO VERY MUCH INVOLVED IN OUR SALVATION!

1. Without God's help man would be hopeless in trying to save himself - Jer. 10:23
 "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."
2. Notice that Paul writes "for it is God who works in you"
 - a. We are not alone in our efforts to serve God
 - b. God is always there to help us along
 - c. Phil. 2:13 "For it is God who works in you both to will and to do..."
3. In what way does God "work" in us? Paul identifies two ways:
 - a. "to will" - God helps us in our desire and motivation to do His will
 - b. "to do" - He works right along together with us!
4. This does not deny that man is a free moral agent...
 - a. Paul has already said to "work out your own salvation"
 - b. But when we offer ourselves in service to God, He becomes our partner, our "co-pilot" - Heb. 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, 21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."
 - c. God can work and is willing, but only if we let Him!
5. Knowing that God is at work IN us, this ought to provide further motivation to work OUT our salvation!

C. Notice the other things involved in working out our salvation

III. THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF OBEDIENCE

A. THAT DONE ONLY IN THE PRESENCE OF OTHERS

1. This is a very common form of obedience
 - a. Done only when others are around
 - b. Because we fear what others might think if we don't behave a certain way
2. Yet Paul did not want the Philippians' obedience to be of this sort
 - a. For then it would only be what he calls elsewhere "eye-service" - **Col. 3:22**
 "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye service, as men pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:"
 - b. Eye = Ophthalmos [eye, sight] Service = Douleia [servant]
 - c. Their faith would then be an "environmental faith" (a faith which is active only if the environment is conducive to it)

B. THAT DONE IN THE ABSENCE OF OTHERS

1. This is the proper form of obedience
 - a. Done to please God, conscience, and no one else!
 - b. This type of obedience remains faithful no matter what others do or think
2. It is this type of obedience...
 - a. That Paul hoped for in the lives of his beloved friends
 - b. That we should render in our service to the Lord and His cause
 - c. Obedience was a continual obligation whether Paul or any other preacher was present or not.

IV. DOING SO WITHOUT MURMURING AND DISPUTING (14)

A. "Do all things without murmurings and disputings;" v. 14

B. THE DANGER OF "MURMURING"

1. Murmuring is defined as: "To complain in low mumbling tones; grumble." ----- "A complainer, one who is discontent"
2. JUDE 16 "These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage."
3. Not only are our souls at stake, but when did anyone ever go about a task seriously all the while "complaining in low mumbling tones"?
 - a. An employee at work - A student with his or her homework
 - b. Or a Christian who is to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"!
4. How can we then "shine as lights" if we are seen to be a group of complainers?

C. MURMURING WAS THE DOWNFALL OF ISRAEL

1. Notice 1 Cor. 10:10-12 "Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. 11. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. 12. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."
2. This can also be a problem among many Christians today whenever they face hardships

3. But we are told that God is ever ready to help us (1 Cor. 10:13), and that He is in us both to “will” and to “work” (Phil. 2:13), so why complain?
4. Rather, rejoice for the opportunity such “tribulations” give us to develop spiritually! - Rom. 5:3-5; Jas. 1:2-4

D. DISPUTING OFTEN FOLLOWS MURMURING

1. Those who murmur are likely to be the same ones who begin disputing with others
2. The word “disputing” simply means: “arguing; disputing”
 - a. It is not describing the discussions of differences between individuals who seek to find common ground
 - b. But rather the sort of divisive “wrangling” condemned in 1 Tit. 6:3-5; 2 Tim. 2:14-16; Tit. 3:9
3. Such disputing can devour those in the body of Christ, against which Paul warned - Gal. 5:15 “But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.”
4. It can also destroy our ability to convince the world concerning Jesus!
John 17:20-23
5. All it accomplishes is ill will, and in many cases, unnecessary division
6. Shall we dare destroy the unity for which Christ died on the cross to attain?

E. REPLACE "MURMURING" WITH "THANKSGIVING"!

1. When a person is murmuring, it is an indication of dissatisfaction
2. But a Christian has so much to be thankful for, including:
 - a. Salvation in Christ Jesus, which includes every spiritual blessing - Eph. 1:3
 - b. Assurance of a Heavenly Father who understands and will provide our needs - Mt. 6:31-33; Heb. 13:5-6
 - c. Indeed, the help of God, who "works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure" - Phil. 2:13
3. Yes, if anything, the people of God should be known as filled with "thanksgiving", not "murmuring"!
4. Surely an "attitude of gratitude" will help us "shine as lights in the world" much better than murmuring, grumbling and complaining!

V. SO YOU CAN SHINE AS LIGHTS IN THE WORLD Phil. 2:15-16**A. TO SHINE AS LIGHTS, WE MUST BE CHILDREN OF GOD WITHOUT FAULT**

1. Which is possible only if we "become blameless and harmless"
2. Which requires doing all things "without murmuring and disputing"
3. Which can only happen if we allow God to "work in" us as we "work out" our own salvation; in other words...
 - a. Allow God to forgive us in obedience to the gospel
 - b. Allow God to strengthen us through His Word and prayer
 - c. Allow God to change us in conformity to His Will

B. TO SHINE AS LIGHTS, WE MUST BE "IN THE MIDST" OF A CROOKED AND PERVERSE GENERATION

1. Lights are valuable only if they are used to dispel darkness - Mt 5:14-15
2. Though we are to "be separate" from the world (2 Co 6:14-18), we must "not isolate" ourselves from it - Jn 17:15,18; 1 Co 5:9-11
3. We must associate with those in the world in order to be a positive influence

C. TO SHINE AS LIGHTS, WE MUST "HOLD FAST" THE WORD OF LIFE

1. Some translations read "hold forth"
2. Certainly we should do both...
 - a. "hold fast" the Word of life (by our study and obedience to it) - 2 Tim. 2:15
 - b. "hold forth" the Word of life (by offering it to those in the world - Mk 16:15)
3. In both ways, we are to be like "The Statue Of Liberty"
 - a. Showing the way
 - b. Offering hope to those in need
4. Acting as "lights in the world", we bring great joy to those who taught us the Word of God.

VI. REJOICING IN YOUR SACRIFICES (17-18)

A. WE MAY BE CALLED UPON TO SACRIFICE OURSELVES

1. It may be in service to our own faith, or in the service of the faith of others
2. It may be a sacrifice of time, energy, money, or even life itself
3. But it is for a good cause, and this is how Paul viewed his possible execution for the cause of Christ

B. SUCH SACRIFICES CAN BE AN OCCASION FOR GLADNESS AND REJOICING!

1. This is how Paul viewed it
2. For he knew his sacrifices were in the cause of saving others
3. And he knew that their salvation would ultimately bring him greater joy at Christ's coming - 1 Th 2:19-20
4. Does not the prospect of seeing each other in the presence of the Lord at His coming...
 - a. Make any sacrifice for one another worthwhile?
 - b. Constitute good reason to be glad and rejoice in sacrificial service?

CONCLUSION

1. These are some of the things involved in the efforts to "Work Out Your Own Salvation"?
 - a. Obey God at all times -- not just in the presence of the preacher, elder, or other Christians.
 - b. If you are not a Christian all the time then you are not a Christian any of the time.
 - c. There is a part for each of us in working out our own salvation. God's role has been done -- providing salvation through Christ -- our part is to obey.
 - d. Do our work without murmuring and complaining -- This does not accomplish anything worth while but only hurts.
 - e. Shine as lights in the World - Rejoice in your sacrifices
 - f. Individual responsibility
2. As someone has suggested: "Work as though it all depended upon you, but pray as though it all depended upon God"
3. Indeed we should, for as we work out our salvation, it is God who is working in us!
4. Are you doing YOUR part?

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