

Session 7, *Salvation...Grace to the Uttermost!*

Paul has been encouraging the Christians in the church at Philippi to be:

- ***Unified in love,***
- ***Vision and***
- ***Purpose.***

That purpose being “others-centered” instead of self-centered.

To be like Jesus, Who left His place of prominence and power to become a servant of others (the good, the bad, and the ugly).

Now, Paul continues:

Philippians 2:12-13, “Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling,¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose”

Don’t just do it for show, but do it when no one else is looking...

- ***“In my absence”...still be like Jesus.***

Most of the members of the Church at Philippi had always been people who:

- ✓ Heard the preaching of the Word of God and immediately responded to it.
- ✓ When Paul demonstrated from the Scriptures what was the will of God, they took it to heart and did it.
- ✓ When Paul showed them what was out of God's will, they stopped that behavior.

And so he is saying, "Even though I'm not there in person, I'm hoping that you will obey the Word of God just as if I was there. As a matter of fact, I'm hoping you'll be even more faithful to do so."

- **Work Out Your Own Salvation**

We must remember: Salvation is not experienced until we meet our destiny (end of life on earth to be with Jesus, the saints, and God the Father).

Salvation can begin at New Birth...but will not be culminated, made known for real until we meet on the other side of life.

Paul's exhortation is to work out their salvation. Don't confuse this with working FOR their salvation.

"For it by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Ephesians 2:8-10.

What does it mean to "work it out"?

The original word Paul used literally means to carry it through to completion...or, "take your salvation all the way."

The ultimate end of being saved is to be like Jesus. His temperament, His personality, His manner of doing things. When you're working out your salvation, you're becoming more and more like Him all the time.

But the discouraging thing is that there really are so many Christians today that aren't working out their salvation at all. They're not growing, they're not becoming more like Jesus.

- **With "Fear and Trembling"**

Maybe you're thinking, "How much do you expect from me? I'm saved, get off my back. I'm not trying to become a pastor, I don't see the need to go overboard and be all holy, righteous, and self-sacrificing. I'm going to church, and people know I'm a Christian."

What is Paul saying?

Paul simply and straight-forwardly states...the truth delivered "right between the eyes."

The simple fact is, you should be working out your salvation, carrying it through, taking it all the way; because it's very possible that not doing it is demonstrating that you don't have salvation at all.

If our faith is not continually growing and working out as a reality in your life, making you more like Jesus, it is very likely that you've been deceiving yourself into believing that you're a Christian.

Love and kisses are good, but it won't get you a meeting with God unless you are willing to bow before the King... Humbling yourself and opening your heart to him. No façade...no ifs, ands, or buts...just true repentance and a willingness to grow in faith and harmony with God and others.

Matt. 7:21-23, “*Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.’*”

Note:

- **When you hear the teaching of God's Word, it should be effecting a change in your life.**
- **When you read in the Scriptures of something that godly people do, you should be pursuing it. Otherwise, you're practicing a false hope.**
- **How many times in the last month did you hear a message and say, "Ouch...that applies to my life...I know the way I've been behaving is wrong, and I will eliminate that sin from my life starting now"?**

If you're working out your salvation with fear and trembling, that is happening to you on a regular basis.

God's Good Pleasure in Your Will And Work

If you are a Christian, God is at work in you.

- ✓ While religion tries to change you from the outside in, Christianity changes you from the inside out.
- ✓ When you were saved, the Holy Spirit came to live inside of you, and He's working on you from the inside.

Working to do what? Causing you to both want to do and to do God's will. If you're submitted to the Lord, you're not just doing God's will, you actually want to do God's will.

LOOKING BACK AT THE PASSAGE, IT GIVES A PERFECT STATEMENT OF THE WORK OF SALVATION.

1. Salvation is of God

a. It is God that works in us the desire to be saved.

- ✓ The Holy Spirit convicts and sincerely tries to convince us that the only way to the Father is through His Son, Jesus Christ.
- ✓ The desire for the salvation of God is not kindled by any human emotion but by God Himself.
- ✓ The beginning of the process is awakened by God.

b. The continuance of that process (process of salvation) is dependent on God.

- ✓ Without His help there can be no progress in goodness;
- ✓ Without His help no sin can be conquered;
- ✓ Without His help no virtue achieved.

Remember: There is none good...no not one. There is none righteous...not one.

c. The end of the process of salvation is with God.

Its end is friendship with God...in which we are His and He is ours. The work of salvation is begun, continued and ended with God.

2. There is another side to this—Salvation is of man. (Don't throw rocks at the teacher yet! HEAR THE TEACHER OUT!)

- a. The Word says “Work out your own salvation”...Paul firmly states.**
- b. Without man's cooperation, even God is helpless.**
- c. Fact is...any gift or benefit has to be received.**
 - ✓ A man may be ill and the doctor able to prescribe the drugs that will cure him; but the man will not be cured until he takes them.
 - ✓ The man might stubbornly refuse all persuasion to take them.

So it is with salvation. The offer of God is there; without it there can be no such thing as salvation.

But...no man can ever receive salvation unless he answers God's appeal and takes what He offers.

To summarize this statement in Philippians:

There can be no salvation without God; but what God offers, man must take. It is never God who withholds salvation; it is always man who deprives himself of it.

SOME REAL PERSONAL QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS FROM THIS LESSON:

- 1. Do you know for sure you have the salvation we have been speaking?**
- 2. If you know you have eternal life through Jesus, do you reflect the Jesus you know to others as you work, play, and live with them?**
- 3. What areas of your life do you feel you need to work while you stretch toward the journey home (heaven)?**
- 4. We all have idiosyncrasies that might turn people off as to how we handle life. With that in mind, are you/me willing to work on our shortcomings to better reflect God's grace and mercy?**