

Philippians 2:12-13
(Continued)

Well, once again, let's all turn together to Philippians 2 to take a closer look at what Paul writes in his letter to all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi. In verses 12 and 13, Paul urges them:

*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.
For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.*

As we've made crystal clear so there's no confusion, Paul is not saying attain or achieve your salvation by good works because we are not saved by any good work as we're told in Titus 3. Salvation is the work God perfectly does for us and in us which we must believe in to be saved.

Yet though there is no salvation by doing any good work, salvation is not without good works. God's work of salvation for you and in you is shown through your good works.

God's work of salvation for you and in you is shown by your works which His work of salvation produces. As the tree is known by its fruit, your salvation is known by your works.

Remember, in Ephesians 2:10, Paul says we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto or for good works. This is why Paul says: *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.*

In fact, as we mentioned last week, the word—*do*—means “to be at work.” In other words, God works in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

Paul said at the beginning of this letter: *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform (complete) it until the day of Jesus Christ (Philip.1:6).*

What's the good work that God has begun in you and will perform/complete until the day of Jesus Christ? Your own salvation. And the evidence God will complete your own salvation is Him daily working in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

Also, the word—*do*—means “to act or start to act.” To will and to do of God's pleasure is acting out God what God is acting in us.

From the moment you're regenerated or made alive by the Holy Spirit and no longer dead in your sins, you must begin to act out what God acted to begin and finish in you. So when Paul says—*work out your own salvation*—he's saying: Act out God's act in you.

Salvation is a fundamental transformation that produces action, not stagnation. Again, salvation is not redecoration where you're a lifeless, unresponsive statue or puppet. Salvation is regeneration where God works in you both to will and do of His good pleasure.

So let's down the nitty-gritty.

What does the Word of God mean when it says: *work out your own salvation*?

Work out your own salvation means *will and do God's good pleasure*. How's this so?

Well, to answer that, here's a question: Why did the angel of the Lord tell Joseph to call the son who Mary would give birth to JESUS? *for he shall **save** his people **from their sins***.

If you believe in JESUS, He saves you from your sins.

So *work out your own salvation* means: "Do not sin."

Think of it this way: If you fall into a pit and someone saves you, how do live out your salvation? You avoid the pit. You stay away from the pit.

But wait a minute? You just said: *Work out your own salvation* means *will and do God's good pleasure*. Now, you're saying: *Work out your own salvation* means: "Do not sin."

So what is it? Is *work out your own salvation*: *will and do God's good pleasure* or do not sin?

The answer is—Both—because when you will and do God's good pleasure, you do not sin.

And vice versa.

Think about it this way: The Scripture says Christ *did no sin* (1 Peter 2:22a).

The Scripture equally says Jesus *went about doing good* (Acts 10:38c).

These are two different ways of saying the same thing.

Not sinning and doing good are one and the same.

The moment you do good is the moment you don't sin.

The moment you don't do good is the moment you sin.

There's no middle ground. We know this because James 4:17 says:

Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

(to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin)

So why can the Scripture say that Jesus *went about doing good* which means He *did no sin*?

Because Jesus does always those things that please the Father seeing as Jesus says:

I do always those things that please him (John 8:29c).

And why does Jesus do always those things that please the Father? Because Jesus says: *For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me* (John 6:38).

Therefore, work out your own salvation ultimately means: "Do the will of God."

For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure

So what is God's good pleasure? To define God's good pleasure, we have to realize what He doesn't have pleasure in and what He does have pleasure in.

In Psalm 5:4, David prayed to the LORD: *For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness*
So what does God have pleasure in? Well, in Jeremiah 9:23-24, we read:

*Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: **for in these things I delight**, saith the LORD.*

Have pleasure in and delight in are the same. The LORD delights in *lovingkindness, judgment (justice), and righteousness*. And, here's the thing, as one Bible commentary says: "They are not only the attributes of God; he delights in those who manifest these same qualities" (F.B. Huey, Jr. *The New American Commentary: Jeremiah, Lamentations*).

In other words, our life should be a demonstration of loving-kindness, justice, & righteousness. That brings right back to Paul saying: *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.*

Work out your own salvation means—Exercise lovingkindness, judgment (justice), and righteousness. *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure* which is lovingkindness, judgment (justice), and righteousness because as Jeremiah 9 says: ***for in these things I delight***, saith the LORD.

In fact, you know what Micah 6:8 says?

He (the LORD) hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

This brings us, once again, to what James 4:17 says:

Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

Concerning this verse, I read in a Bible commentary:

"The good that believers know they must do involves confessing dependence upon God's will in everything they do" (Kurt Richardson, *The New American Commentary: James*).

Any good you do and even desire to do is not your own doing. We know this because the Lord Himself says in Jeremiah 13, verse 23: *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.*

Why is this? Romans 8: 7-8, tells us:

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

That's why you and I need to be born again and we could never be born again without God's intervening mercy. Paul tells Titus, a pastor, in Titus 3 to exhort the church in verses 1-7:

Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers (Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities), to obey magistrates (to be obedient), to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves also were sometimes (we ourselves were also once) foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers (various) lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that (when) the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 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; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

And right after this, Paul says to Pastor Titus:

*This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou (want you to) affirm constantly, **that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain** (devote themselves to) **good works**. These things are good and profitable unto men (verse 8).*

And it's no coincidence that right after writing what he writes here in Philippians 2:12-13, Paul immediately says in verses 14-16 to all the saints in Christ Jesus which were at Philippi:

Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke (fault), in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; 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.

As we mentioned last week, often we quote what Paul writes in Ephesians 2, verses 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.* At the same time, we can't forget that the very next verse says:

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10).

God saves you by your faith alone in His Son, Jesus Christ, alone. God doesn't save you because you do good works but God does save you to do good works in this present evil world.

Remember, Scripture says faith without works is dead (James 2:20).

And notice that Paul doesn't say *we are his workmanship, created unto good works*; no, he says: *we are his workmanship, created **in Christ Jesus** unto good works.*

Why is so vital that we realize that we are *created **in Christ Jesus** unto good works*?

Because we can do no good work without Jesus Christ. For what does Jesus Who is the Vine say to us who are the branches? *without me ye can do nothing* (John 15:5d).

We can't do any good work without the Holy Spirit because Paul says in Romans 8, verses 8-9: *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his* (he is not His; does not belong to Him).

1 Corinthians 12 says none of us can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost (verse 3b). That's why we must never boast about ourselves in our salvation.

Instead, Paul writes here in Philippians: *work out your own salvation **with fear and trembling***.

Why does Paul say: *work out your own salvation **with fear and trembling***? He gives the answer: ***For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure***

*Work out your own salvation **with fear and trembling*** means live seriously and cautiously so as to honor and not dishonor God Who has saved you by His grace.

This means flee from sin. As Paul says in Romans 6, verses 1-2:

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

*Work out your own salvation **with fear and trembling*** means live seriously and cautiously because you are God's, you are not your own; for you are bought with a price and that price is the precious blood of Christ.

You are a sinner, rightfully condemned to be punished by the Lord with the everlasting destruction in hell, but God Who is rich in mercy has given you the free gift of salvation, the free gift of eternal because He sent His own sinless Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, so that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

The Lord Jesus, your only Savior, shed His blood, died for your sins, and rose from the dead so you would not perish but have everlasting life.

In order to receive this free gift of salvation/eternal life, repent and believe Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.

If you believe the Lord Jesus Christ is your Savior, *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.*