

The Work of Salvation

Phil 2:12-18

Dec 6, 2020

Phil 2:12-18 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. 14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing; 15 so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, 16 holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain. 17 But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. 18 You too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.

Introduction:

Remember that this passage is still dealing with unity in the church. It now deals with man's part in salvation.

Eph 2:8-10 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

A saved person does not sit around doing nothing, letting the chips fall where they may. A saved person will get up and go to work, doing all he can to work out his own deliverance. This is the subject of the present passage. If the church is to be unified and if believers are to walk in a spirit of unity, then they must look at their salvation; at the whole scope of their life and the salvation that God has given them, they are to do all they can to work out their own deliverance.

The first work: To work out our salvation (deliverance) with fear and trembling (v. 12)

Work (katēgazesthe) = To work to the finish (completion, perfection); It always means to complete the effort and work begun; to accomplish it perfectly; to bring it to completion.

They were to continue in their obedience to God until God's work in them was finished.

Work out your salvation with **fear and trembling**

Speaks of the fear of the Lord, a reverential awe of God.

The fear of the Lord should do two things (from Intimate Friendship with God, by Joy Dawson)

1. Produce in us the same attitude towards sin that God has, which is to hate it.
2. To give us a deep respect for and understanding of the holiness of God, the power of God, and the total sufficiency of God to meet man's need.

Prov 14:2 He who walks in his uprightness fears the LORD, (Heb 12:28-29)

The fear of the Lord leads to faith obedience, Examples:

Abraham (Gen 22:12)

Joseph (Gen 42:18)

Hebrew midwives (Ex 1:17, 21)

Israel (Ex 14:31)

Job (Job 1:8; 2:3)

The second work: The work of obedience [faith/obedience Rom 1:5; 16:26] (v. 13)
for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

to will = to desire, to want, to wish

to work (energon) = to energize

Salvation is of God

It is God that works in us His desires

God gives us the ability (energy) to do that desire

“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.” (Letter to the Philippians, by Barclay; pg. 42)

The third work: The work at not grumbling (v. 14)

Do all things without grumbling or disputing

Grumbling (goggusmon) = It means to mutter, murmur, grumble, and complain. It describes the low, threatening, discontented muttering of a mob who distrust their leaders and are on the verge of an uprising.

1Cor 10:10 Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. (Num 20:2; 21:4)

Disputing (dialogismon) = arguments, outward and vocal questionings, and expressions of doubt.

Num 12:1 Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married (for he had married a Cushite woman) [Num 12:1-15; 16:1-50; 26:9-10]

Think about the damage caused by grumbling and disputing:

Churches are divided; God's will is opposed, progress is hindered; personal growth is stymied; people are misled; self-opinions are elevated; people are pushed away from Jesus Christ and His church

The fourth work: The work at being pure (v. 15)

prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God

prove yourselves = show yourselves to be

blameless (amempto) = has the idea of “blameless, deserving no censure, free from fault or defect.”

innocent (akeraioi) = literally means unmixed, unadulterated. It is used of wine or milk which is not mixed with water and of metal which has no alloy in it. It is the idea of flour or grain passing through a sieve to separate the pure from the impure.

Heb 7:26 For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens;

2Cor 6:16-18 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, “I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. 17 “Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE,” says the Lord. “AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you. 18 “And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,” Says the Lord Almighty.

The fifth work: The work of being a witness (vs. 15-16)

you appear as lights in the world,

Mt 5:14-16 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; 15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Eph 5:8 for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light

holding fast

holding fast = are the translation of a Greek word used in secular documents of offering wine to a guest. It means "to hold forth so as to offer." This should ever be the attitude of the saint, offering salvation to a lost and a dying world. [from Wuest's Word Studies]

the word of life

1Jn 1:1 What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life (Jn1:1-4)

2Tim 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. (Jn 3:16-18; 10:10)

The sixth work: The work of following the example of sacrificial labor (v. 17-18)

so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.

Paul used many word pictures to explain spiritual truths. He often pictures the life of an athlete.

He knew the contest of boxers 1Cor 9:26.

He knew the foot-race of racers at the starting line 1Cor 9:27.

He had seen the runners press along the course to the goal Phil 3:14.

He had seen the judge awarding the prize at the end of the race 2Tim 4:8.

He knew of the victor's laurel crown in of his exultation 1Cor 9: 24; Phil 4:1.

He knew the rigorous discipline of training which the athlete must undertake, and the strict regulations which much be observed 1Tim 4:7-8; 2Tim 2:5.

Like the athlete who's training, and effort had not been done in vain, his greatest prize in life was to know that through him others had come to know, to love and to serve Jesus Christ.

if I am being poured out as a drink offering

Paul now uses a picture from the heathen sacrifice. One of the commonest kinds of heathen sacrificed was a libation, which was a cup of wine poured out as an offering to the gods. Paul here looks upon the faith and service of the Philippians as a sacrifice to God. He knows that his death may not be far away. So, he says that he's quite ready to be poured out as a libation upon the sacrificial offering of their faith.

References Used:

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