

SERMON NOTES

By Pastor John Paul Miller

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians

Philippians 2:12-16 – “The Christian’s Workout”

Philippians 2:12-16, “*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. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, 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.*”

Mark Twain, “Few things are harder to put up with, than the annoyance of a good example.”

Perhaps the thing most annoying about a good example is it’s inability to accomplish the same achievements in our own lives.

Others can inspire us but they cannot enable us.

It takes more than an example on the outside; it takes power on the inside.

How can I live out the life of Christ in this dark world of selfishness and sin?

The answer can be found in verse 13, “*For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*”

It’s God’s power working in us – “*worketh*” – Energy!

Are we then just to be passive in this whole process or do we, as believers, have any part to play?

Yes!

The believer cannot become spiritual by himself nor can Christ live His life through an unyielded vessel.

Notice what Paul says: we must “*obey*” (vs. 12a)

Four things to do:

I. Work out: "*your own salvation*" (vs. 12)

Philippians 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.*"

What did Paul mean when he said "*work out your own salvation?*"

He's not telling them to work to be saved.

Paul was writing to believers - Philippians 1:1, "*...to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi...*"

Salvation is a gift - Ephesians 2:8, "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*"

He didn't say "work for your salvation", or "work toward", or "work at your salvation".

He said, "*work out*".

You can't work out what God hasn't first "worked in".

"*work out*" - in the Greek is an "imperative". It involves a constant process of self-initiated activity. It means to "work to full completion"

You don't become a Christian by living a Christian life; you're a Christian because you have been born again!

Notice the three tenses of salvation:

1. Saved
2. Being Saved
3. Shall Be Saved

Paul is talking about "being saved" – sanctification.

Notice Paul's words in Ephesians 2:10, "*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*"

In verse 16, Paul says that he was "running" and that he "*laboured*".

Each believer is responsible for his or her own growth in the Christian life. We can't blame others for our carnality.

Are you working out your salvation?

Notice the attitude we should have as we work out our salvation:

1. "fear and trembling" – a reverence for God.
2. "a dependence upon God" – not self

We should never take the gracious gift of our salvation lightly.

Work out!

How?

II. Work in (vs. 13)

Philippians 2:13, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

1. Word of God
2. Prayer
3. Trials and suffering
4. Other believers
5. Service

III. Shine out (vs. 14-15)

Philippians 2:14-15, "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;"

Paul says we're to shine as lights in the world (vs. 15b).

In Matthew 5:16, Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Where are we to shine?

In the world – The Christian is to be in the world but not of the world.

Notice Paul says, "in the midst of".

Illustration: Jesus – He ate with sinners.

Why?

The need for us to shine (vs. 15) “*in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation*”.

crooked implies that which is curved in contrast to that which is straight.

perverse – that which is permanently distorted and twisted.

It’s a picture of the world of ungodly men.

God’s Word is the standard.

Light must shine where it’s needed the most: in the darkness!

Application: Your home, work, school, neighborhood

It’s like stars in a dark night.

In Matthew 5:14-16, Jesus said, “*Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*”

How do we shine?

1. By living without complaining or arguing (vs. 14)

murmuring in the heart is always associated with rebellion.

J.D. Pentecost – “outward expression of an inner lawlessness and rebellion that shakes the fist in the face of God and repudiates his right to rule, that questions his love and his wisdom.”

Half-concealed, half-uttered complaints with men and God.

Illustration: Israel in the wilderness.

disputings – murmuring leads to arguing with God and people.

It’s a bad witness!

2. By living blamelessly (vs. 15) it's free from censure.

Robert G. Gromacki – First, the concept “blameless” (*amemptoi*) means a freedom from censure. In his unsaved Pharasaical life, Paul regarded himself as blameless concerning the righteous demands of the law (3:6). In his apostolic ministry, he behaved unblamably among the churches (1 Thess. 2:10). For Christians, he prayed that their “whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thess. 5:23). To be blameless means to be judged by others to be innocent and pure.

Illustration: Daniel

Daniel 6:4, "Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him."

How about you?

3. By living harmlessly – it's to be mixed or unadulterated.

It's used of solid gold jewelry which was without any alloy.

In all our dealings with God and man, our thoughts and motives are to be pure.

Psalms 139:23-24, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

IV. Hold out – the Word of Life (vs. 16)

It means to hold forth others.

With our words we share with others the Word of Life.

What is the Word of Life?

It's the gospel of Jesus Christ, the living Word as found in the written word.

It's something every Christian should do.

The world is not only dark, it's dead!

Ways to share:

1. Your testimony
2. Sharing the gospel
3. Tracts
4. Books
5. Tapes
6. Radio
7. Missions
8. Bring people to church

Paul devoted his life to "getting out the gospel", and paid a great price doing it.

How about you?

Are you just a pew warmer?

Don't hold back – hold out the Word of Life!

Why Paul was so committed:

Philippians 2:16, " 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."

That (the reason):

1. I may rejoice in the day of Christ.

How about you?

2. I have not *run* in vain, neither *laboured in vain*.

How?

Wrong messages, motives and behavior

How about you? In vain?

Paul said, 1 Corinthians 15:58, " *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*"

Our labor for Christ is not in vain if our motive is right and done in God's power.

You say, John, its too hard!

Remember (vs. 13) its God we are His workmanship

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

Notice the words, 'to will' and 'to do'.

What God commands us to do; He gives us the power to do it.

Let God work in you!

How?

- prayer
- suffering
- by the Spirit of God using the Word of God to make the child of God more like the Son of God.

F.B. Meyer – "Will you begin now? He may be working in you to confess to that fellow-Christian that you were unkind in your speech or act. Work it out. He may be working in you to give up that line of business about which you have been doubtful lately. Give it up. He may be working in you to be sweeter in your home, and gentler in your speech. Begin. He may be working in you to alter your relations with some with whom you have dealings that are not as they should be. Alter them. This very day let God begin to speak, and work and will; and then work out what He works in. God will not work apart from you, but He wants to work through you. Let Him. Yield to Him, and let this be the day when you shall begin to live in the power of the mighty Indwelling One."

Are you a child of God?

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