

Philippians Ch2v12-18

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Date: 02 October 2022

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[0 : 0 0] Brian with us. If you're not familiar with Munster Bible College, it's a wonderful opportunity just to hear from God's Word, to learn from God's Word. And we're very privileged here in Cork to have such learned men come. When you look at the biographies of people coming each year, we read of professors, of people who have books published, people who have spent years and years learning about the Word of God. And when you think and read all this, you think, wow, they must be so amazing to have all this knowledge. And they are.

And yet, one thing that I've been amazed at in meeting the lecturers, when you meet them, you're meeting men of God, men who in humility come to us to share with us. You don't know that, you don't realize, wow, I'm speaking to a professor, somebody's read books, because there are men who just have a heart for the Lord, who want to speak of the Lord and teach others.

And it's a privilege to be able to do that. It's been wonderful to have Brian. I've enjoyed his classes, his master classes. And Brian, can I just pray with you as you come now to preach to us?

Father, I do thank you for Brian. Thank you for all his years of learning, for all that you have shown him in your Word. I thank you for his humility, his desire to share your Word with others. And I thank you that even as he has been reading your Word and learning, that you have been changing him to become more like his Saviour. I pray indeed, as we open up your Word, as we read these words from Paul to the Philippians, I pray indeed our desire would be to learn, to grow, where there is correction, that we'd be willing to be disciplined, where there is encouragement, that we would be encouraged, where there are things that we need to learn or be reminded of, indeed, that we would be changed by your Spirit, that you would change us to be more like your Saviour, and that when we go from here, we will be people who have such a heart for you, a desire to serve you, and to obey you. In Jesus' name, amen. Thank you, Brian.

I feel like I'm going to knock it out there. Yes, that looks a little better. Good morning, everyone. It's great to be here. This is actually my fourth time. I think I've preached one time or two times, but it's my fourth time across three of those for the college, and then one time for a summer Bible week. And so it's really a delight for us to be here, and I know so many of you now by name, having come since, I think, 2016 or something like that was my first year, but whatever the case. Yeah, Jonathan mentioned books. I mean, the trick of writing a book, there's only one trick, and that is you just have to be able to sit down for a really long time, and then it just happens, right? So it doesn't really require a lot of skill except for sitting.

[3 : 09] What we're going to do today is look at a text of the Bible that we're all pretty familiar with, but before we start, I just want to ask you a question, and I checked with Joy to see if this translates. Have you ever seen this phrase, you buy something, maybe it's furniture or something for the kids, and on it it's stamped, some assembly required. Do you know what I'm talking about? You have this, right? So I googled some assembly required stories, because I can remember when Jamie was just a child, Denise and I would have like a dollhouse or something, right? So it's Christmas Eve, Jamie finally goes to bed, it's about 1 a.m., and we get this dollhouse out, and it says some assembly required, and somewhere around 4 a.m. or something, it's basically together, and there's a few pieces like, well, these probably don't need these because, man, it'll fit anywhere, and we've spent hours and hours in doing it. I looked at a website in particular. I'm really interested in cycling, and I spent a lot of time looking at bikes that I can't afford, and so I was looking at this website where you can mail order these bikes, and then it says some assembly required, but they say even a 12-year-old can put it together. So I have these videos of a 12-year-old taking these bikes out of these boxes and putting them together. Apparently, if you're above 12, it's impossible, because all the people who wrote comments said, the problem here is I'm in my 20s, I'm not 12, so I can't do this.

And so they showed this kid putting it together, but it's almost impossible, but it's got this big sign on it, some assembly required. I think sometimes when we think about our salvation, you hear a text like this, work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

And it sort of sounds like some assembly required for your salvation, even though you know, right, and you probably know and you probably affirm that we are saved by grace, through faith, in Christ, apart from our works, right?

Everybody probably would stand up and say, yes, I affirm that. And then we come to a text like, work out your salvation with fear and trembling, and we think, that must be like the fine print, right?

So you get the contract, and like everything's free, and then you go down, and it's like the part that you skip over and you don't really read at the bottom of a contract or like agreement, if you like, some sort of agreement on your phone, like, do I agree?

[5 : 45] Like, yeah, I guess I just agree. But you don't read the small print, and then you don't read the small print when it comes to your salvation, and then later you hear, work out your salvation with fear and trembling. And so we're going to look at this text.

We're going to look at this text from Philippians 2, 12 and 18. But what I want to say is this. When it comes to salvation, it is absolutely the opposite of some assembly required.

In fact, it is no assembly required. Now, another way you can put that, though, is the opposite. You could say all assembly required. But what it means is God is the one who does all the assembling.

So it's not a case of God kind of gets us started, and then like sort of maybe gives us some tools or something, and then we just figure out the rest, right? So we're going to look at this text. But I think most of the time we're really familiar with part of this verse, right?

So if you're in Philippians 2, verse 12. Verse 12 is kind of a long verse, but we tend to only know like one phrase from it, and that is work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

[6 : 55] But it's a big, long verse. And not only that, it's in the middle of a letter. So if Paul wrote this letter to you, or let's put it this way. Let's say like, so next week we go back to the States, and then a couple weeks later you receive a letter from me.

Like, why has this guy written me a letter? But it's like three pages long. And that sounds depressing probably. But let's just say you get this letter from me or an email, and it just goes on for like three pages.

Even if you weren't excited about getting a letter from me, there's one thing you would never do. Well, I guess you might not read it at all. But if you're going to read it, there's one thing you would never do.

You would never start like the third page. Ever. Like never. That would never cross your mind, right? If you get an email from one another, or you get communication from the church that has announcements or whatever, or maybe a pastoral letter from Johnny, you would never start at the end or in the middle.

But you would do the simple thing, and that is you would start at the beginning, and you would read all the way through the end. And I think sometimes, especially with a verse like this, that we all know really, really well, work out your salvation with fear and trembling, the question we should ask ourselves is, what has Paul said up to this point?

[8 : 08] Or has Paul said anything to us about how this might work? Or has Paul said anything about salvation before here? Because sometimes we just read like it's just that verse, just sort of floating around, and then we sort of talk about it and think about it, which is okay to do, right?

But it's meant to be read. It's meant to be read as though we started at the beginning. Now, I'm not going to read all the Philippians to you, but we'll just read 12 to 18 here. 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, for it is God who works in you to will and to do or to act for his good purpose.

Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may be blameless and pure, children of God without fault, in a warped and crooked generation. Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life.

And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I'm not run or labor in vain. But even if I'm being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you.

So you too should be glad and rejoice with me. This is the word of the Lord. So, the first thing that we need to understand when we read this text is this.

[9 : 39] It comes with a promise. And the thing is, it's a promise we all know. And we know it from this same book, but it comes earlier. Right?

So, when you read, when you read verse 12, which we're going to talk about, the thing is, by the time you would get to chapter 2, verse 12, you would have already read this.

I thank my God every time I remember you, in all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ.

So, chapter 1, verse 6, has this promise. So, Paul is totally confident, he's absolutely confident that God, who started the work in the Philippians, is going to complete it.

Right? He's already said this. And notice he doesn't say, I'm really confident that this work that God started in you, that you're going to complete it. He says, I'm confident that the one who, that is God, the one who began a good work in you, will complete it until the day of Jesus.

[10 : 54] So, number one, this command in chapter 2 comes with a promise that Paul has already said, and that is that God is the one who is going to complete the work.

So, it's never, on your part or my part, some assembly required. Right? It is all assembly required, actually, but it's God who does all the assembling. Because God is not calling us to add to our salvation.

When he says, work out your salvation, it's not like God has started his work in you, and it's, you know, it's kind of like, it's like rough around the edges, or it's sort of complete, or he's kind of got you part of the way, and he gets you like 90% of the way, or even like 99% of the way.

And then he's just like, now you kick your bit in, and you put, you know, I do my part, and you throw in your part, and finally, finally, your salvation is going to be complete. Now, probably, I'm guessing, I don't know all of you that well, I'm guessing that nobody in here would go around, if somebody came up to you and said, hey, I heard you're a Christian, can you explain what you mean by salvation?

I'm pretty sure that nobody would say to somebody else, like a non-believer, well, basically it's this, God saves us, like 90%, 95%, 98%, and then leaves it to us to kind of fill up the rest to make sure that we get to heaven.

[12 : 20] Like, probably none of you would explain it that way. But I think when it comes to us, when we think about ourselves personally, and we hear, work out your salvation with fear and trembling, we sometimes will then think things and apply it to ourselves that we wouldn't actually say to other people.

Which then sometimes, I think, leaves us in a place where we feel maybe even hopeless. Where we feel like, now God has saved me, but now God's out to get me.

Right? So you hear this, we'll talk about it in a minute. It says, with fear and trembling. And the thing is, is many of us, many of us, we believe that God saves us completely by grace, through faith, in Jesus, apart from our works, because of His great love with which He loved us.

That's what Paul says in Ephesians. We believe that, but then once we're saved, I think sometimes we have this idea that God is always behind us, just waiting for us to slip up.

Right? In other words, He goes from being this gracious Savior to being like a school principal who always assumes that we're just always on the brink of doing something wrong and the minute we do, whap, He's on top of us.

[13 : 39] Right? That He's always looking down like, I know, and just waiting. Right? Now, again, nobody would describe God this way. Right? Nobody. You would never describe God that way. But I'm just supposing that for lots of us, we sometimes act like that's what God is doing.

So He's just watching. You better work out your salvation. And you better do it with fear and trembling. If not, I'm going to jump on you like three seconds. So we have this, so we start to live in this sort of fear.

The sort of fear that like God is out to get me. And I think sometimes that comes from just sort of reading that verse, reading that verse all by itself. So, again, right?

It comes with this promise. That's the first thing. And then the promise is restated in Philippians 2 because it is God who's working in you both to do and to work for His good purpose.

So Paul said it twice. Paul said it twice that this is what God is doing. Now, sometimes people will say, well, what Paul means here is we've got to work out what God has worked in.

[14 : 44] I don't know if you, this is a statement I hear at home a lot. People will say this. I think, well, that's okay. The problem is it doesn't really tell me much. I mean, it's kind of catchy, right?

And I might remember it. I might go home thinking, yeah, I've got to work out what God's worked in. But then, like, what does that mean? Right? I mean, the proof is sort of in the pudding. And that is, if I say, work out, you've got to work out what God's worked in, what are you going to go do?

Like, what will that look like? It's really easy to think, yes, that is really profound. And I'm really going to do that. That's really, I've got to work out what God's worked in. That's even easy to remember.

It's a little bit rhyme-y. I'll probably remember it. But then you go home, you're like, well, what is that? How do you even do that? Right? So it's a nice idea, but it's a little bit vague when it comes time to put it into practice.

But the great news is Paul doesn't leave anything vague at all. In fact, he shows us exactly what it looks like to work out your salvation. So you don't have to ask any questions.

[15 : 48] So today, when you go home and you think about this text, you don't have to say to yourself, so what kind of stuff do I need to be doing? Do I just come up with a list? Right? And I think sometimes we kind of do that.

We hear these commands and we hear commands in the New Testament as just like, I've got to be doing more. Right? I've always got to be doing more. Like, I got saved, it was completely free.

And now, I constantly feel like it's just more, I've got to do more, I've got to do more, I've got to do more. Because if I don't, God's going to turn from being a gracious Savior to being like, just a really, really mad school principal who's going to just be on my back in three seconds.

Right? So, again, we've said it comes with a promise, the promise is that this is God's work in you, but then it has this really tricky thing with fear and trembling. Right?

And that's the part that gets us. Like, if that wasn't in there, we'd be good to go. I mean, seriously, if it just said work out your salvation because it's God working in you, I mean, this would be like our favorite verse. But it's that fear and trembling part that gets us.

[16 : 54] So, we need to think about what that means. So, let me just tell you three things, three things that it isn't. The fear and trembling that Paul's talking about is not living as though God is out to get you at every second the first time you ever slip up.

The second thing is this is not a threat. And I think a lot of times we hear it like a threat. Like God saying, you better do this.

You had better, I'm telling you, don't mess around here because if you don't do it, remember who I am. Remember what I'm capable of doing. In other words, in other words, rather than thinking about God as the gracious Father who saves us in Jesus, who has promised to complete His work in us, all of a sudden we view Him as like, He's sort of against us.

And this is the worst thing, He's like suspicious of us. Right? He becomes really suspicious. And then you know that He knows you better than you know yourself.

And so you kind of live in this sort of, in two worlds. Right? We live in two worlds. It's one world of salvation by grace through faith alone, apart from my works, and then in the, God's out to get me.

[18 : 11] However you might describe that. Right? You might not say God's out to get me, but I think you probably know what I mean. We all would have a different way of expressing that. And it's not usually stuff we would say out loud, by the way.

You usually wouldn't tell other people, you know, I think God's out to get me. You might even, you never talk that way. But I'm talking like when you're alone and you're thinking about it and you have sort of reviewed what your day has been like and you've reviewed the things that have come into your mind, and you've reviewed the things that you've said that you wish you hadn't have said, and you've reviewed the things that you should have said but didn't say, and then at the end you feel like, I could hide from God if I could.

And you can't figure out how to put together this idea that God is your gracious Savior and Jesus apart from your works, and how you to work out your salvation with fear and trembling. So the third thing that this fear is not, it is not the fear and trembling that Adam and Eve felt in the garden.

So you might remember the story, I'm not going to repeat the whole thing, they eat the fruit and the first thing they do is hide because they're terrified. And so God comes and says, where are you?

And they said, we heard you coming and we were afraid. So Paul doesn't say, work out your salvation and be very afraid that God is going to get you if you don't.

[19 : 31] So here's what it is. Number one, the fear and trembling that Paul is talking about is living with the reality that the one who is working in you is the God who created the world and who is sovereign and all-powerful, and he is your God.

Number two, it's acknowledging and confessing, this is the most important part, it is acknowledging and confessing your own inability to save yourself. In other words, it is always remembering, it is always a reminder that if we are left on our own, we are doomed.

If we try to save ourselves, we are finished. If we feel like God has got this started, now I've got to put in my 10% or whatever percent, it doesn't matter, it could be half of a 1%, and it still is impossible.

Then, then, then, then we do stand before God exposed and afraid. And finally, it's simply this.

It's the reality of children living under the authority of a father. Like he says in verse 15, right? In verse 15, he just calls them, in verse 15, he says, so that you may be blameless and pure, children of God.

[20 : 52] Right? So, I grew up with the most loving and kind father imaginable. my dad was a, he was a great guy and he was very loving and he loved everyone, but he was a really tough guy too.

Right? So, my dad grew up really, really poor. He lived in the mountains of West Virginia and he served in the army. He landed at D-Day. He went, he came home and then went into business and worked nonstop for like 45 years.

So, he was really kind of like a no-nonsense kind of guy but very loving. And, my dad and I had a great relationship but I can also tell you this, there was a certain amount and sometimes not enough, there was a certain amount of really healthy fear I had of my dad when I would do something wrong.

Or that when my dad would give me and like he would be telling me what to do. Right? So, I also worked for my dad at the auto shop. And, I knew that when dad came around and said, you know, I need you to do this right now, he didn't have to tell me that there were consequences if I didn't.

But, it wasn't threatening. It was never a threat. My dad was never like, you better do this kid or I am going to break out all over you. Or like the belt's coming off in three seconds.

[22 : 18] But, there was a, I did have this healthy fear of my dad because he was my dad. And, he was my father and he had authority over me. And, the way that relationship works is, fathers have authority over their children and their children recognize that.

Now, sometimes, sometimes because different sorts of, we have different sorts of father and children, child relationships among us, sometimes those illustrations don't work too well.

Right? Because you might be thinking of a situation you were in that was not like my situation with my dad. Where it was actually just complete, straight up fear. Not respect, but just fear.

But, what Paul's talking about here is this respect of understanding that God is your father and you are his child. But, it's also remembering that this father is the same father who promises to finish a good work in you.

So, what does Paul mean to work out your salvation? What does that even look like? Well, the great news is, as I said this before, Paul's already told them.

[23 : 25] He's already told us what it looks like to work out your salvation. And all we have to do is back up a little bit to get our answer. Right?

So, this is the next point I want to get. The next point is answering the question, what does it look like? How do I do this? Well, at the beginning of chapter 2, Paul shows us what it looks like.

Therefore, if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any calm and sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete.

And here it comes. He's getting ready to tell you this is exactly what it looks like to work out your salvation. to make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in Spirit and of one mind.

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility, value others above yourselves. Not looking to your own interests, but each of you to the interests of others.

[24 : 37] That's what it looks like. That's what working out your salvation actually looks like. You see, it's not adding, it's not like adding to God's incomplete work.

It is living as God's children on the earth among ourselves and loving one another and putting our interests, putting the interests of others ahead of ourselves. That's, I know, it's like very anticlimactic.

Like, shouldn't it be more exciting than that? Right? I mean, really, you hear it and you're like, man, I kind of thought it was going to be kind of like fireworks or something. But it isn't.

It isn't. And if we're still not convinced, I'm not saying you're not, but pretend you're not. I'll give you a little more evidence. Because now Paul is going to give the world's greatest example of somebody who put the interests of somebody, of others before themselves, and that is Jesus himself.

Right? Because, I mean, I kind of started in verse 12, but I did that on purpose because verse 12 is just, Paul hasn't stopped since verse 1 of chapter 2. And so then he says, in your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Jesus, who, being in the very nature of God, did not consider equality of God something to be used for his own advantage.

[25 : 52] So in other words, think about this. So Jesus, who is the very form of God, he is the son of God, he is the second person of the Trinity, had everything, he could have used every power imaginable in the universe and used it for himself.

Everything. There's nothing he couldn't have done. But he didn't. He didn't use what was rightfully his. And we'll get to that in a second.

He didn't use what was rightfully his for his own gain. But gave that up. He gave up that right for other people, for you. That's what he's done.

But rather, he became like nothing by taking on the very nature of his servant, being made in human likeness. Being found in appearance of man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue acknowledged, confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

[27 : 00] By the way, that is the best way to think about the fear and trembling part. Is that Jesus is reigning and Jesus is reigning and every knee and every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord.

Ultimately, one way or another. One way or another. There is not a person on the earth, one way or another, who will not one day confess that Jesus is the King. Right?

And that means whether you are doing that as one who is saved by grace through faith in Jesus, knowing that God's work of salvation is yours, or those who resist, who one day will find that Jesus is on the throne and that they will confess him whether they confess him in life or not.

But whatever the case, whatever the case, the great news here is, see, if we would even start reading at chapter 2, by the time you get to work out your salvation, you get to hear what it's like. In other words, working out your salvation means this, and that is living for others like the way Jesus lived for you.

Because that is your salvation. Think about what your salvation is. Your salvation is the gift that you have from Jesus who lived and died for you.

[28 : 14] That's what, I mean, there's lots of ways we could define salvation, right? But that's what he says. Work out your salvation. And the salvation he has in mind here is exactly what he just described.

That is the salvation you have because Jesus served you. Jesus, who had all the power of all eternity, we can't even imagine, we can't even put it into words, could have done everything to protect himself, he'd been good to go.

Right? And he had the right to do so. Jesus wasn't compelled, like, well, I guess I have to save. It's not any choice. It's, somebody's got to do it. I guess I'll do it.

No, he did it freely. You see? And so when Jesus submitted himself to the cross, he did that freely. He could have, in a second, snapped his fingers and brought an end to the whole thing.

The first time, the first time he's standing there in front of the high priest and one of the high priest's assistants comes up and slaps him in the face. Jesus could have snapped his fingers, that guy could have just fell over dead right then. Or worse.

[29 : 24] At any moment, at any moment, he could have chosen to defend himself once and for all. But he didn't. He gave that up.

He didn't exercise that right. And so, if you think about that, then sort of, think about what Paul has just said, and that is, living for others. Then you come down here and you think, work out your salvation.

Doesn't it make the most sense that rather than Paul saying, hey, go home and make a list of all the things this might look like, doesn't it make the most sense to think, maybe Paul's talking about the things he's been talking about for several verses now.

so that to work out your salvation means to live out the salvation that has been given to you in Jesus so that your life looks like his, putting the interests of others ahead of yourself.

And again, again, we hear that and I think sometimes we think, oh yeah, it's the love part. I mean, it's like the exciting parts and then like, oh, it's just, well, we just need to love each other.

[30 : 24] But the kind of love that Paul's talking about here is the most challenging thing that we would ever do. Because what Paul is essentially saying is this, Jesus has freed you up so that you don't have to, you no longer have to live for yourself.

You no longer have to exert your own right. You no longer have to think about sort of whether you have time. you are freed to the point where you can actually live for others and live for others the way Christ has lived for us.

This is the work that God has started in you that he's going to complete is transforming you. Not transforming you to be more like Jesus. It's transforming you so that your life starts to look like this.

Think about it this way. That our lives should look like the salvation we've received. Right? So rather than think of salvation as like this thing that's like partially done or wholly done but then apparently there's this fine print.

Rather than think about it this way, think about salvation in this sense of what it actually looks like in your life. So it's not just a thing you have. Right? It's not just this like, oh here's my salvation and I can describe it.

[31 : 32] That's fine. But I said not just that. It's also something that looks like something. It's not just something you talk about. It's not just something that we sort of discuss. We should talk about it and discuss it.

Absolutely. But it's also something that looks like something and what it looks like is your salvation. The salvation that you have in Jesus. Right?

So Paul's not calling you like to be Jesus. But he's saying have this mind. Have this same mind in you which is yours in Jesus. And so what he's directing us to what he's directing us to is not so much work out what God's worked in.

I mean that's okay. I'm not against that. What he's saying is your life should look like the gift that you've been given. And it's really I know I'm getting ready to say this and I don't really want to I'm going to do it anyway.

I'm going to say it is on that level as simple as that. But of course simple doesn't mean simple to do. Right?

[32 : 37] Because every single day we're confronted I mean think about it it's really really easy to talk about loving one another. It's really really easy to talk about serving one another. But you know when kind of push comes to shove and it gets really down into the details it can be really difficult.

Because I can always think of like a hundred things that I need to be doing for myself instead. Always. Like at any at the drop of a hat any given second I can immediately think of something I need.

Right? Now Paul's not here saying like become a doormat for every single person that crosses your path and no matter what it is you're doing if somebody comes up and says hey I need you to do something like you completely drop I mean he's not saying that.

Right? But what he's saying is you have the freedom you have this freedom to live for other people. And you can do it with this confidence. Here's why here's why we can live for other people.

Here's why I don't have to always be thinking about my time my responsibilities the things I've got to get done but that I can actually think of others is this because I have been given an eternal salvation that has been promised to me that God who started it will complete it.

[33 : 50] In other words I live in this complete freedom of knowing God's going to complete this work in me so I have nothing to prove. Right? I have nothing to prove. I have nothing that I have to I have nothing that I personally just have to accomplish at the expense of anybody else.

Because I'm resting in God's work that's done for me from beginning to end. In other words it's when we grasp how complete our salvation is that we're freed up to live that salvation out for one another.

And that's the key. The key is understanding the freedom that you have. And this is strange sounding. You and I we are so free this is how radically free we are.

we don't have to live for ourselves. That's like the I mean for one thing that sounds like that doesn't sound like a lot of freedom. It doesn't in the world. But you know notice here that Paul says to live like this children of God in a warped and crooked generation in other words in a world that's the exact opposite of this.

You have such freedom that you don't have to look out for your own interests because you can trust God that what he has started in you he will complete and it's a promise in Jesus that is not going to be taken away.

[35 : 06] And he says and this will make you shine like stars in the world that you're living in. And then you won't look what he says I'm almost finished he says you will be blameless and pure do everything without grumbling or arguing.

So what's the opposite of grumbling arguing is peace contentment and peace. So you can have contentment and peace rather than grumbling and arguing why of grasping hold of the fact that God has supplied you with everything you need in Jesus and he has supplied you to such an extent that you can actually look at another person and live for them and not for yourself.

And you don't have to worry about what recognition you're going to get. You don't have to worry about is anybody going to notice or you know and I know I feel this way too sometimes I know that you feel like you know I'm doing everything I'm serving but nobody even notices.

And then you feel guilty because you realize that you just thought well I just need more and then it starts this whole thing over but see you're freed from that too. You're freed from that too.

You're even free from like all the sort of you know binds that you put on yourself every time a bad thought crosses you. Like I'm free from that too. But ultimately it's this you're free from needing people to recognize all the things that you've done.

[36 : 25] That's great to be recognized. But you know we could all be doing that more is recognizing each other for the things that we do. But individually individually I'm free that I don't need to I mean I do but I don't need to worry that other people say recognize the things I've done for them or that they gave me enough thanks for the things that I've done for them.

Because if I truly believe that God's going to complete this great salvation that he started in me that should free me of to think I've only got one thing to do and that is I don't have to protect myself.

Now it's really hard to do that. It's really easy to say but super hard to do. And all you need to make this really so okay this is really easy to do until one thing enters into your life another person.

Like it is super easy to live for others and to love others until another shows up. Like I am the most selfless giving you know kind loving person on the earth until another human being walks in the room and ruins that for me.

Right? I mean I can think I'm like you know I was really like loving and living for people and then you know somebody like say my wife walks in and all of a sudden that becomes really difficult and I start thinking about what I need to do and how I need to assert myself and how I need to be right in this discussion and I need to make sure that she knows that I was right like because just out of principle because it's the right thing for people to understand who's right and who's wrong and that's like really important and then she leaves the room and I'm like I need to live for other people.

[38 : 11] Right? This is the thing I need to do. Right? And then Denise comes back in the room and I'm like she says something and I'm like well I mean I understand what you're saying but right? I get it why you would put it that way but here's the reason so rather than grasping it not only am I free from that I am free to make her life better that's what it does you see when we grasp the freedom that we have in salvation it immediately makes everybody's life around us better because we don't have to exert ourselves over top of them.

Right? And so I just want to I want to end with this. every time you hear a command like this don't first hear it as I've got to do more and more and more and more and more the first thing is when you hear a command like work out your salvation allow that command to do its work and what I mean is this allow that command to expose in your heart how you have not been doing this.

That's an important work because it will do that and then what will that do? Now it might sound like you mean just let it really depress me No but don't just hear it like yeah I've got to do more hear it and let that command expose in you the places where you're not doing that that will then do what?

Will drive you back to your salvation in Jesus where you realize you know what? I've been set free all these places that I see in my life the command is exposing my life that I don't do this I've been set free from all that but you can only be set free by it by having that command sort of drive you back to the cross over and over and over again that's where you'll find your freedom because once you find your freedom in the cross you will have this freedom like you have never experienced before the freedom that was given to you by the one who rather than exploit all the eternal power he had gave that up for your sake right?

so in other words we progress God's going to complete his work in us from beginning to end not by sort of us moving further and further and further and further away from the cross but by every single day coming back to it every single day coming back to it and understanding that it's in the cross of Jesus that we're free to live for one another and to work out our salvation with fear and trembling because it is God himself who is working in us both to will and to work for his good pleasure and you have that as a promise let's pray together Father it's really easy to hear these things and to talk about them and to make a big deal about them and to you know feel like we're ready but Lord we know that if you're not with us we'll walk out these doors and our lives may look anything but like what we've heard here but we're confident Lord not in ourselves but we're confident that you are a God who keeps your promises and that you don't just trick us you don't just lead us along you don't just give us something and then show us the fine print later but Lord we need you to do this in our lives just as you promised so Lord all we pray today is that you would keep your promises to us in Christ in his name we pray

[41 : 38] Amen Amen Amen Amen You