

Living For the Glory of God

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[0 : 00] And, before we look at God's Word, let's pray together. Our Father in Heaven, we thank You for Your goodness and love.

We thank You that we can come now and look at Your Word. We recognize that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable. And we pray that Your Word will prove profitable to each one of us this day.

Not that, O Lord, we will be glorified, but that Your name will be glorified, that You will be honored in all that we see in Your Word.

So bless, O Lord, this time around that Word. In Jesus' name. Amen. So would you turn with me, please, to Philippians.

That's the passage that we're looking at together. Philippians chapter 2, and reading from verse 12.

[1 : 04] Philippians chapter 2, looking at verse 12 through to 18. So the Apostle writes, 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 act according to His good purpose. Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe, as you hold out the word of life, in order that I may boast on the day of Christ, that I did not run or labor for nothing.

For even if I am 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. And our prayer is that God will bless to us that portion from His word.

We began our time together this morning by being asked various questions, and this message begins with a similar kind of question.

[2 : 36] What kind of life am I living as a Christian, as a believer? Do my friends know that I am a Christian? Do my colleagues at work recognize me as a Christian?

Where am I as far as my Christian experience is concerned? I know that there is the habit, so they can go up on Facebook, of doing selfies.

Well, sometimes they're just that, selfies, you know. You're looking in on yourself for all the wrong reasons. But we want to look upon ourselves this morning for the right reasons.

Am I all that I ought to be in the sight of God's camera, as it were? Am I growing spiritually speaking?

The Apostle Paul recognized constantly the need to grow spiritually. In chapter 3 and verse 14, he says, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus.

[3 : 55] So even the Apostle, a great man that he was, with all his experience, was still pressing on as he reaches the end of his earthly life.

And we remind ourselves this morning that our Christianity must never be a slot in the week. Christianity is 24-7. And what the Apostle Paul is encouraging us in, in these verses, is that we too will endure to the end.

That we won't reach a time when we retire, as it were, as Christians. That we will sit back. That we will continue to live to the glory of God.

Now you'll notice that the reading that we had this morning begins with a therefore. Well, as somebody has said, a therefore always has a wherefore.

So he's saying, in the light of what I have been saying. Well, what has he been saying? Well, way back in chapter 1 and verse 27, he says, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel.

[5 : 08] And then he goes on to explain how we can live our lives to the glory of God, as we conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel.

To be different, to be united, to contend as one man. To live, verse 29, in the light of what has been granted to us.

Namely, that we should believe, but also to suffer for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ. To live selfless lives. To live with the mind of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's what he has been saying. And he goes on to say more. 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 with trembling.

And to live like that is to live to the glory of God. So how can I live to the glory of God by continuing to work out my salvation?

[6 : 25] And I want us to concentrate on that phrase and see how it is expounded by the apostle in these verses. Let's first of all notice Paul's exhortation here, that it is an exhortation to Christians.

It's not an exhortation to the unbeliever. He says, continue to work out your salvation. He's not speaking about a salvation of works.

They are saved, but they must go on to live for the Lord. Their salvation. To use the analogy again of a camera, it's a wide angled lens looking upon the church at Philippi.

They've already been identified, chapter 1 and verse 1, as servants of Jesus Christ, of saints, holy ones, those who have been separated unto God.

He has spoken in chapter 1 and verse 6 of the one who had begun a good work in them, that he will continue to carry it on to completion until the day of Jesus Christ.

[7 : 38] He has spoken in chapter 2 and verse 1 of what it means to be united with Christ, to be comforted by his love, to enjoy the fellowship of the Spirit.

Now you Philippians, work out your salvation. You have that salvation. Work it out. I wonder how people would have received this letter.

In Acts chapter 16, we have the foundation of the church at Philippi. And we're introduced there to three of the members of that early church.

And how they individually would have received this letter, work out your salvation. I think of Lydia. We read about her. She was a member of the church there.

And we read about her in Acts 16 and verses 13 to 15. Remember, she was one of the women who was praying on the riverbank. She was a religious person.

[8 : 49] She desired to serve the one and only true God. But she needed spiritual eyes being opened. And we know that there on the riverbank, as the Apostle Paul and others brought to them the gospel concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, that the Lord opened her heart.

And she invited Paul and his companions into her home. And there she gave them hospitality. Lydia, work out your salvation.

She prayed then. She worshipped the one true God. She had an understanding of the Lord Jesus Christ. Her heart was open to the truth.

Lydia, work out your salvation. You prayed then. Continue to pray. You practice hospitality then.

Continue to practice hospitality. Don't stop. An exhortation to Lydia, the Christian. And then we go on to read in Acts 16 of the slave girl.

[10 : 09] Remember, she was possessed of an evil spirit. A pythoness. Worshipping a demon. Making manic utterances.

And that comes across in the original languages. She was not a pleasant person, but she was held captive to Satan. And you remember how she was delivered from that evil spirit.

Now I would agree with you that nothing is said about her becoming a believer. But if you look at Acts 16 and verse 19, you discover that when the owners of the slave girl realized that their hope of making money was gone, they attacked Paul and his companions.

You see, something had happened to this girl. She had been delivered. She was a different girl. No longer making those manic utterances. No longer involved with the worship of the python spirit.

A different girl, freed from the power of Satan. A new creation delivered by the Lord. And can you imagine Paul's exhortation coming to her?

[11 : 29] She would remember her past life. She would remember her wonderful deliverance. Step out and continue to walk on. You're no longer under the dominion of Satan.

Continue to walk with the Lord Jesus Christ. Work out your salvation as a Christian. Or think of the jailer. We know his story.

Remember how he receives Paul and Silas? He puts them into the prison. He puts their feet in stocks. He doesn't treat them gently.

And there are Paul and Silas in the prison singing praises to God. And the prisoners are listening. And suddenly, this earthquake. The jailer wakes up.

He's suicidal. Sirs, he says, what must I do to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved and your household.

[12 : 33] And there that jailer in that prison after the earthquake sits before Paul and hears more. Tenderly now, he washes their wounds.

And he is baptized. And then later, this letter comes from Paul and he remembers that night. Jailer, work out your salvation.

Continue on in your Christian walk. work. My friends, if you're a Christian here this morning, you have a testimony.

You can look back to a day or perhaps over a period of time. And the Lord entered into your life. He changed your life.

He began a work in your life. Are you, as a Christian, working out your salvation? Maybe you were saved from a religious background like Lydia.

[13 : 37] And maybe you were saved from an addictive background. Maybe you were saved as somebody who was just going about their work like the jailer doing your job, being responsible with little thought of God.

And then an earthquake interrupted your life. And you cried out, Save me, Lord. Whatever your testimony is this morning, the exhortation is to you.

Work out your salvation. Don't stop. Don't think you've arrived. Continue. Grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So the exhortation is to you this morning as a Christian. The second thing we notice is that it was an exhortation that was very serious.

They were to work out their salvation with fear and with trembling. They're solemn words, aren't they?

[14 : 53] And we can easily pass them by. Christianity is serious. Not serious in the sense that we can't be happy and joyful.

Yes, we can be all of those things. But there is a seriousness about it. Work out your salvation with fear and with trembling.

The Apostle Paul is very aware that every Christian lives his life in the sight of God. And he lived his life with this sense of awe.

The Apostle would have known the Psalm. The Psalm is saying the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. That fear has a sense of awe.

Living in the sight of God. And the Apostle Paul wants the believers in Philippi to recognize the seriousness of his exhortation.

[15 : 55] And he wants us to realize the seriousness of the exhortation. Psalm 139 is a psalm that reminds us that our God sees all and our God knows all.

That our God knows us intimately. He knows all that we think. The psalmist says, you perceive my thoughts afar off.

Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O Lord. Our God is an everywhere present God.

Where can I go from your spirit? As the psalmist. Where can I flee? From your presence. Work out your salvation.

Live to God's glory. Remembering that you do it in the sight of God. And the way that we behave is always in the sight of God.

[17 : 07] And the only way that you and I can live to the glory of God is by being holy, being sanctified, being set apart, being holy as our God is holy.

It's a big demand. That's how serious it is. It is to have, as the apostle Paul puts it in chapter 2 and verse 5, to have the mind, to have the attitude of the Lord Jesus Christ.

To walk before our God with humility. To walk before him and to recognize we walk before him. So when we get up tomorrow morning, we're living in the presence of God.

when we go to our places of work, it is in the sight of God. When we go on a holiday, we don't go without the Lord.

We live our lives and we seek to work out our salvation with fear and with trembling. The third exhortation, idea of this exhortation, is an exhortation that demanded commitment.

[18 : 37] It has here that we are to continue to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. He's talking about a process which takes a lifetime.

Now when we believed, when we trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ, at that moment, we were justified.

We were declared not guilty. The perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ was put to our account. So we are justified.

We're right in the sight of God. That's immediate. And that's true of every Christian. sanctification. But then sanctification is a process.

It's a lifetime commitment. We're not what we once were, but we're not what we should be. So work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

[19 : 47] We're coming up to the Olympic Games and no doubt we'll be watching the races and some of the things that will be going on there. We will see the sprint which will be over in less than ten seconds.

It's over, it's quick, and we would at times wish that life were like that, that it was a quick sprint and all the glory that goes with those hundred meters runners.

But no, the Christian life is not like that. It's a marathon. It's a slog. It's sometimes going through the pain barrier.

It's a commitment moment by moment. And notice how Paul acknowledges the commitment that was already in the Philippians.

He prays for them, chapter 1 and verse 4. And he prays for them with joy. Why? Because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

[20 : 58] In other words, there had been a degree of commitment. In chapter 4 and verses 14 to 16, again he's speaking about commitment.

Yet it was good for you, he says, to share in my troubles. moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving except for you only.

Yes, they were committed, they were laboring for the Lord. There was partnership in the gospel. You have always obeyed, he says, in the verses that we're looking at this morning.

Not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence. All right, continue then to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

Keep going, keep forward, don't stop living to the glory of God. There's always room for improvement. improvement. Remember that Paul is not sitting in an office.

[22 : 15] He's a prisoner. And he's asking the Christians in Philippi to be like him, to keep going on, even when the going is tough.

In verse 17 he speaks about being poured out like a drink offering. Later, he would write to Timothy and he would say as his execution approached, I have fought the good fight.

I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. I remember hearing of a man who was a very faithful evangelist and he'd heard the message that he had terminal cancer.

and people were saying to him, stop, take a rest now. He said, no, I'm coming to the finishing line.

I'm on the sprint now to get home. Continue on. Don't give up. Be like the apostle and be able to say as you approach God, and none of us know when that day will be when we stand in his presence.

[23 : 37] But may we all be able to say, I was committed right to the end. I fought the good fight. I finished the race. I have kept the faith.

I have been obedient even to death. So this exhortation of the apostle is to you as Christians. It's for you to be committed.

Live to the glory of God that you might be as you're reminded in chapter 1 and verse 10, pure and blameless until the day of Christ.

Fourthly, it's an exhortation that deals with real issues. Look at verse 14. Do everything without complaining or arguing so that you may become blameless and pure children of God.

Now this verse deals with the whole idea of being obedient. Not arguing or complaining about what God teaches you through his word.

[24 : 53] Yes, I know it says that, but, and we argue with God's word. Yes, I know it says that, but you don't know my circumstances, and we argue, or it's hard, Lord, because of the situation in which I find myself.

Do everything. Be obedient. That's what he's saying here. It's dealing with real issues, issues in your life, and in my life, and in the Philippians life.

It deals, if you like, with the nitty-gritty of life. Let's remember that the apostle is writing under the inspiration of the Spirit of God.

He's the apostle who's speaking with authority. And let's remember, he's not using words for the sake of using them.

He's not only calling for obedience, he's speaking to specific situations that applied to the church at Philippi. You see, there were people there in the church, and they were made up of different people.

[26 : 06] from different backgrounds. People from different cultures. People who were rich, or were born to a rich background.

Some who had a slave background. Different personalities. And they were all part of the church. Well, you do everything, no matter what your background is, that you may be pure and blameless children of God.

God. He speaks to a specific issue, because he is dealing with real issues. In chapter four and verse two, I plead with Euodia, and I plead with Syntyche, to agree with each other in the Lord.

One commentator says about their names, and he said that they should be altered slightly. They should be odious and soon touchy.

And I think there's a lot to be said for that. But at any rate, they were people who were complaining or arguing. They were causing problems in the church.

[27 : 19] Now, you two ladies, work out your salvation by agreeing with each other in the Lord. Stop arguing. Stop complaining. And there were others in the church, chapter four and verse six, who were anxious and worried about different things.

Do not be anxious, he says in chapter four and verse six, about anything. But in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God, and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Real issues in the church. Don't fret. Don't complain about your lot in life. Why?

Well, so that you might live to the glory of God, so that you might be, as he puts it here, become those kind of people that are blameless and pure, live as children of God.

Notice the force of Paul's words here. Live so that you're recognized by the family likeness.

[28 : 43] You have a heavenly father. You have been bought with the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit has witnessed with your spirit that you are sons of God, daughters of God.

Take on the family likeness. Are we Christ-like? Are we like our elder brother, the Lord Jesus Christ?

So the force of Paul's words are there for us all to see. Take on the family likeness by living sanctified lives. Live to the glory of God day by day, moment by moment.

Happy in doing the will of God from the heart. Constantly live to God's glory. When our children are young, at least some of them, we might say to them, would you make me a cup of tea?

And they say, oh, do I have to? Yes, you do have to, you know, make a cup of tea. But then the day came, and they said, would you like a cup of tea? They didn't have to be asked.

[30 : 09] I think the barbecue is going on later on today, so I hope somebody is listening. But, you know, the whole thing is doing all to the glory of God without grumbling or complaining.

We're before our heavenly Father, to do it gladly from our heart. Not because we must, but because we want to be pleasing to the Savior.

Fifthly, it was an exhortation that was delivered in a hostile world. Work out your salvation as Christians.

Be committed. Be committed. Deal with the practical things in your life that need to be dealt with. Work out your salvation even though you're living in a hostile world.

Look at the latter part of verse 15. Without fault, in a crooked and depraved generation. salvation. In a world, verse 17, where I am being poured out like a drink offering, work out your salvation in the Roman pagan world of the day.

[31 : 33] Work out your salvation in a world that is hostile to the message of the gospel. people. Work out your salvation where the world is under the dominion of Satan.

Work out your salvation where Christians are suffering martyrdom and imprisonment. That's where you're to work out your salvation. We're living in an increasingly hostile world.

We see that in laws that are passed. We see that in so many different ways. In the secular world in which we find ourselves.

Work out your salvation even though everybody is against you. Was it Athanasius, an early Christian who was told, the whole world is against you, Athanasius?

Well, he says, if the whole world is against Athanasius, then Athanasius, is against the whole world. To stand firm in a hostile world.

[32 : 48] Work out your salvation when people are disagreeing with you, when people are making their life difficult, when your bosses are making life difficult, when things are difficult in the home situation.

Work out your salvation there. And as you work out salvation there, you're to hold out the word of life. Verse 16.

In the hostile world of their day, they were to make the Lord Jesus Christ known. They were to make known that which was of first importance, that Christ died according to the scriptures, that he was buried, and that he rose again according to the scriptures.

Live your life, not only in what you don't do, but what you do do. Let people know that your parable, that you're seeking to live before men, let them know the meaning of it.

Why I am living like this is because I belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. I'm living this way because of what Jesus Christ did for me upon the cross of Calvary.

[34 : 01] I'm living this life because he rose again that I might be justified. I'm living my life to the glory of God in a hostile world.

And in this hostile world, I shine as stars in the heavens. I'm a luminary in a dark world.

In Daniel chapter 12 and verse 3, we have these words, those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens and those who lead many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.

Oh, that that would be our testimony in the world in which we live in Carragiline, an exhortation that was delivered in a hostile world.

The last point, it's an exhortation that can be worked out. I don't know if you felt like me as when I was preparing this message.

[35 : 21] How can I do it? I might as well give up now. it's impossible to live like that. I might as well give up. I'll never make it.

And I would agree with you if it wasn't for verse 13. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

God in his grace in his mercy in his love has revealed his son to you.

He's put his Holy Spirit into your life through the miracle of the new birth. Your very body as a Christian has become the temple of God's Holy Spirit.

We are indwelt by the Spirit of the living God. And because of this power that is at work within us we are enabled to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

[36 : 40] There's an old hymn that says this every virtue we possess and every conquest won and every thought of holiness is our his alone.

He has worked therefore the virtues that I have in this evil world is because of him and every victory I'm able to accomplish is because of his work in me and every thought that I have the desire after him is because he is at work with me in me.

I can continue to work out my salvation because he is at work and he will bring that work to completion. I can live to the glory of God.

I can be committed to him who loved me. I can deal with the real issues that are bothering me in my life. They can be dealt with.

I can live in a hostile world to the glory of God. I can do it because of his work in me.

[37 : 56] It wouldn't be possible would it apart from that work in me. So are we going to live for the glory of God?

Will we be a rejoicing church because I believe that's how the apostle Paul brings his section to an end. He says even if I am 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.

The apostle as he sees the Philippians living to the glory of God working out their salvation he rejoices he hasn't run in vain the Lord has blessed his ministry and he sees the church growing and becoming stronger and living to the glory of God God and he rejoices and the church rejoices there's nothing sad about living to the glory of God may the Lord enable us over the days that follow and the years however many they may be if life be short or if life be long may I be glad to glorify my God let's pray together father we do thank you that you've given us your word and we thank you father that by your enabling we are enabled to live our lives to the glory of your name help us for the rest of this day and for all the days that are given to us that lie ahead whether they be long or whether they be short may we lift your glory by the power of your spirit in

Jesus name Amen