

# Philippians 2:12-30

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] it's really good to see everybody this morning i'll turn on my microphone that might be even better today we are continuing with our study through the book of philippians and i'm very excited about these scriptures i get to preach today they're some of my favorites it's a very interesting topic i think and i'm really glad to be back in this pulpit now i don't know if you keep camped of these things you probably don't you never know who's going to preach when you come here we do that intentionally we don't want you to develop favorite preachers and only show up when they'll be here you know so anyway i was looking back i didn't preach all summer i last preached june the fourth and then my father's declining health it just seemed like i constantly had to be running to virginia to take care of him and then he actually the last time i was supposed to preach he actually passed away that weekend so anyway he's in glory and he's glad that uh his son gets to preach like he used to so uh this would delight him it delights me that uh we have survived a difficult time in our family history uh not in his passing but in his long lingering before he passed that was the difficult time but god was with us and brought us through it so we're continuing as i said here with philippians and you can see that uh the beginning the very first verse says this book is from paul and timothy and then the book goes on to talk about how he's writing from prison and we've already studied much of that so here's just a picture of paul the old guy handcuffed to the wall chained to the wall uh probably was actually chained to a guard and timothy was a younger guy so this is some uh artist or actor's conception of what that might have looked like now we're going to read together today's passage which is philippians 2 12 through 30 and so many verses i decided not to put it on the screen but i'm going to ask my lovely wife who just had her 50th high school reunion last week uh becky if you'll come up here and read that scripture for us um i we're going to read it from the uh new living translation just because i think it's an easier translation to understand when you simply hear the reading okay philippians 2 12 through 30 dear friends you always followed my instructions when i was with you and now that i'm away it is even more important work hard to show the results of your salvation obeying god with deep reverence and fever for god is working in you giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him do everything without complaining and arguing so that no one can criticize you live clean innocent lives as children of god shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked crooked and perverse people hold firmly to the word of life then on the day of christ's return then on the day of christ's return i will be proud that i did not run the race in vain and that my work was not useless but i will rejoice even if i lose my life pouring it out like a liquid offering to god just like your faithful service is an offering to god and i want all of you to share that joy yes you should rejoice and i will share your joy if the lord jesus is willing i hope to send timothy to you soon for a visit then he can cheer me up by telling me how you are getting along i have no one else like timothy who genuinely cares about our

welfare all the others care only for themselves and not for what matters to jesus christ but you know how timothy has proved himself like a son with his father he has served with me in preaching the good news i hope to send him to you just as soon as i find out what is going to happen to me here and i have confidence from the lord that i myself will come to see you soon meanwhile i thought i should send epaphroditus back to you he is a true brother co-worker and fellow soldier and he was your messenger to help me in my need i am sending him because he has been longing to see you and he was very distressed that you heard he was ill and he certainly was sick in fact he almost died but god had mercy on him and also on me so that i would not have one sorrow after another so i am all the more anxious to send him back to you for i know you will be glad to see him and then i will not be so worried about you welcome him in the lord's love and with great joy and give him the honor that people like him deserve for he risked his life for the work of christ and he was at the point of death while doing for me what you couldn't do thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you 50 years plus wow where would i have been if the lord hadn't brought her into my life thank you darling well let's go to the lord in prayer father we've heard your word read and we've sung our praises we've already lifted prayers we lift another one help us now to receive the word of god into our hearts help your word to change our lives in jesus name we pray amen so next slide today in the passage that becky just read i think you saw three separate things in there you saw first of all paul urging us to live the christian life and then you see him talking about timothy is the guy he really trusts and he's going to try to send timothy soon to visit with him and then last of all he says this friend of mine epaphroditus who came from philippi he's your church member he came up here to help me i'm sending him back to you right away now because we we talked this morning in sunday school uh steve tybersky and our elementary age children that jesus once preached for three days and so if i had three days i would cover all three points but i'm not going to be able to let jesus feed you for because you go hungry after three days i don't think i'm gonna be able to do that we don't have enough peppermint candies in the back so instead i'm going to focus on the first thing paul urging us to live the christian life now last sunday you got to hear a great hymn like like a song in the scripture about the glory of jesus christ and so today's scripture kind of flows right from that let's back up and just read three verses of that the next slide would show that for us it is philippians 2 9 through 11 and there it is therefore god exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that's above every name that at the name of jesus every knee should bow in heaven on earth under the earth and every tongue

acknowledge that jesus christ is lord to the glory of god the father somebody say hallelujah say it like you mean it that's a little better all right now why am i saying this because that is the high point that verse right there is the high point of this whole book of philippians and it's one of the mountain peaks in the whole new testament and you ought to get happy every time you think about there's coming a day when every tongue every person who's ever lived those who are on the earth under the earth wherever they are they will confess that jesus christ is lord they might be atheists today they may have lived horrible lives but there's coming a day when they see christ return that they will say oh my goodness jesus really is the lord praise god you get to say it ahead of time praise the lord so now today's verse begins with let's have the next slide please begins with the word therefore it's the very next verse after the one we just read so paul is saying because jesus is so incredible because his name is greater than any name ever because he truly is the lord of all things therefore here's what you should be doing and he begins to talk about taking action as a christian paul begins to talk about you know just to say you're a christian just to occasionally go to church what is that worth he's really urging us to live the christian life you know sometimes we'll hear somebody say we've all said we'll say guess what john doe became a christian yesterday and we're really happy about it and he probably did but it's also true that that same john doe needs to also become a christian today and tomorrow and every day for the rest of his life because becoming a christian is not just a once and done thing it's not just that when you were seven years old one time you prayed a prayer i believe in jesus and then we dunked you under some water and now you don't see christ again for the rest of your life that is not becoming a christian the bible makes it clear that a christian is a person who says i will follow jesus christ i will spend the rest of my life trying to follow christ according to this bible and i commit my life to that that's what it is to be a christian it begins with that prayer and on that day when you pray that first sinner's prayer yes you get saved yes you get forgiven but only because you have made a commitment to turn from the way you used to live and walk with jesus for the rest of your life and if you haven't done that well we'll have more to say about that it's interesting in this scripture that um yeah let's look at the next slide here's the rest of that scripture so let's just read the whole scripture therefore my beloved paul loved the philippians as you always obeyed the lord even now not only in my presence but more while i'm absence continue work out your own salvation with fear and trembling for it is god who works in you both to will and to do his good pleasure so we're seeing two important concepts here this is where we're going to spend almost all the rest of the sermon work out your salvation matt you think i got work to do in

this no the bible says you've got some work to do in this but it's god who's working to help you want to do his will well which way is it who does the work in your salvation is it you or is it god the answer is yes it's a teamwork thing now the next slide this sometimes has caused debates in the church this could be called the conflict between determinism or free will free will says i am the captain of my own ship i am the captain of my life i make all of my decisions i determine my future determinism says no somebody like god or your environment or your background or other people or these things they are really directing you you're not making free choices you've never made a free choice and so we begin to see that tension here in this scripture here's another way we often talk about it in church the next slide please is we often wonder is there predestination or is there free will in other words we ask ourselves everything i do in life since god knows everything and since he's sovereign and can do everything do i really have any free will or did god decide that i would be in this church this morning at 1107 sitting right here listening to some guy rambling on or did i decide that was it my free will to be here or was this all predetermined now the churches through history have loved to argue this point and it has split denominations there are some denominations that are very heavily into everything is predestined and predetermined and they have scriptures to back it up the baptists tend to lean more toward oh no you have free will and you must choose and you must decide and god is calling you but i like what it says down in the corner of this slide let's try to unlock two eternal truths so did god simply predestine you for salvation or did you choose to believe yes yes did you seek to know christ or did he come seeking for you yes these two things are interconnected let's look at the next slide and we go back and look at that scripture god has put these right here together in the same letter paul's writing he's saying listen you got to work out your own salvation but it's god who's working in you to will and to do his good pleasure now listen if god has put these things together why should man tear them apart why do theologians like to tear this apart and say oh no it has to be one or the other you can argue both points quite well from scripture this sermon bugs you if you're the kind of person and i'm kind of that person by the way i like for my theology to be in a nice neat little box where i have it all explained real nicely and i've got it all tied up in a ribbon and i can answer every question but god is a mysterious god and his ways are higher than our ways and the scripture says his

thoughts are much higher than our thoughts and we can't always understand about everything about him and there are paradoxes in god that we will never understand until we are in his presence in heaven and then it may take all of eternity that we will continue to understand and learn more of god he's that vast he fills all of the universe what an incredible god and so if god has put these two truths together that you have work to do and that he has his part to do why should we tear them apart now everything you don't want to miss this part because i'm going to get your little brother to do something elias come here and help me out with something that bathroom call will wait just a minute i know it will elias you probably haven't even this is my grandson for anybody visiting him you're not a fine young man right there tell you what didn't have a cool hair you're doing all right give me five are you willing to help me out with something up here did you ever see there's a balloon hanging up there how about that where did that kid come from you've seen it before in your house where why was it at my house because it was family's birthday birthday oh it was family's birthday party yesterday okay so there's a leftover balloon you know what's what's the most fun thing to do with a balloon play with it until it does what pop it's kind of fun when it pops right hey i'll tell you what i have pills hey take this in your hand aren't you right-handed there you go go over there jump up there and pop that balloon jump a higher jump a little did you drop your through it you threw it you know in all my planning i hadn't foreseen i hadn't foreseen that okay i'll tell you what without throwing it just jump a little bit try to jump up here and pop it you can't possibly do it i got an idea what if i pick you up up here don't stick me with that pen let's see reach it out hang on everybody here it goes wow good job good job now Elias there's something i want you to remember from that as you grow up through life you're going to have some challenges some things you want to do and it's going to seem too hard to do it just like it was too hard to pop that balloon you couldn't do it with your own strength you couldn't jump out enough but you wanted to and if you will follow jesus when you reach those moments and you want to do something you can't quite do it you might not see him but god is going to be holding you up and he's going to be helping you to do whatever it is it needs to be done so always keep that faith and trust god to help you when something needs to be done okay all right take that to back with you now you can go to the restaurant okay so i'm gonna put this hat pin away before it ends up somebody sitting on it or something there we go okay now what was the real point in that well you got a little lesson again of it but also who really popped that balloon well i'll ask you but he couldn't have done it without my help in a sense i popped that balloon

[ 20:17 ] i'm the one that hung it up there i'm the one that brought the hat pin i could take some credit for this too god and you work together in your salvation you don't work separately it's not all this or all that i've got another example i was really blessed the lord has blessed me too many times i mean i'm just really i won't get into all that but god has really blessed me if i talk about it too much i'll start crying and i can't preach so one of the ways he blessed me all three of my children got really good scholarships to go to college all three of them and they all went to universities and it was expensive um i ended up paying very little and that was good because when they were going to college we had just raised three children with one teacher's income and we didn't have two nickels we could rub it yet and they would have ended with a lot of debt but they ended school with no debt at all now when steve was being told about his scholarships from campbell university it was a lot of money they were giving him pretty exciting wasn't it i was really happy every time that one of my three children said to me dad this what i got this scholarship and i was like whoa that was good too well who won the scholarship who didn't work they did they're the ones who took the test and studied and brenda keller tried to fail two of them but they got she was teaching math and english to ryan and emily but they survived her anyway thank you brenda you were part of why they got their scholarships i think they did better because they got full rods and i didn't well the army helped you there you go so brenda if i had only brought my wallet i'd give you a hundred dollars right now to thank you a lame check well they did the work but guess what i had something to do with it and so did becky before they started school we were reading to them so that they would learn to love books and words and then when they got in school we made sure they got so tired of it it's bedtime i don't want to go to bed yet it's bedtime we made sure that they were in bed at a reasonable time we made them eat a reasonable diet instead of just ice cream and cookies and cake we made them eat vegetables we and then we made them do their homework steve did you and i ever sit at the kitchen table doing homework together we fought we made them it would be like no you're not going to go play with your neighbors or whatever until you show your finished homework and then it was okay you've got to apply for this college and that college i'll do it tomorrow now you're going to fill out the application today now you've got to apply for scholarships really it's look they asked 15 questions answer the questions you can't leave the house till you finish filling out the scholarship at the end of the day there was a partnership at work they didn't work we didn't push the shove the they didn't feel like it was a healthy hand but it was now here's another interesting thought on this to me

if i had been filthy rich like some people and this happens by the way you don't hear every now and here's somebody going to court with some movie star but i could have called the president of campbell university and said was dr wiggins still there yeah dr wiggins i'd like to donate one million dollars to campbell university and he would have said oh yeah come on down here let's talk and i can say i've only got one request would you give my son the xyz scholarship i don't know dr wiggins would have said but there's a lot of people they get good scholarships get admitted to college etc because mom and daddy got a lot of money happens at harvard all the time and stuff i could get better half you said well if he had all that money why do you care if he gets a scholarship you're buying prestige you're not worrying about paying for the situation you want to be able to say my son is at harvard on the kennedy scholarship whatever so i can do that now if i had paid for my children's scholarships and then they called me and said dad guess what we got a scholarship i would have thought so what it wouldn't have been any joy for me in that if he had known that i had bought his scholarship from dr wiggins and then they announced you received a 40 000 scholarship he would have been like my dad bothered me what's the point god could snap his finger right now and make every one of you just like jesus at the end of your life he's going to do that by the way at the end of your life the work he has not yet finished in you and that you have not yet worked out in your salvation he's going to make you like jesus because it says when he appears we will be like him for those who have accepted for those who have followed christ yes thank you if that's not clear um always for those who have received christ and are walking with him so god could do that why doesn't he i think he enjoys and gets pleasure from watching us grow in our faith from watching us accept certain challenges and grow and overcome them and then he wants us to have the benefit that all through life we are growing more like jesus so that all of us who have walked into faith for a while we can look back and we can say you know i'm still really making and messing up a lot i'm still i'm gee i just sinned yesterday this morning i had a terrible thought about something but as i look back i'm not the sinner i used to be i am no longer sitting in this way or that way that i used to the lord has helped me and he gives you a sense of joy in your success as an overcomer and you begin to realize in christ i can do all things greater is he that's in me than he that's in the world you begin to realize and understand these things god doesn't want to rob you of that he could have given the nation of israel when they came out of egypt the whole country boom it's yours but he said no you're gonna have to fight for every inch of it that is god's plan and he wants you to partner with him and do your part

well we could go on with other examples of working together with christ to be transformed into his image god has promised he's going to do his part now i want to warn you don't stop doing your part and then this goes into another issue let's see the next slide this brings up an issue that we often debate in churches called do we have eternal security or can we lose our salvation churches have debated over that and it has also started new denominations there have been church splits eternal security means if you're saved are you always saved we are often for short we call it once saved always saved and you say matt do you believe that that's what most baptists believe here's what i believe if you were ever really and truly saved if you ever really and truly said lord forgive my sins i'm making a commitment today i'm going to follow you the rest of my life then yes god's going to do his part and you will persevere to the end he will carry you all the way through and the scripture says no one can snatch you out of my hand neither height nor depth things present nor things to come and so forth and so forth in that scripture can ever separate you from the love of god you are eternally secure but first be sure that you've really made that decision to follow jesus christ and i have to wonder this you know the bible says examine yourself examine yourself on this one if you don't have any interest in praying if you don't have any interest in reading the bible if you don't have any interest in ever getting together with other worshipers if you don't have any interest in trying to help another person that needs a helping hand and you're doing it for the love of christ if you don't have any interest in serving in the church in any capacity you don't want to you don't care about it if you don't want to ever help with any sort of mission outreach or mission project or help fix somebody's house or help cook a hot dog when we have a cookout if you don't have any interest at all in anything that has to do with god and his church well what makes you think you ever really got saved in the first place that's a hard word but i think it needs to be said salvation was not that you one time asked the lord to forgive you salvation is that daily you turn from sin and follow the lord and continue to say lord forgive me when i've sinned help me to stay on the path i will follow you and yes you'll mess up and then you'll say lord i need to do over he'll give you a lot of do-overs help me to get back on the path lord and follow you well almost through there's just one more verse here i want to look at because it's the verse right after these next slide please the very next thing paul said was i wish he'd left it out paul did you have to write that do all things without grumbling or disputing and he kind of adds this idea of uh dividing the church with rumors and gossip and disagreements and fussing you know now if you and i were going to say what does the church really need to avoid what would be the worst things we're probably going to say uh any kind of lying and cheating and drug addictions and and sexual sins and avoid those paul starts off with watch your mouth



quit complaining quit arguing quit telling rumors and starting trouble in the church he knows that's what ruins a church okay i gotta tell you another story and then i'm gonna quit i think i'm gonna quit okay the story goes that there was a man who didn't like his preacher the man at one time had controlled the church a lot new preacher came along and had different ideas and there was a lot of conflict between them and the man thought i just gonna get rid of this preacher and so he kind of noticed things he did and he figured out a little lie that he could tell that would give a bad reputation so he told this lie to just two or three people in the church boy that lie took off and started growing in power started getting more stuff added to it and it wasn't long before the church was meeting and talking about how terrible the pastor was and thinking about removing him and this guy who started it really felt guilty he realized what have i done this man oh my man i never knew the story would get this terrible he had done nearly those things they're talking about and he felt so bad about it that he didn't right thing he went to the pastor in person and he said preacher i need to ask you to forgive me i'm the one who started these stories about you and i never knew we get so out of hand and i'm so sorry would you forgive me and the pastor said i will forgive you would you do one thing for me and guess guess what he said go home and take a feather pillow tear it open out in the field by your house and shake all the feathers out and then come back and tell me what he said i'm just asking it's a simple thing are you willing to do it he said i'll do it he went home got a feather pillow ripped it open went out into the yard there a field by his house shook that pillow feathers just went building the wind picked them up someone in the tree some fell in the creek some of them blew here and there the wind was blowing they took off then he went back to the pastor with his his empty pillow case and the covering and he said well pastor i knew what you asked me i i scattered all the feathers that were in this villa and the pastor said okay now i'm just going to ask you one more favor go back and collect all those feathers and put them back in the pillow oh and the man said i'm sorry that would be totally impossible and the pastor said that's what's happening with the stories you've told about me you've come to me for forgiveness and i'm going to forgive you but it's impossible for you to ever go and recollect and gather all the trouble you've caused and bring it back down where it began so paul says part of how you work out your salvation do it without grumbling and without complaining and without spreading gossip and rumors and causing strife and divisions work out your salvation god's going to do his part but to help each other in the process one more slide i want to put up there a long list of one another is in the bible and it never says stab one another in the back

it says things like serve one another accept one another forgive one another love one another bear one another's burdens pray for one another it goes on and on and on this is just a partial list there's about 60 or i don't know how many of those there are work out your salvation strive to do these things strive let it be your conscious desire this week this day go home and say i am really going to work on my salvation because lord i know you're doing your part i know you're not going to let me down i'm going to do my part every day god every day i'm going to study the scripture i'm going to pray i'm going to be with other christians i'm going to encourage people i'm going to help somebody when they need a helping hand lord i'm going to give myself a hundred percent to the christian life god help me with this and god said i'll help you i've got you back when you can't pop the balloon i'm gonna lift you up you can count on me let's pray lord thank you so much for your word and the encouraging that comes from your word lord help us to work out our salvation without complaining without strife without divisions without disputes and thank you lord that you promised that you will work in us so that we will do your will thank you lord bless your church we pray in the name of jesus we're going to sing a closing hymn i'll be glad to pray with you about anything in your life and let's walk with the lord lord