

Working out your own Salvation

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[0 : 00] Welcome to our services today, and we would seek that it would please the Lord to bless his word to us as we read his word and as we come to meditate upon a portion of his word.

Let us join together in prayer and seek the Lord's blessing upon our worship today. O Lord our God, we give thee thanks that thou hast in thy mercy and in thy grace, and in thy love has enabled us to come together today around thine own word.

We give thee thanks, O Lord, for the technology that enables us to come together today in this act of worship, and to give thanks and praise unto thy name for all the tokens of thy goodness and kindness to us, in things that are temporal as well as in things that are spiritual.

We give thee thanks for thy word, and we pray that through thy spirit that thy word would find lodgment in our hearts and would bring forth evidence in our lives to the glory of thine own name.

For that is our desire as we come together in this act of worship, to glorify thee, that thy name may be uplifted and magnified by us, not only by our words, but in our lives, in our conduct from day to day, that we would indeed walk worthy of the gospel.

[2 : 08] We pray, O Lord, that thou would bless our gospel. We pray, O Lord, that thou would bless our homes and our families and our communities. O Lord, that it would please thee to come on a day of thine own power, and through thy spirit that thou would work that work among our people, that would bring them to a realization of their need, and of the sufficiency of the provision which thou hast made for sinners, through thy Son to meet with that need.

And to that end we pray, O Lord, that as thy gospel has been proclaimed throughout our land, even into the ends of the earth, that thou would accompany it in the power and demonstration of thy spirit.

For we acknowledge, O Lord, that without thee we can do nothing. We acknowledge our dependency upon thee, and we acknowledge, O Lord, that only the spirit can give life.

And we pray, O Lord, that today, as the gospel has been proclaimed, that there would be many who would experience that life, who would experience thine own salvation, and the joy of thy salvation.

We give thee thanks, O Lord, for the great message of the gospel, that that communion and fellowship that was broken by sin can be restored again to us through thy Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[3 : 47] We give thee thanks, O Lord, for the efficacy of his finished work, that is able to reconcile us to our God, that is able to grant to us the forgiveness of our sins.

We give thee thanks, O Lord, for the sending of thy Son into this world, and that he took what our sins deserved upon his own body on the cross, that he died and was buried, and that he rose again and ascended to thy right hand, where he ministers on behalf of his people, in the intercession that he makes for them.

Oh, we give thanks unto thee, O Lord, for the great promise that thou hast given to us, that he shall return, not to offer himself again as a sacrifice for sin, but to ungather his people, and to bring them into the inheritance that he has prepared for them, so that they shall be forever with the Lord.

We pray, O Lord, that thou would bless our homes and our families and our communities, that thou would bless thy gospel as it has been proclaimed today, and thy servants whom thou hast called and equipped to go forth with the gospel.

We pray, O Lord, that thy word would not return unto the empty, but that it would accomplish that for which thou hast sent it forth. We give thanks, O Lord, for the power that there is in thy word, through the operation of thy Holy Spirit.

[5 : 28] And we pray today that it may indeed be lodged into our heart and bring forth evidence in our lives. Remember those who are ill, those who are in hospital or at home.

O Lord, those who are on the bed of affliction, that thy healing hand would be upon them, if it be so in accordance with thine own sovereign will.

And if it be otherwise, we pray, O Lord, that thou would prepare them in their soul. O Lord, we remember our young people and our children.

And we pray, O Lord, that thine own fear would be instilled into their hearts through thy Spirit, that they would grow up fearing the Lord and showing reverence to the Lord.

We pray, O Lord, that among them thou would call a people who would be thine own witnesses in this world. We remember, O Lord, the preaching of the gospel through all nations of the earth.

[6 : 33] And pray that it would be accompanied by thy Spirit, or to bring reformation and transformation into the lives of sinners, such as we are.

We ask, O Lord, that thou would remember those who may be feeling lonely today. And pray that thou wouldst draw near to them, especially those of their number who are of the household of faith.

We pray, O Lord, that the enemy of the soul would not be allowed to pray upon them, doubting thine own word and feeling that they have been forsaken.

O Lord, we pray that they would be mindful of thine own promise, which has been sealed for them through the blood of the everlasting covenant, that thou wouldst never leave them nor forsake them.

We pray, O Lord, that thou would continue with us now as we come to wait upon thee, that thou would bless thy word to us, and that thou would bless our meditation upon it.

[7 : 42] And all that we ask with the forgiveness of our many sins, is in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. We shall now read the word of God as we find it in the New Testament, in the epistle of Paul to the Romans, and chapter 6.

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?

Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism unto death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him.

[9 : 17] For in that he died, he died into sin once, but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lust thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace?

God forbid. Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, whose servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness.

But God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

[10 : 42] I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh. For as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity and to iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness and to holiness.

For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.

But now be made free from sin, and become servants to God. Ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

For the wages of sin is death. But the gift of God is eternal life. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. May the Lord bless unto us the reading of that portion of his word.

Let us now turn to the letter of Paul to the Philippians and chapter 2. As we continue our study in this letter, we will see that the Lord would add his blessing to it.

[12 : 02] Philippians chapter 2 and at verse 12. As we have noted, on numerous occasions since we began our study on this letter, Paul's primary concern and appeal has been to harmony, to a oneness, a togetherness among the church members at Philippi.

Since he expressed that to them in the first chapter and verse 27. Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ.

That whether I come and see you or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel.

He urges upon them that their conduct, their lives would be lives that would be worthy of the gospel. He is concerned that there would be no conflicts or sinful behaviour among them that would cause divisions.

As we noted last week, Paul is not urging them so much to be of one mind concerning the truth and what they believe, although that is important, but to be of one mind and one spirit in their relationships with each other.

[13 : 59] He is seeking that they develop, promote and encourage a spirit of oneness and togetherness, thereby avoiding conflicts and divisions.

He is urging them not to be like those who focus just upon their own interests, but he is urging them to focus upon the interests of others, even to put the interests of others before their own.

For he says, let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

And the great example he takes of a person doing that is the Lord Jesus Christ himself. And so he says, let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

For the sake of others, not for his own sake, Jesus Christ condescended to come down to earth. And as we studied in verses 6 to 8, what that meant for him.

[15 : 18] Who had been in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and been found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

And as a result of his obedience to the will of the Father, we saw that God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.

Notice that here we have said for us, that which is always the patron, whosoever humbles himself, shall be exalted.

Humble yourself, look after the interests of others, cultivate a spirit of oneness and togetherness, and God will look after your exaltation.

Then he says, wherefore, which connects, that which he is about to say, with all that he has said before, wherefore my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation, with fear and trembling.

[16 : 52] Paul reminds them of his affection for them. Wherefore, my beloved. Paul has a very personal and warm affection for the members of the church at Philippi.

He has already expressed this, as we saw in chapter 1, verse 8. For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

He loves these people, and they love him. And he knows that they feel discouraged by the fact that he is now a prisoner in Rome.

Paul had established the church here at Philippi, but he had to leave them, and now he is chained as a prisoner in Rome. And he has already proved to them that instead of this being a hindrance to the gospel, that actually it has been to the advancement of the gospel.

One of the emphasis that Paul is impressing upon the Philippians is that his presence or his freedom from Rome is not essential for them to continue to live the Christian life.

[18 : 09] In other words, their Christian life is not dependent on whether Paul is present or absent. He is going to bring two things before them that is essential for their new life.

That they have been given the gift of salvation by faith, just like every other Christian, just like Paul himself. Now he says, I want you to work out that salvation.

I want you to work out that new life that you have received. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

And the second thing, which is essential to them, is this, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

He is reminding them that it is not Paul that is absolutely necessary, but God. And he is reminding them that God is there, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

[19 : 24] And this special long-term relationship between himself and the church at Philippi is evidenced, says Paul, as he have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence.

Paul is reminding them of the way in which they had initially responded to the commands as contained in the gospel that he had preached to them.

You have always obeyed. And they had continued in obedience in his absence. So Paul is saying to them, just as you have always obeyed, continue to obey.

Now, the question can arise, to whom has such obedience been given? Well, in the light of our context, that is of Christ's obedience that led him to the cross and his present status as Lord of all, it is extremely difficult for us to think of the emphasis on obedience here in any other way but obedience to Christ and the gospel.

And obedience to Christ means not simply following the rules but coming totally under his lordship. It means being completely devoted to him.

[21 : 02] So Paul is saying that they have always given evidence of their faith by being obedient to Christ and the gospel, not only in his presence while he was with them but also when he is absent.

So he now commands them, work out your salvation with fear and trembling. Maybe before we go any further that we have to define what we mean by salvation or what does Paul mean by salvation here in our passage.

Salvation is deliverance from danger or suffering. In biblical terms, the word salvation concerns an eternal spiritual deliverance.

When Paul told the Philippian jailer what he must do to be saved, he was referring to the jailer's eternal destiny. So we can ask, well, what are we saved from?

Our sin has separated us from God and the consequences of sin is death. So that biblical salvation refers to our deliverance from sin and the consequences of sin.

[22 : 26] Paul, writing to the Romans, says, For as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

In Psalm 51, David says, Behold, I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me. Reminding us that we are all born into this world with a problem of sin.

There is no one of us born into this world without the problem of sin. We are all sinners. And as sinners, we are under the wrath and condemnation of God.

And so salvation is the deliverance from the wrath and condemnation of God. To be delivered from sin and all the consequences of sin.

That is what salvation means. Now, who does the saving? Well, only God can remove sin and deliver us from the penalty that is true to our sin.

[23 : 38] And how does God save? Well, God has delivered us through Christ. Specifically, it was Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection that achieved our salvation.

salvation. In Romans chapter 5, verse 10, we read, For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Or perhaps a better translation would be, we shall be saved in his life. Scripture is always clear that salvation is the gracious, undeserved gift of God.

Paul, writing to the Ephesians, says, For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.

So that a definition of the doctrine of salvation could be something like this, the deliverance by the grace of God from sin and the consequences of sin which is granted to those who repent and exercise faith in Jesus Christ.

[24 : 55] Now, in our passage today, Paul is not commanding the church at Philippi to produce their own salvation, but rather he is commanding them to work out the salvation of which they are already in possession.

It might be good that we remind ourselves that the term salvation or saved is used in the Bible in three different tenses or in three different senses.

If we are Christians, there is first of all the fact that we have been saved, so that I can say I am saved. In what sense have we been saved?

We have already been saved from the guilt of sin. That is something that has already happened. Been justified by faith, we have peace with God.

That is in the past. We have been saved in that sense, in our justification. salvation. But there is another sense in which we can think of salvation that is totally in the future, because there is a day coming when we shall be finally and completely saved.

[26 : 13] And this is what we call our glorification. That is the final aspect of salvation. And in that aspect, we shall be completely delivered from sin in every respect.

There is that day when we shall stand in body and soul before Jesus Christ, faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

Later on in this letter, Paul writes for our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like into his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

That was the goal of Christ dying on the cross. That is the goal of God's redemptive plan, to bring sinners to be faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

But what about the present? What about the period between justification and glorification? In this period we can say that we are still being saved.

[27 : 43] We are being saved from the power and pollution of sin. Our relationship to sin is not just one of guilt. It is not just that we commit certain sins and therefore that we are guilty before God.

Some people think that this is their whole relationship to sin, but that is only one aspect of sin. It is that aspect of sin that manifests itself.

But what is the fountain from which these acts of sin that we commit come from? we are to understand that sin has affected our very nature.

The sin of Adam affected the very nature of man as we have already noted. Our nature became polluted and man fell under the power and dominion of sin.

And we need to be saved in this respect also. It is not merely from the guilt of sin that we need to be saved, but we need also to be saved from the power that has dominion over us and from the pollution of sin that mars and makes us to be unclean.

[29 : 01] So the Christian is being saved from that. And that is what we call our sanctification. It is a process that is going on within us in the present.

In the past we have been saved from the guilt of sin. That is our justification. But in the present we are being saved from the pollution and the dominion of sin and the power of sin.

And that is our sanctification. And in the future we will be saved from every aspect of sin. And that is our glorification.

So the Christian can say I am saved in the past in my justification. I will be saved in the future in my glorification. But I am being saved in the present from the power and pollution of sin in the work of sanctification.

salvation. And it is this process of sanctification that Paul speaks of when he commands us to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

[30 : 26] Salvation is not simply something that we receive, although that is true, but it is also something that we do. We have mentioned and quoted a few times in our study the Westminster Shorter Catechism.

It is interesting when he speaks of justification, it reminds us that it is an act. But when he speaks of sanctification, it says it is a work.

Sanification is a process that begins at the very beginning of our spiritual life and will only be completed and perfected in our glorification.

Paul has already hinted on this in chapter 1 when he says, been confident of this very thing, that he which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

Been confident of this very thing, that he which has begun a good work in you will perform it and he's performing it through the work of sanctification and he'll continue to do that until the day of Jesus Christ, until the day of our glorification.

[31 : 50] God never begins a work and gives it up away. He will complete what he has begun. when God through the Holy Spirit begins this work in us, he calls us to live a certain kind of life.

He calls us to change our behaviour, for we are to live as it becometh the gospel of Christ. And this is a great test about Christian faith.

we may be quite glad to hear the gospel and all that it has to offer. But when it calls us to change and live in a particular way, to change and to restructure our behaviour, then very often the reaction and attitude towards the gospel changes.

It is not heard so gladly and often becomes labelled as narrowness. But our attitude to what the gospel demands of denying self and taking up the cross and following Christ, and that is a great test of our Christian faith.

This is the point at which we are tested whether we have the true work of grace in our lives or not. So Paul commands, Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

[33 : 32] The Philippians have believed and trusted in Jesus Christ. They have received salvation and now Paul commands them that they are to work it out.

When a person is converted, the Holy Spirit comes to indwell in that person so that the seed of holiness is implanted, as it were, in the soul and that person immediately desires holiness.

Sin is an affront to that person. Now, this causes sometimes at the beginning of our Christian life some legalism to creep in until the Holy Spirit enlightens us more and more in showing us ourselves.

And then like Paul we cry out, O wretched man that I am. What are we to do? Paul commands to work out our salvation.

And the working out of our salvation in this sense has to do with obedience. As we have already noted, Paul commends them for their obedience and here Paul is saying to them, as they have obeyed Christ, to continue in their obedience to Christ.

[34 : 55] of course as Paul has emphasised they have Christ as the great example who was obedient who submitted himself totally to the will of God.

And this word obey is a remarkably interesting word for it contains within it the two ideas of hearing and hearing especially the divine word as proclaimed or revealed and submitting oneself to that word.

This does not implore upon us the this does I should rather say this does implore upon us the importance of being under the hearing of the word of God.

What Paul says in Romans 10 faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. As we have already noted this working out of our salvation has to do with obedience.

In other words it has to do with hearing the divine word as proclaimed or revealed to us and working that out in our life. We are servants and the servants always give the hearing ear to the will of his master just as Christ as a servant gave the hearing ear to the will of the father and just as Jesus Christ obeyed we are to obey.

- [36 : 32] The true evidence that we can have that we are truly hearing the word of God is by obeying it. That is the mark, the token, the evidence that we are truly hearing the word of God.

It is evidenced by our obedience to the word of God. You know there are many who listen to the word but actually they do not hear the word.

For when you actually hear the word it affects you. It changes you. You become obedient to the word. Obedience is a real test.

Paul in writing to the Thessalonians speaks of those that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. They may have listened to the word but they never really heard it and so continued in their disobedience despite having listened to the word.

So I can listen to the word and not actually hear the word because when we hear the word, when we truly hear the word it will be evidenced in us being obedient to the word.

- [37 : 57] Working out our salvation has to do with hearing and obeying the word of God. In his prayer as recorded for us in John 17 Jesus petitions the father sanctify them through thy truth thy word is truth.

Before this Jesus had said I have given them thy word. The disciples received the word personally from Jesus. We receive it through the witness of Christ's servants and we have it all brought together in the scriptures which is the only rule of faith and the only rule of obedience.

David wrote in Psalm 19 the law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure making wise the simple.

The statutes of the Lord are right rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the Lord is pure enlightening the eyes. If we are going to work out our salvation in the sense that Paul is speaking of here in this letter then we have to be devoted to the hearing and the study and the belief and the practice of God's word as contained in the scriptures.

And our devotion to the scriptures must not be just for a season for a short time but a long life commitment because sanctification comes through the truth of his word.

- [39 : 33] We must submit ourselves and embrace the scriptures embrace the word of God and apply what it teaches because the word creates holiness within us.

The word commands us to have a distinctly biblical lifestyle that identifies us as the people of God.

God's word is a special means for our growth to overcome the old fortress and to live out the new life. This is a command to work out our salvation in this manner.

Paul writes it to the Ephesians in chapter 4 says that he put off concerning the former conversation the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.

And be renewed in the spirit of your mind and that you put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. In working out my own salvation I must avoid everything that is opposed to God.

- [40 : 52] This is a call to discipline our lives. Paul says there as we read earlier on in Romans in chapter 6 where he says likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed into sin but alive into God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body that you should obey it in the lust enough. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness into sin but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

Later on in the same chapter he says for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity and to iniquity even so now yield your members servants to righteousness and to holiness for when ye were the servants of sin ye were free from righteousness what fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed for the end of those things is death but now being made free from sin and become servants to God ye have your fruit into holiness and the end everlasting life what Paul is saying to the Christians at Rome is that they are to consider and keep before them the truth about themselves they have to keep on reckoning who they are they are in Christ they are the new man now Paul in Romans is not speaking of our experience but of our position in Christ therefore he says in

Christ that we are dead to sin and alive to God and because of our position in Christ he says let sin reign neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness now as we have already noted that sanctification is not a sudden experience of deliverance once and forever it cannot be for sin is going to remain and as long as sin remains I shall never have an experience of a sudden deliverance once and forever for sin in working out our own salvation scripture urges us that we are to continue to be doing certain things we are not to allow sin to reign in our body we are not to give our members as instruments to uncleanness and to iniquity and to sin returning for a moment to

Ephesians chapter 4 this is what is required for us in working out our own salvation wherefore he says put away lying speak every man truth with his neighbor for we are members one of another be angry and sin not and let unto the sun go down upon your wrath neither give place to the devil let them not still no more but rather let him labor working with his hands the things which is good that he may have to give to him that need doth let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth but that which is good to the use of edifying that it may minister grace unto the hearers and grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice and be kind one to another tender hearted forgiving one another even as for

[44 : 51] Christ's sake hath even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you now there are many other ethical instructions given to us in the scriptures and these instructions we are to obey and in obeying them we are working out our own salvation it is all to do with the process of sanctification as we have already noted sanctification proceeds as we draw from the scriptures being led by the Holy Spirit in other words we have to ask ourselves what kind of person ought I to be in the light of my position as being in Christ as being the new man what kind of person ought I to be in the light of that truth sanctify them through thy truth thy word is truth what are our true motives for holiness surely it is this because

I am in Christ and I know what God's purpose is for me to present me faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy I know that all he has planned and brought to pass is for that purpose I know I know that all that the Lord Jesus has done for me was for this purpose that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify into himself a peculiar people tell us of good words and therefore how can I go on and sin how can I go on and sin therefore I will work out my own salvation if I allow myself to continue in sin then it is a complete denial of everything that I claim to be and of everything that I am looking forward to be now we have looked at the motives that should help us to work out our salvation or the process of sanctification now we also know that we have a continual battle and struggle with sin

Paul speaks of the besetting sin or the harassing sin sin is a great power a great enemy always looking for the least opportunity and we must always be mindful of that that is why Paul says neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness the term members as used by Paul there in Romans 6 are very comprehensive it includes not merely the parts of our physical bodies like our feet and our hands our eyes our ears our mouth but it also includes our emotions and even our imagination neither yield ye your members not only your feet and your hands your eyes your ears your mouth but your emotions and even your imagination don't don't yield don't them as instruments of unrighteousness don't allow them to be used by sin

Paul says that we are not to yield them that is we are not to put them at the disposal of sin we are not to allow them to be used by sin now that is one side of working out our salvation but there is another side but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God to put ourselves at his disposal now we are to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling what does he mean by fear and trembling first I think that he is telling us that we work out our salvation that we have to do so realising the tremendous seriousness that belongs to what we are doing in other words we have to do it in humility and with reverence and awe of

God for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that everyone may receive the things done in his body according to that he have done whether it be good or bad so we are to work out your salvation with fear and trembling realising the tremendous seriousness that belongs to what we are doing and secondly we are to do so mindful that the world and the flesh and the devil is opposed to us and to have to fear and to fear and fear and trembling because for it is

[50 : 39] God which works a thing both to will and to do of his good pleasure Paul tells us that it is God that empowers us in this respect he empowers us because of his prior work in us we are to work out our own salvation within the context of God's prior action we are indeed to work it out but we are able to do so precisely because God himself is at work in us and supplies the necessary empowering you see when God begins this work in a person he works from the inside and his spirit comes to dwell in that person in Paul's words if any man be in Christ he is a new creature or he is a new creation all things have passed away behold all things have become new and among the newness that comes into this person life is that the spirit plants new desires new longings in the heart and a person comes to desire to follow

Christ a person comes to loathe sin and to decide holiness and that desire is not of ourselves for to the natural man such desire is foolishness the preaching of the cross is foolishness to the natural man Paul says for the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness but unto us which are saved it is the power of God this is God's work for it is God which worketh in you and the word worketh that we have here is different to the word work that we have in the previous verse 12 in verse 12 it means to labour or to strive to work out our own salvation it is a work of labour it is striving striving for holiness striving against sin it is always a struggle it is always a striving but here it is the word from which we get the

English word energy it is a word that is used mostly by the apostle in the New Testament it carries the idea of working mightily and effectively for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure God is at work within creating a desire but also the ability to fulfil that desire God's action does not curtail human action but rather provokes a reaction which God's action supports there is the divine side and the human side the father draws us but it is us that come the shorter catechism answers the question on effectual calling effectual calling is the work of God's spirit whereby convincing us of our sin and misery enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ and renewing our wills he doth persuade and enable us to embrace

Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the gospel he persuades and enables us but we are the ones who embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the gospel Paul prayed for the Ephesian church says now unto him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that worketh in us and so Paul commands the Christians at Philippi and he commands me and you today and he says to us to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure may the Lord bless our thoughts let us pray eternal and ever blessed

Lord enable us we pray thee to work out our salvation with fear and with trembling know you Lord that it is you that worketh in us both the will and the desire and that in all in accordance to thine own good pleasure we give thee thanks O Lord for those great words that Paul spoke to the Ephesian church when he said unto them now unto him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that worketh in us O Lord we pray that we may be mindful of that at all times who we are that we are in Christ and that his power is working in us may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the

[55 : 56] Holy Spirit be with you all now and forever more Amen