

28/3/10 (pm) - Series on Philippians - Sermon 18

Team Work

Philippians 2:12-13

Theme: Christians are to work out their salvation as God works in them.

Regeneration is done by God alone. *It is spiritual birth.*

Progressive sanctification is the *work of God (in which a person has a role) which makes that person more like Jesus in actual living. It is spiritual growth.*

2:12-18 speaks to the dynamics of progressive sanctification.

Team Work: Christians Working Out as God Works Within (2:12-18)

Obedience links 2:5-11 with 2:12-18.

2:12c-18 has two main sections:

- a general exhortation referring to teamwork (2:12-13);
- advice on how to do the general exhortation (2:14-18).

2:12c-13 naturally divides into 2 parts:

1. A Christian's Role in Sanctification (2:12c)

In 2:12c the Philippians are called to continuous, sustained, strenuous effort.

Work out: Keep on bringing about, right to the finish line.

Salvation: Does this refer to the individual Christian's obedience to Jesus or to the corporate health of Church? There is much debate! Why not *both*? Lack of unity would be dealt with as each Christian lived as he/she should.

Fear and trembling: Awe and reverence in the presence of Lord.

Note: Paul is not saying the Philippians can save themselves, *cf.* Rom. 4:5; Eph. 2:8-9.

Putting this all together:

The Philippians were to conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ (1:27a) and work out their salvation by continually obeying Christ, showing spiritual growth and development.

Every Christian is called to exert continuous, sustained, strenuous effort to be holy in life.

We are to display evidence of our salvation. Cf. Rom. 6:11-14; Eph. 4:22-24.

We are not to be satisfied with mediocrity in the Christian life!

In practice this means intentional,
diligent, strenuous effort.

Be killing sin or it will be killing you.
(John Owen)

*Are you obeying 2:12c? Are you
serious about your walk with God?*

2. God's Role in a Christian's Sanctification (2:13)

Behind the Philippians' *working out*,
God was *working in* them.

The indwelling Spirit is the Agent of
Sanctification.

God gives the will to obey and the
ability to obey.

This is for God's good pleasure.

*Christians have the desire,
determination and ability to obey
God because God is working in us
for His good pleasure.*

Encouragement: *we see and
experience evidence of God in our
lives.*

We work because God works in us.

Challenge: *If you are not being driven by God to be holy, if you have no desire to be Christ-like, there is something seriously wrong in your life.*

At best you are in a backslidden state.

At worst there is no spiritual life in you.

*The genuine Christian will always show (s)he is a genuine Christian: the indwelling Spirit compels you to **will** and **act** according to God's good purpose.*

You must see spiritual growth and development in your life if you are a Christian.

Conclusion

The process of sin being mortified and holiness being cultivated is never complete in this life.

From our perspective it seems our sanctification is regressive at times.

From God's perspective our sanctification is always progressive.

Why? Because of the truth of Romans 8:28. And because He continually works in us.

Be encouraged and *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!*