

The Gospel: How We Live Part 2

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[0 : 0 0] Well, good morning again. This week's message is a continuation of last week, the gospel, how we live, how we live out the gospel each and every day. We are going to be again in Philippians chapter 2, verses 12 and 13 this week. And if you remember, last week we spoke a little bit about the context of what was going on, why Paul wrote what he wrote in the letter to the Philippian Christians. They were having some relationship difficulties.

There were some issues they were having with one another, some selfish relationship issues. They were not living out the gospel of Christ. They were not living like they were followers of Christ. And so in light of all that, Paul says to conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of Jesus Christ. And as we said, Philippians chapter 2, verses 12 and 13 has been a very often misunderstood portion of scripture where there are many who say, well, that's where works come into salvation.

That's where, you know, we do our part in salvation. We see, Paul said it, work out your salvation. But we need to understand within the context, we need to understand, as we've been talking about the last few weeks, all of the components of salvation, what takes place in salvation. And last week, we looked at some of the foundations of it. Today, we're going to look at some foundational truths in salvation as we continue to unpack Philippians 2, 12 and 13. Let's look at God's word this morning, beginning in verse number 12 of Philippians chapter 2. Paul says, therefore, he's been talking about Christ, what Christ has done for us, who he is, he's dealt with the issues that they've had. And he says, therefore, my beloved brethren, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence. He says, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to do for his good pleasure. Another way of saying this would be work out the ramifications of the gospel in your heart, in your life. Work those out every day, for it's God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. So we are working out the ramifications of what the gospel has accomplished in our lives each and every day, for it's God who works in us for us to do his will and for us to act according to his purpose.

Now, based on that, last week we looked at the three components of salvation. And this morning, I would like for us to look at the foundational truths in salvation, especially in these two verses, and to be looking at these truths in light of the second facet of salvation that we talked about last week. Remember, we talked about last week that we were saved, or we are saved, we are being saved, and we will be saved.

And we saw that in light of how we look at salvation, the three tenses of salvation. When we trusted Christ as our Savior, we were delivered from the penalty of sin. As we are living out our Christian life, we are being delivered from the power of sin. And one day, as the Apostle Paul, we saw last week, he was looking at the goal of salvation. The goal of salvation is that one day we will be glorified, and we will be delivered even from the very presence of sin. And so the three tenses of salvation we're going to be looking at, that second part, and that is the present tense of salvation. We saw in Scripture where Paul literally wrote, as you are being saved, because that was a present tense participle, and we are living in a process, a process of sanctification, becoming more and more like Jesus Christ each and every day. So as we look at it in terms of that second facet, we look at this first truth, and it is this, the grace of God. God's grace undergirds every facet of salvation.

[4 : 44] Were it not for God's grace, we would not have salvation. God's grace undergirds everything before we trusted Christ, because it made it possible for us to be able to trust Him. Grace undergirds the moment we trust Christ, because grace is what God provides us, He even provides the faith for us to trust Him. Grace undergirds our journey, because were it not, if it were not for grace, we would not be able to be daily being sanctified more and more like Jesus Christ, and were it not for God's grace, we could not have our future glorification. So it's the grace of God at work as we are working out our salvation each and every day in that process. Now I know this verse in verse 12, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. I know it sounds like the work that we do, but don't miss this. As we talk about it, we look at the way that verses 12 and verses 13 flow together. That's very, very important. Verse 12 says, we are to work out our salvation.

How can this happen? Well, verse 13 says, for it is God who works. Look at verse, let's read those two verses again. Therefore, my beloved brethren, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only. So Paul says, don't just be on your best behavior when I'm there, but when I'm absent from you, continue in that process of your sanctification, being more like Christ. But now much more in my absence, he says, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Now verse 13, that connection there is important. He says, for it is God. Verse 12, he says, work out your own salvation.

Then verse 13 provides the link. For it's God who works in you, both to will and to do for his good pleasure. In other words, what Paul is saying is, the only way you can work out your salvation is if God is working in you. We don't work to gain God's favor. We work as God works in us.

Because he provides the power. He provides the energizing factor in our be able to work for him. So who is the actor, main actor in our salvation? It's God, not us. He's the one that provides that.

God is the one who carries us through this entire picture of salvation. From the moment we trust Christ as our Savior, through the entire process of sanctification, as we grow more and more like Christ each and every day. And as he carries us into eternity, the grace of God undergirds this entire picture. Now I want us to think about this on three different levels. First of all, think about the fact that grace is our message. From beginning to end, grace is our message. Now think about it with me.

[8 : 00] First of all, we need the grace of God. We need the gospel to know Christ. Now that sounds rather simplistic and basic. How can they know unless they have a preacher? How can we know unless we've heard the message of the gospel? So we need the gospel in order to know Christ. But there's a very dangerous tendency, I believe, in Christianity for us to leave the gospel back at the moment of our salvation.

And we say we're going to go on to bigger and better things. You know, we're going to go attend all these, you know, end of, you know, these missions conferences, these conferences that talk about all how they, you know, leave the deeper life. And we kind of leave salvation in the background.

And now there are some who say, you know what, I don't need to hear about the gospel anymore. Because now I want to grow in Christ. I don't need the gospel anymore. Well, I think what we can do, I think what happens is we damage the gospel when we leave it behind. Because we need the gospel throughout our entire salvation. Because if we look at every component of what takes place when we're saved, it's grace. Grace saved, grace got us to the point where we could be saved. Grace keeps us growing in Christ. And it's God's grace that will ultimately, ultimately take us where we need to be.

We need the gospel to know Christ. But second, don't miss this. We need the gospel to grow in Christ. Because everything that takes place that is accomplished by the gospel, we need to grow.

The gospel is a means by which we're saved, but it's also the means by which we grow, or as we said last week, are being delivered from the power of sin in our life, or sanctification.

[9 : 53] As one writer put it, he put it this way, the gospel isn't one class among many that you will attend during your lifetime as a Christian. He says the gospel is the whole building that all the classes take place in. Because it's all about the gospel. The reality is our souls are sanctified by Christ, forgiven by Christ. We're given new life by Christ. Our souls need to feed on the gospel, the gospel message and what takes place. And as part of salvation, every single day. It's the foundation by which we live our lives today as followers of Christ. Because were it not for the gospel, we wouldn't have what we have today. Were it not for the gospel, we wouldn't have the riches, every riches that we have in Christ Jesus, every blessing that flows from him. It's all based on the gospel. The gospel is the foundation of every dimension of our lives. So that's the message of grace. We need the gospel to know Christ, and we need the gospel to grow in Christ. So we see grace is our message. It's continually our message throughout our life. So it's all about grace.

It's not about works. It's about grace. So grace is our message. If someone asks, hey, what's the Christian life all about? It's all about grace. We sing about grace. We need grace.

We are to live by grace. We are to be dispensers of grace as we work with each other in the body of Christ. So it's our message. But secondly, I want us to see that grace is our master. You see, we have a former master before we came to Christ. Now we have a new master. We take the term master from Romans 6 where the apostle Paul says, sin shall no longer be your master because you are not under the law but under grace. Wherefore, at one time, sin was our master. We had no choice.

But now we're no longer under the law. We are now under grace. Grace is our new master. Grace is the master of our lives. And it's because of God's grace that we're able to be who we are. Grace is conquered through Jesus Christ has conquered this in two different ways. First of all, by his grace, by the grace of God, we are free from the penalty of sin. I just said that a few moments ago.

When we trusted Christ as our Savior, the blood of Christ covered, took our place. It was the atonement. It satisfied the wrath of God towards sin. And because of that, we are delivered from the penalty of sin. Because of the gospel, we know that Christ has taken our penalty of sin, the ultimate penalty of sin, which is death. Jesus Christ took care of that on the cross. And so we no longer have to fear death because of grace. His death conquered the penalty of sin. And not only can God save us, from the penalty of sin, He's powerful enough to save us from the power of sin, which is what we see next. If you're taking notes, by his grace, as a follower of Christ, we are free from the power of sin. We say, well, pastor, that's easy for you to say, but you don't know the struggle I have.

[13 : 41] Well, positionally, God says, the apostle Paul, God says through the apostle Paul in Romans chapter 6, we are free from the power of sin because we are now dead with respect to sin. We no longer are alive towards sin, but we are alive toward Christ. Listen to Romans 6. Now we've got 11 verses to go through.

What shall we say then? Paul says, shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not. How shall we who, here it is, die to sin, live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ, this happened at the moment of salvation, were baptized into His death. We were identified with the death of Christ on the cross. Verse 4, therefore, we were buried with Him. There's the symbolism. Buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. The formula we use when we baptize new believers. Verse 5, for if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, and we have, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man, that who we were before we came to Christ, was crucified with Him, or put to death with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be, and here it is, we should no longer be slaves to sin. As a follower of Christ, who has been bought and purchased and redeemed by the blood of Christ, no longer has sin as our master. That we should no longer be slaves of sin, for he who has died has been freed from sin. Now, if we died with Christ, we believe that we also shall live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more.

Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all, but that the life, but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Just as in Adam, acted as the federal head or the representative of the entire human race, when He took a bite of that fruit, sin came and death came upon all human beings thereafter. One man, through one man, sin entered into the world, and by the same, in the same fashion, by one man, Jesus Christ, He conquered sin, conquered death, and He has given life to all. Now, verse 11, likewise you also reckon yourselves or consider yourselves to be dead indeed to sin. Now, if we've died to something, if we just stayed dead, that would be a problem. We would have to worry about sin, but we'd just be dead. But he says, not only did you die with respect to sin, but now, because we've been identified with the resurrection of Christ, we now are alive to God through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Listen to this.

If you're a follower of Christ, you're dead to sin. It is no longer your master. So why do some of us live in continual guilt over our sin and just cannot seem to forgive ourselves?

Well, two chapters later, in chapter 8, Paul says, there is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. Why is that? Because Jesus took our death penalty. And so why suffer guilt, and why put ourselves through guilt over our sin? Because it's already been covered.

[17 : 50] And John gives us the remedy for feeling guilty. He says, confess it. And God is just, and He's righteous, and He's able to forgive you of your sin. So just get it out of the open. Say, God, I did it.

God, I didn't do it. And I should have done it. God, I have sinned. Thank you for your forgiveness. God doesn't count our sin against us anymore. This is grace. Remember, grace undergirds every facet of our salvation. It is grace that's our master. Well, what if you still struggle with sin?

You're in good company. Because part of your homework, if you haven't already done so, go home and read Romans chapter 7. And what does Paul bring out in Romans chapter 7? Those of you who are familiar with it. It is the greatest struggle of life, Paul is saying. Now, he just finished in his letter writing, we are dead with respect to sin. And then right on the heels of that, Paul says, everything I know that is good to do, I can't do it. I don't do it. And every time I try not to do bad, I fall flat on my face, and I do bad. So I try to do good, but I can't. I try not to do bad, and I can't. So there's this great struggle in Romans chapter 7 that I believe if we identify ourselves with Paul as a human being, we're going to continue to have a struggle. But then, how does Paul cap it? He says, we're dead with respect to sin. But yes, we still struggle at times.

And in chapter 8, he says, but there is therefore now no condemnation. Don't waste our time, and don't let Satan run your life by trying to make you feel guilty over past sin that's forgiven. Confess it and move on, because it's God's grace that's our master.

God's grace is able to take care of that. So, which leads us to the second portion as we think about grace. Grace is our message. Grace is now our master. Sin is no longer our master. And third, I think we need to get this. Grace is our motivation. Grace ought to motivate us to do right.

[20 : 18] Grace ought to motivate us to share the gospel. Grace ought to motivate us to please Christ each and every day. Grace empowers us to accomplish all of this, especially when we come to this picture in Philippians 2.13. Again, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to do for his good pleasure.

Now, we may have a number of motivations for obeying God. There are a number of different motivations. It might be guilt. There are some people who obey God out of guilt. Well, you know what? If I don't obey God, then I need to obey God because I feel guilty because of Romans chapter 7 kind of stuff.

So, I need to obey God because I feel guilty. There are some who obey God out of fear. It's not a bad motive, but they fear getting disciplined. So, I don't want to get disciplined, so I obey God because I don't want to get disciplined. So, they obey God out of fear.

Some, out of gratitude. You know, I'm obeying God because of all he's done for me, and I just feel that I need to pay him back. And gratitude. Another motivation is wanting to please. You know, there are some who we are innately people pleasers, and so we then become, after Christ, we become a God pleaser. And we just want to please God. Now, these are not bad motivations, but understand this. Those, I don't think, are the best motives because there's only one, I believe, perfect motive or best motive for obeying God. And I'll explain in just a moment. The motivation for our obedience, I believe, should always be the grace of God. Because if we obey simply out of fear, I mean, do you, really, do you want your children to be afraid of you? I mean, you want a certain amount of fear that, you know what, if I do wrong, dad's really going to be upset and is going to discipline me. So, a certain amount of fear is normal. And even the Apostle Paul, even writers of

Scripture, use fear as a motive. We see that throughout the Old Testament. We even see it in the New Testament. We're to fear God. Reverence. All. Realize that He is above all and that He is an angry God. Not that He is, you know, ill-tempered all the time. But against sin, God will show His wrath. Well, what about wanting to please? Well, I think we should want to please God. That's natural. That's normal.

[23 : 08] What about gratitude? Of course, gratitude is good. We are encouraged to be thankful and to be grateful for what God has done for us. But I want us to think about this. We don't owe God anything.

We owe God nothing. You say, Pastor, how can you say that? Because we could never repay Him. How can we owe something that we could never repay? So, that's where grace comes in. God says, I've done this for you. It is because of my grace. You could never deserve it. I'm just giving it to you. And so, gratitude, while it is a great motive, I don't think it is the best motive for obeying God.

The best motive, I believe, is grace. Because look at what God has done for us. It is His grace that provides the ability for us to obey. Think about that. His grace provides the ability for us to obey. Because here's the thing. We are indwelt by God. God's Holy Spirit indwells us. It's His grace that lives in us. This is the beauty of Christianity. We can never relegate any of our attempts to obey Him to earn favor, to curry favor, or to pay God back for anything. Because anytime we try to pay God back for something, it's something we're doing in our own strength, something we're doing in our own ability. This undercuts the very foundation of the gospel. Andrew Murray, some of you may be familiar with some of his writings. Andrew Murray said it best in a book called Abide in Christ. A great book, by the way. I encourage you to pick up a copy. You can get it online, actually. You can get it an e-book. But it's a great devotional read. And this is what he says.

The idea that many Christians have of grace is this, that their conversion and pardon are God's work. But now, in gratitude to God, it is their work to live as Christians and follow Jesus.

Andrew Murray says, no. Just as it was Jesus who drew you when He said, come, so it is Jesus who keeps you when He says, abide. The past grace to come and the future grace to abide are alike from Him and Him alone.

[25 : 46] So we are indwelt by God. And it's not gratitude that says, I want to pay God back. It is God's grace brought us to the cross. And it's God's grace that will bring us to the point of glorification.

So it undergirds everything. So it's at this point that some people think, well, you know, there's nothing I can do. It's all God. So what I'll do is I will just, and this is a famous saying, it's a bumper sticker. I don't have any problem with the bumper sticker, but we have to understand that there's more to it. And it's let go and let God. Nothing wrong with that. But there's some people who take that track to their Christian life. I'm just going to let go and let God.

I don't have to do anything. Just let go, let God. I don't think that's the full picture of salvation. I don't think that's the idea of the gospel either. We need to understand that faith is the God-ordained link between His work and our work in salvation. Because if you take Paul, the Apostle Paul, you take the Apostle James. If you take them separately, you think Paul is all grace, let go, let God. But if you read the book of James, it's almost as if grace, good, works, proves.

You know, work, work, work, work, work. Well, do they disagree with one another? Absolutely not. Paul said, because Paul was dealing with a group of people that wanted to work, thought they needed to work their way to pleasing God. And so Paul's emphasis was, of course, not on works. Why? Because they were already trying to do that. So it's kind of like if you have to understand the context. And it's like if we're speaking to one group and we're trying to convince them of something and away from something else, we tend to, what?

Harp on the main thing. And you say, well, you're leaving the other part out. Well, you know what? They got that part. They're trying to put too much emphasis on it. So Paul was really focusing on grace.

[28 : 11] Well, it came to the point James comes along and there were people that had been saved for a few years and they were saying, well, you know what? We can live however we want. Well, you know what?

I got saved way back when. It's like people today say, well, you know what? I got saved when I was 13. But their life doesn't show it. And so what does James come along and do? James says, if you say you've got it, then let your life show it. Because if your life doesn't show it, pardon the vernacular, you probably ain't got it. And that's what James is saying. Show me your faith by your works.

Because if the God, if God indwelling in you, if the works aren't being produced by God indwelling in you, then you probably haven't trusted Christ and there's probably no salvation there in the first place.

So grace works work together. So that's why God says you work out your own salvation because it's God who works in you, both to will and to act to do his good pleasure.

Faith's the link. By grace alone, through faith alone, grace undergirds everything. But we have a part to play in our sanctification. Let's look again at our text. Therefore, my beloved brethren, as you 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, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to do, for his good pleasure.

[29 : 52] So here we have man's work and God's work side by side. So how do we reconcile it? How do we work out our salvation and it be the work of God at the same time?

The answer? Faith. It's our faith. That's the link between the two. The matter of, it's not a matter of us meeting God in the middle and saying, I'll do my part.

God, you do your part. We'll kind of meet in the middle and we'll, you know, one plus one equals two. That's not the way grace works. That's not the way salvation works. That's not the way sanctification works.

It's not, we do our part, God does his part, we meet in the middle. It's a matter of, what he's saying is, we work. But when we work, it's God's who's, it is God who's working in us.

It's God, God is the one that's doing the work. The only way we can work and produce lives that are pleasing to God is if the work of God is already evident in our lives.

[30 : 59] So, work out your own salvation. Live right. Because it's God who's living it out through you. And as you allow God to live it out through you, we're working out our salvation.

It's not, okay God, do it all and I'll sit with my arms crossed and just kind of okay God, do the work, get the hunger fed, go in and, you know, put your arm around that hurting person.

No, they need the physical touch. They need our part in helping the poor, feeding the poor, helping the distressed, loving those who, and serving and showing grace and showing mercy to those who need it.

We do our part but it's only as God works it out through us. So, what we see here is the motivation for obedience is grace. Faith is the God-ordained link between our work and God's work.

We trust God to do the work within us but next, faith involves, we can't just have faith in faith, faith involves radical dependence on God's work in our lives.

[32 : 05] Don't depend on your ability, don't depend on your charismatic personality, don't trust in your intellect, but what we need to do as followers of Christ is we need to have radical dependence on God.

This is where self-made individuals, this is where people who are ruggedly individualistic have difficulty with Christianity because we have to submit.

We have to divest ourselves of our will. We have to die to ourselves and give the authority and give the reins of our lives to God and let Jesus Christ live it out through us.

So it's a dependence on God's work in our life. So how does faith and works work? Well, number one, faith involves this dependence on God.

The same faith that saved us is the same faith that sanctifies us now. Faith is the attitude of our hearts that say, Father, I don't bring anything in my hands.

[33 : 08] I need you. Open my eyes. I need you to do this work. Now because of what God does in our lives, He changes our hearts.

He changes everything about us. And so we need Him. We need Him to mold our hearts. Remember it says, for God works in you to will and to act.

See, it's not enough for us to just do. We need to also be obedient to the will of God. And there are certain parts of Scripture that talks about once the Holy Spirit lives within us, He is changing our wants.

He's changing our desires. He's changing our will so that our will becomes God's will. He makes His will our will. And so it's not a matter of Him or of us just wanting things and then God correcting us.

No. The Holy Spirit enables us to want what He wants. That's exactly what Philippians 2.13 is talking about. God working in us to do a couple of things.

[34 : 19] To will and to act. He molds our hearts. It's not just what we like. It's changing our wills and desires to produce that in our hearts.

So He molds our hearts and shapes us to His will. And for the transformation we talked about last week, we need God. We need His grace to empower our lives.

Because it's not by our power, it's not by our might that things are accomplished of eternal value. It's only as He does it through us.

This is the working out of our salvation in verse 12. It's not a difficult passage. It's not saying work your way to heaven. It's not saying do good things and so you'll please God and once you're saved you've got to work to stay saved.

That's not at all what Paul's saying. Or work out your salvation because you know what? You've got to earn it somehow. You've got to pay it back. We don't pay it back. We can never pay it back. We work out our salvation by verse 13 allowing God to do the work through us.

[35 : 26] To change our will and so that we will do according to His will. This is the working out in verse number 12. Therefore my beloved brethren as you've always obeyed not as in my presence only but now much more in my absence.

He says live like you're a Christian. Live like you belong to me. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

We need God to change our hearts. We need God to change our minds. We need God to empower our lives. It's grace that motivates our obedience. Grace undergirds everything.

Grace is our message. Grace is our master. It's no longer sin. Grace is our motivation. is God's work evident in your life.

Let's pray. Lord God this morning we are so so very thankful that you do it all. You've accomplished our salvation.

[36 : 40] You've accomplished paying the penalty for our sin on the cross of Calvary. It's grace that led us to Christ. It's grace that leads us through the Christian life.

Father we thank you it's because of your grace that one day we will be able to be glorified with you. We thank you Father that you are helping us through this journey of salvation by helping us to grow and to be more and more like Jesus Christ each and every day.

We thank you. We praise you. In Jesus name we pray. Amen. Amen.