

## **“Working Out Our Salvation”**

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Scriptural Text: Philippians 2: 12-13, ESV

The context of this study is this dear Philippian church which has experienced joy in their relationship with the Apostle Paul, joy in their relationship with God, and the Gospel. Paul is writing to this church to encourage them to continue in the faith, particularly in reference to spiritual unity in the church. There is some conflict which is disrupting the spiritual health and life of that church. Paul urges them not to do things out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but rather to esteem others more important.

He gives the great section in the second chapter of this letter, Verses 5 through 11, which reveals Jesus as the ultimate example of humility. Now Paul comes to the very practical aspect of Jesus' example for us in our text.

### **Lights in the World**

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Humorist Mark Twain famously observed, “Few things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of a good example.” There is truth in this observation because, while good examples may motivate us, they have no ability to empower us, to change us.

I have been watching some of the U.S. Open Tennis Championship and I found the players inspiring, but not enabling. I watched them closely. I observed their technique, their quickness, and their strength and I want to be able to hit serves with such power, hit backhands with such precision, hit volleys with such soft touch and fineness. Yet, for all of this inspiration, my tennis game remains largely the same: it remains mediocre.

It is easy to be overwhelmed and frustrated in the presence of a truly great example. What might we do when we face a great example? It seems as though our pride can raise its ugly head and move us to respond in several ways. First, it can move us in pride as we look at great examples and we can convince ourselves we actually do measure up to the example in front of us. We listen to Josh Groban sing and we believe we actually sing like him. We watch Larry Fitzgerald catch a football and we believe we have just as soft hands. We taste a famous chef's food and we believe, “I can do that!”

One way our pride squirms away from the frustration of a good example is to amp up our estimation of ourselves to amp up our esteem of our own performance and our own abilities. Believing more highly of ourselves than we ought is a real danger.

The second expression our pride takes in the face of a good example, I believe, is even more prominent. In pride, as we look at a good example, we can simply say to ourselves, “I need to work harder in order to measure up to the standard in front of me.” So, we begin to exhaust ourselves in pursuit of a “better me”. We do not let ourselves rest until we reach or exceed the perfection of the example. We drive toward that goal with personal determination and with willpower.

We hang successory posters on our walls to remind us we need to strive and move toward perfection: successory posters such as “Focus: Approach Every Challenge With a Level Head and Unwavering Determination and All of Your Horizons Will Be Bright”; “Discipline: Discipline Is the Bridge Between Goals and Accomplishments”. These sayings do inspire us to try harder in life and to do better.

On a human plane there is some wisdom in these statements, and sometimes the self-determined approach produces some good results. The can-do spirit possesses some merit in terms of external outcomes, but there is a small problem, and then there is a huge problem, in this drive to simply work harder. The small problem is that self-determination

often ends poorly. We fail to meet our own expectations and then we despair and our life is miserable because we are failing to meet the expectations we set in front of us. That is the small problem.

But, the real big problem is that self-determination is almost always driven by our pride and pride kills our soul. Whether we are successful or whether we fail, pride is fed. What should a believer do when we reflect upon a great example?

That is a really important question because we just studied Philippians 2:5-11. What did we see in those verses? We see the great example set before us of Jesus Christ and it is set before us on purpose,

<sup>5</sup> Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup> Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

What an example of humble obedience Jesus sets before us? He exists as God, yet He humbles Himself, becoming obedient to the Father, even “to the point of death, even death on the cross”. He is the quintessential example of costly humility, yet none of us, not one of us, can live up to the standard Jesus sets for us. It is not in our own power. This is where Jesus is different from every other example we have in front of us.

The principle we learn all through Scripture, and in this passage in particular, is: Jesus not only inspires us to live a humble, selfless life, but He empowers us to do so. He is not only our Pattern, but He is our Power to live a godly life in this broken, dark, and sinful world. Our union with Jesus enables us to experience His presence in our lives so that Jesus lives His life in us and through us.

The Apostle Paul will write later in this letter,

<sup>3:10</sup> that I may know him and the power of his resurrection...

He recognizes Jesus not only sets a pattern, but He provides for the power, through His resurrection, which works within us and he makes this bold assertion,

<sup>4:13</sup> I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

This is not through self-discipline and self-determination.

What a Savior we have. When we look upon Christ, we do not merely see a great example, but we experience Christ as our Savior and as our Strength. Through faith our life is joined to His so that He lives in us and He lives through us.

I love how God expresses this truth in Galatians. The Apostle Paul will write in his letter,

<sup>2:20</sup> I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Is that not awesome? Paul is asserting it is “Christ living in me is how I am able to live a godly life in the midst of all the temptation and in the midst of my fleshly weakness; it is Christ who lives in me.”

Can you say this is your experience? Do you know Christ internally, truly, and transformationally so that you can say, “It is Christ who is living in me and I experience Christ and I experience His power in me to live a godly life.”

One great danger to people who grow up in Christian homes, and I am thankful I grew up in a Christian home, is to grow up in an environment regarding the Bible and the Gospel and thus engage with Christ superficially, on the surface of our life, of our thoughts, and of our commitments, and yet fail to experience Christ internally and truly. Can

we say, “I have been crucified with Christ so it is no longer I who lives, but it is Christ who lives in me and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”

This is the thing which differentiates the Christian from the rest of mankind. It is that he sees Christ and he experiences Christ internally. True Christianity is not theoretical, a doctrinal statement we sign, or opinions we hold. True Christianity is experiential. It is that we taste of Christ and we find Him to be our life. He becomes our great satisfaction. He becomes our strength. Have you found your life in Christ? Think before you answer that question and do not dismiss it quickly. Ask, “Have I experienced Christ externally so that He influences my life, or have I experienced Christ internally so that He lives His life through me?”

\ Those are two different experiences. One is a superficial connection to Christ where He influences us. For instance, He influences us to go to church on Sunday, to read our Bibles, to pray, and to do some religious things. This is different from experiencing Christ internally where we have His life inside of us.

Allow us to consider an old hymn from Charles Wesley which presses this issue home. I listened to this hymn during the drive to Colorado to visit our son. It touched heart. It is a testimony of one who has Christ dwelling in his heart and who is experiencing Christ internally and transforming him. As I read these words, ask yourself, “Is this my experience with Christ?” Charles Wesley writes,

Thou hidden source of calm repose,  
thou all-sufficient love divine,  
my help and refuge from my foes,  
secure I am if thou art mine;  
and lo! from sin and grief and shame  
I hide me, Jesus, in thy name.

...Jesus, my all in all thou art,  
my rest in toil, my ease in pain,  
the (medicine) of my broken heart,  
in war my peace, in loss my gain...

...in grief my joy unspeakable,  
my life in death, my heaven in hell.<sup>1</sup>

Do you know Christ experientially? As you hear those words, do you say, “Yes, that is who Christ is to me! I have experienced Him being my peace in war, my gain in loss, my ease in my pain. I have experienced Him being the medicine in my broken heart. I have experienced Him being the One who cleanses me of my shame and guilt.” Do you know Christ truly and experientially?

All of this passage is built upon the testimony of the Apostle Paul who says, “For me to live is Christ. That is what life is all about,” and there will be no sense in looking at Verse 12 if we have not experienced Christ,

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling...

Paul is writing to one's he loves so dearly and he wants them to know of his love. The “therefore” used in this verse simply means, “in response to this, or because of this, as we viewed the example of Christ in the earlier text, in view of Christ's humble obedience, His humble ministry, in bringing the Gospel to us by taking on flesh and dying upon a cross, in view of this, work out your salvation with fear and trembling.”

Notice this is the second “therefore” to grace these verses. The first records God the Father's response to the Son's ministry, work, and example. The second “therefore” records our response. What is the Father's response to the ministry of the Son, to the humble obedience and the costly commitment of Jesus? We find that in Verse 9,

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<sup>1</sup> “Thou Hidden Source of Calm Repose”, Charles Wesley, 1749.

<sup>9</sup> Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

This is what God did in view of Jesus' humble obedience. That is God's right response to the Son's humble action, exalting Him to the highest place.

The second "therefore" calls us to likewise respond to the Son's humility by exalting Him through what? God the Father responds to the Son's humility by exalting Him. Then He tells us what we are to do and how we are to exalt Christ, because that is what life is all about; it is about the glory of Christ worked out in us and through us. And, we are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling in view of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, in view of His deity, in view of Him taking on human flesh, in view of the atoning death upon the cross, in view of His resurrection, in view of His exaltation, and in view of His future authority which will be given. We are to exalt Jesus by living lives which reflect His glory.

When we consider we are to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, Paul recognizes, immediately, he is not the key to the Philippians' walk with God to their life of holiness and godliness. Remember, Paul is in Rome in prison and he cannot be with them and he recognizes he is not needed in order for the Philippian church to obey God. The Philippian church needs God's Spirit working in them and through them, but they do not need the coach's eye upon them to motivate them to work out their salvation to obey God, and he writes,

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence...

Too much Christianity is man-pleasing Christianity and he recognizes this. He wants to encourage them because he does not see that in them and he recognizes they are simply man-pleasers and they are acting one way when there are spiritual leaders around them and they act another way when they are not. Yet, he is able to see and perceive they are able to obey God in the quietness of their home just as sincerely and purely as they do in the public places of their church.

The principle we learn from this is: if our motivation for our obedience to Christ is the approval of man we will lack consistency and integrity in our walk with Christ. It is vital we set our focus on the right place and not on people like the Apostle Paul and spiritual leaders because we do not want to disappoint them, but we must set our heart's eyes upon Christ who is always present. He is the Great Example. He is the Great Savior and Paul tells us this is to be our kind of faith; it is not a man-pleasing faith.

As we live out our faith in this world, we must ask the question: Who am I desiring to please? The answer we need to have is God who is ever-present, omniscient, always here and around, and ever enabling us to live for Him.

Paul then comes to this great command: Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. This verse is often misunderstood. To gain clarity, it is vital that we read it carefully and to do that we might circle the preposition "out". The proper understanding of this command hangs on that word. The Apostle Paul is not commanding us to work "for" our own salvation, and he is not commanding us to work "toward" our own salvation and he is not calling us to work "up" to our own salvation. He is calling us to work "out" and there is a huge difference between working out our own salvation and working for our own salvation.

The principle we learn is: working out our own salvation means we already possess it and we are committed to do something with it. We cannot work something out we do not have. Working out our salvation means we already possess our salvation and now we are going to work it out, live it out, and we are going to do something with it.

Working for our salvation means we do not yet possess and we need it and we need to acquire it. So, we are going to work toward it and for it in hopes we will gain it. But, we do not need to work for something we already possess. We must remember the Apostle Paul is writing to people who already possess the salvation of God in their soul.

How do we know that? There are two pieces of evidence. If we read the first verse of this letter,

<sup>1:1</sup> To all the saints in Christ Jesus...

Paul is talking to those who are already sanctified and set apart by God unto salvation. Secondly, we know these are a people who have already received God's salvation through faith in Jesus Christ because of the way the Gospel came to this church.

In Acts 16, particularly the great story of Paul being imprisoned. During his imprisonment the earthquake came and the jailer was despairing. He was about ready to commit suicide and Paul calls out, "Do not take your life. We are still here," and the jailer asked this question,

<sup>30b</sup> "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" <sup>31</sup> And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved..."

Paul is talking to people who are saved, who have already received God's salvation through faith. Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. It is that simply. That is how we obtain salvation – by grace through faith.

Do you wish to have God's salvation in your life? Undoubtedly there are some who will say, "I am not sure. I like my life the way it is right now. I am not sure if I need God's salvation." Beloved, God tells us plainly, we do need it. Without it, we will be forever without God and without hope. We will remain in our sins and without God's salvation we will die in our sins and we will be condemned by God forever and ever. God calls us to recognize our great need.

Others, when asked to think about that question, will say, "Yes, I do want God's salvation." The message of the Good News is we cannot do enough to merit it, to obtain it, through our works. Many people believe they can gain salvation from God by simply trying hard to obey God's Law or to do religious activities. While they know they do not obey God one hundred percent of the time, hardly anyone I have ever talked with assert they have obeyed God all of their life one hundred percent of the time. Yet, they believe if they can get up to fifty percent then God will accept them, and maybe it is sixty, or eighty, percent, whatever number they have in their head to which they might reach. If they strive to get up to that level of obedience then God will accept them.

The problem is, God, in His Word, makes it very clear He will not allow the guilty to go unpunished and His standard is one hundred percent righteousness. It is a standard none of us can live up to, yet it is a standard God holds in order for us to gain access into His family, into His Kingdom, and into His Heaven.

How good do we have to be in order to be accepted by God into His family to know Him and into His Heaven to be rescued from condemnation? The answer is – we must be perfect! The good news is, in the face of that standard, Jesus Christ is a Savior who freely provides for us one hundred percent righteousness from Himself, and He offers this to us as a free gift to everyone who would believe in Him. That is why we need Him.

The Good News of the Gospel is not a message of human merit, but it is a message of grace. Beloved, if you believe you can earn salvation through your own righteousness, you are placing your confidence in a bridge of clay. It will fall from under your feet. It will fail you.

The Apostle Paul, in Philippians 3, writes about this to explain if there is anyone who has confidence they can merit God's salvation, he will have more than they do because he lived the life and committed himself to it,

<sup>4b</sup> If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: <sup>5</sup> circumcised on the eighth day (God's requirement), of the people of Israel (God's special people), of the tribe of Benjamin (a very special tribe), a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee (he committed himself to obeying the Law); <sup>6</sup> as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless... <sup>8b</sup> For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith...

Paul did everything humanly which people look at and say, "Has he checked all the boxes necessary in order to obtain God's favor?" But, Paul is saying, "All those things which were my own meritorious works, I count them as rubbish so that I might gain Christ." As long as we are holding onto our own righteousness we cannot obtain the righteousness

of Christ because the righteousness of Christ is given to the humble who recognize they have no righteousness. What a gift God gives when He gives salvation to a man, woman, or child.

This gift is not to be placed under the bed and forgotten. It is too valuable to be neglected, so the Apostle Paul says, "As you have received this wonderful, awesome gift of salvation from God through the costly death of Jesus Christ upon the cross, value it by working it out in your life. Do not hide it underneath some covering. Work out your own salvation."

In Paul's day, the word "workout" was used in the context of working in a mine. The mine is filled with gold and working the gold out of the mountain is the context of this word. We are to work hard to get all of the advantage of the wealth in the mountain and into our hands. The idea is, when a person is given a new life in Christ, this new life is a mine of gold and a treasure which brings joy to the heart.

This is an epistle which often talks about joy, yet we look around and we find many believers devoid of joy. Why are believers who have the salvation which brings joy to be devoid of joy? It is because we are not working the wealth of our salvation out into our lives and into our families. God's salvation comes to us by faith, but that does not negate the need for us to labor and toil in that faith to bring that richness inside of us to become a part of our external world, our external expression.

I know many of you are incredibly hard workers. You work hard at your jobs. You work hard at school. You work hard on your yards and on your homes. You work hard developing skills like carpentry, volleyball, piano, or Xbox gaming. Many of you know what it means to work hard for something, but let me ask you, as you look into your soul can you say, "I work hard in mining the richness of God's salvation out of the inner arena of my heart and into the external arena of my world and life." Can you say that?

The Christian life is not a passive one. It is a life of applying focus and energy and commitment to living a life worthy of the salvation God has given to us. What does it mean to work out our own salvation? It is easy because Paul kind of answered that for us in the beginning of his verse, "As you have always obeyed, now do so more. Work it out and continue to obey." In other words, working out our salvation simply means obeying God. We are ready and eager to listen to what He would say to us and then we are ready and eager to submit to His will.

Working out our salvation means obeying God in service, "God what would You have me to do in Your church for Your glory? I will work out that salvation." Working out our salvation means obeying God in purity, "Let me listen to the commands regarding a righteous life and then let me submit to You by turning from those things You tell me are sinful and turning toward those things You tell me are godly expressions in life." That is what it, simply, means to work out our salvation. It means focus and energy applied to those areas of simple obedience.

The Apostle Paul is simply saying, "Get on the outside what you possess on the inside. It is not intended to be boxed up and locked up and hidden on the inside."

What does this command have to do with the context of Philippians 2? That is a great question. I am glad you asked it. It is a question one should always ask whenever one looks at Scripture: What is the context? The context, all along, has been the necessity of spiritual unity in the church. It is a "together" kind of context.

I believe this command, "Work out your own salvation," is right for us to take individually and say, "This is about me and it is about working out this salvation inside of me," but the context suggests we also think of it individually, and we also think of it corporately. Paul is writing a letter to a church and he is saying, "Church, you all work out the salvation which is in you, in this church, for the glory of God." As he is writing, he recognizes, as he looks at the church, there is disunity. There are people who are disconnected completely from the body. There is no spiritual, deep relationship with others in the body. He is telling them they have a salvation which connects them to one another and to Christ, so they need to work that out and not let that remain dormant.

He looks out and sees there is dispute, disunity, and conflict. He tells them they have salvation so they need to work out their salvation because it is not evident as they gather together. There is conflict within the church so they need to work it out. There is a corporate application as well as an individual application. Paul is calling us to labor to get the salvation, first, in our individual heart outward, but, also, corporately, as we do that, there will be a together-kind of

application and we say, “Let us work this out together. Let us work for peace and spiritual unity and deep, loving relationships in the body of Christ.” That is God’s call upon our lives.

First, we are to pursue practical obedience to God everyday. We are to focus on it and work toward it. We are to wake up in the morning and say, “Lord, I want to submit to You today. What would You have me to do?”

Secondly, we are to actively pursue spiritual unity in the local church. We are to pursue deep, spiritual relationships with other believers. Pursue peace whenever conflict breaks out. We are to do so with fear and trembling, recognizing God is a holy and righteous God and recognizing we are weak and frail. I believe the aspect of fear and trembling is we are to recognize how close sin is crouching at the door of our heart and that sin will rob us of joy and life. We are to work this out because we want to work away from that sin which will destroy us.

The second idea is God’s provision. Someone may read the first verse and say, “Pastor, living the Christian life is so hard. I have tried to work it out, but it is so hard and it is so difficult.” I will say to that person, by way of encouragement, “No, you misunderstand the problem. The Christian life is not hard. The Christian life is impossible.” Does that encourage you? This is why Verse 13 is so important and so vital, for it is God who works within you to will and to work for His good pleasure.

God does not leave us to a self-help kind of Christian faith. The message of the Bible to Christians is not simply to work harder, do better, and be better. No sooner does God tell us to work out our salvation then God immediately adds, “I am the One who is doing the work.” God, Himself, is at work within us to accomplish His purpose and to bring us deep joy.

Notice, closely, God is at work within us in two ways. First, it is to change our hidden will. Second, it is to change our outward working. There is an inner change regarding our will and there is an outward change regarding our working which God is performing, and willing comes before working. We will not obey God in service or in righteousness apart from desiring to obey God and wanting to obey God. And, we would not want to obey God unless God worked effectively within us to change what we want.

This flesh is still pressing upon us and our flesh naturally desires selfish things. We desire our own glory, our own interests, our own honor. We desire to put ourselves above others and our will, apart from Christ and His continual working in us, is enslaved to our fleshly desires.

Someone may protest, “Wait a minute. Are you saying, pastor, we do not have a free will?” The answer is “yes” and “no”. Yes, we have free will. No, we do not have free will.

We do have free will to decide some things, but not all things. I can choose, for instance, when I go to the pizza place to put pepperoni or sausage on my pizza. I have free will to that end. I can decide to go to bed early or to stay up late. I can choose to put on a red tie or a blue tie in the morning, or maybe no tie. James Boice<sup>2</sup> puts it this way, “You cannot exercise your free will in anything that involves your physical, intellectual, or spiritual capabilities.” That is important.

In other words, physically, for instance, I cannot will myself to become six foot five inches. I cannot will myself to jump three feet in the air. No matter how much I will that to happen, I cannot will myself because I am unable. I cannot will myself to have forty more points on my IQ. I am incapable of willing myself. My will is not free so I cannot.

Spiritually, God says, as a result of sin, and Adam’s sin particularly, we all have become enslaved to sin. Our enslavement to sin keeps us from having spiritual capabilities to choose God. We will always choose ourselves. There is a spiritual incapability to choose God and to choose to do His will. Jesus said,

John 8:34 “*Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.*”

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<sup>2</sup> James Montgomery Boice, Th.D., 1938 – 2000, a Reformed theologian, Bible teacher, and pastor of Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia from 1968 until his death. Wikipedia.

We are down in the muddy pit and we are unable to get out. Adam was free. He had free will. He could choose God, but once he dove off the edge, he dove down into a muddy pit, and in the midst of that muddy pit, we can get angry and impatient, we can try hard to work ourselves out of the muddy pit, but we do not have the freedom of being above and outside of that muddy pit. It is too deep and too steep. We cannot get ourselves out of it. That is why the Apostle Paul will say, quoting the Old Testament, in Romans,

<sup>11b</sup>...no one seeks for God. <sup>12b</sup>...no one does good, not even one.<sup>3</sup>

In our own will we are incapable of wanting God because we have become enslaved to our self and to our pride.

What does this mean for the believer? First, it means we need to constantly humble ourselves before God to keep our wills moment-by-moment in freedom instead of slavery. When we find Christ we find freedom from the slavery to sin, but that freedom is a freedom we enjoy only as we are connected to Christ through faith, abiding in the vine, as Jesus would say in John 15. We must maintain a constant dependency because the moment we disconnect from Christ is the moment our flesh takes over and enslaves us again.

It is God who is at work within us to will and to do His good pleasure. He changes our will. God is at work to change our will so we connect to Him by faith and by fellowship with Him. Then our wills become free from the slavery to sin and we are able to choose God and to choose to do His will. We desire to live out our life for the glory of God instead of living out our life for the glory of self.

It is vital we humble ourselves before God every moment of every day so that God's work in our lives will be effective and our will will want what God wants.

Second, it means we do not despair and give up when we fail in our walk. Instead, we respond through the confession of sin and through a deep dependence upon God. We lean deeper into God. We know God is able to work within us to change our wills and our doings, so we do not let our failings say, "I have become trapped in this sin and there is no way out of it." No, God is at work within us. If we have Christ, God, Himself, is at work and His power is available to us.

The answer to our disobedient and stubborn heart is a Savior, so we lean into Him. It is not a self-determination when we say, "I am not going to commit that sin ever again," no, it is a humble dependence upon God and we say, "God, please work on my will and work on my working. I need You." We lean into Him and we find a Savior in Him.

Finally, it means we thank God when our wills want what God wants. When we desire God and to do His will, we do not take the credit, not to ourselves and not to others. We recognize we would never be willing to serve God for His glory in the church, we would never be willing to avoid the sins our flesh finds pleasurable apart from God's redeeming love working in our heart to desire Him more in this world.

Why does God work within us to will and to do His good please? It is because He loves us so. Our great and awesome good is found in His pleasure. As we read these verses, I ask you allow God's Spirit to meditate upon us. Have you truly experienced Christ? If so, the call of God is very clear: work out your salvation individually and corporately with the confidence knowing God is at work in you, in your will, and in your working.

What a Savior we have!

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<sup>3</sup> Psalm 53:1-3