

August 17, 2014

The Believer's Responsibility

Philippians 2:12-16

All Stand and Read Scripture

Philippians 2:12-16

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹² So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure.

¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling or disputing; ¹⁵ so that you will ^[a]prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you ^[b]appear as ^[c]lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding ^[d]fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.

Prayer

INTRODUCTION:

The relationship between the power and grace of God and the responsibility of the believer in living out his Christian life has often been misunderstood.

Is the Christian life just a matter of passive trust or does it call for an active obedience? This is a question that all of us need to confront in our Christian walk.

Does God have expectations for His people? The answer to that question is ABSOLUTELY! God expects and requires certain things from His people.

The letter to the Philippians was written in order to address some of these expectations. The Philippian church was a strong church. It was a solid church. It was the first church that was established in Europe by the apostle Paul. The church was a blessing to Paul and it helped support the ministry of Paul.

Paul is in prison, so the Philippian church sends a man named Apaphroditus to bring a gift to Paul while he is in prison. As Apaphroditus and Paul visit, Apaphroditus tells Paul about things that are going on in Philippian church. Through the discussion, Paul discovers that the church is in danger. It is not from an external threat, but from an internal threat. Paul discovers that

disunity, grumbling and quarreling was taking place among the brethren. This concerned Paul greatly.

So, he sat down and penned this epistle to address the divisive spirit that had infiltrated the church. The second chapter was written to deal with the disunity in the Philippian church.

In verses 1-4, Paul told them to seek unity through self-denial. In order to have unity, they must **be of the same mind**; they must **regard one another as more important than himself**; and they must **not merely look out for your own interests, but also for the interests of others**.

In verses 5-8 Paul gave them the ultimate pattern of the humility or self-denial that would be needed in order to reestablish unity in the church. That example was Christ Jesus.

What was Christ willing to do?

V6: He was Willing to Let Go

When God told Christ that it was time for Him to go into the world as a man. Jesus looked at

- the worship of the angels,
- the spender of Heaven,
- the eternal fellowship with His Father and the Holy Spirit,
- and said, "OK!" **He gave it all up!**

V7: He was Willing to Step Down

Jesus Christ came into this world to become a **man** and to become a servant to **man** doing God's will!

V8: He was Willing to Submit

Christ was willing to be obedient to God to the point of death. But, not just death, but death on a cross! It is the most humiliating death known to man. Yet Jesus was willing to hang on the cross. God in the flesh, hung on a tree for you and for me. This was the pattern of ultimate humility.

In verses 9-11 Paul showed them the results of humility. Because of Christ's ultimate humility, God **highly (mega) exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,**

Matthew 23:12

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹² Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.

The lesson for us is found in verse 5: **Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,**

Now, in verses 12 – 16 Paul gives us the process whereby believers can become more like Jesus as they live out their Christian faith.

I want you to listen carefully here, the Lord expects His people to grow in the likeness of Jesus Christ. Let me emphasize this, God DEMANDS that we must grow in the likeness of Christ. It is the desire of God that we are conformed into the image of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The death of Christ on the cross was more than just pardon for our sins. As wonderful as that is, His death on the cross is more than pardon, it is POWER! His grace empowers us to live out our faith. God the Father gave His only begotten Son to die for the forgiveness of His people. Christ paid that debt fully, perfectly, and completely.

The Father GAVE, and the son PAID. Because of that, those of us who have accepted Christ as our Lord and Savior have been “blood bought” and have become a possession of the Lord.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a ^{1a}temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from ^{1b}God, and that you are not your own? ²⁰ For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

You have been bought and purchased by the blood of Jesus on Calvary’s cross.

1 Peter 2:9

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

⁹ But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God’s OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

As we look at verses 12 – 16, I want to look at ***The Believer’s Responsibility.***

These scriptures point out three things concerning the believer’s life that I want to bring to your attention.

V12-13 The Believer’s Work
V14-15 The Believer’s Walk
V15-16 The Believer’s Talk

We will cover the Believer’s Work this morning.

BODY:

Philippians 2:12-13

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¹² So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure.

These verses point out the believer's work or the responsibility of the believer. Paul points out three things:

I. The example of our work.

Verse 12 starts out with "So then" or in other translations, "Wherefore" or "Therefore". This points us back to what Paul has just stated about Jesus' in verses 6-11. His obedience and humility is a perfect example of a servant spirit

Just as Jesus was obedient, even to the cross, we too are to be obedient.

James 2:17-18

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has no works, is [ⓐ]dead, *being* by itself.

¹⁸ But someone [ⓑ]may *well* say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works."

Christian faith or life has two parts that we MUST build on. Those two parts are **faith** and **obedience**. James calls them "**faith and works**". Works are not the CAUSE of our salvation. Works are the very EVIDENCE of our salvation. Works tells us and tells others that we are saved.

Ephesians 2:8-10

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and [ⓐ]that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Paul tells us that we are saved "FOR" good works, not "BY" good works.

James and Paul were not at odds with one another. Christian **faith and works** go together like **biscuits and gravy**. Faith and works never stand alone.

LISTEN CAREFULLY!

God has expectations for His people.

Titus 1:16

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹⁶They profess to know God, but by *their* deeds they deny *Him*, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.

Christ saves us by His grace, but our Christian life must not just be a **passive trust in His grace**. God calls for an **active** obedience.

- To deny this is to deny the very teaching of scripture.
- To deny this is to misunderstand the very work of the cross.
- To deny this is to deny the work of grace.

If you need an example of how to be obedient and live a life of servitude, look no further than the example of Jesus Christ.

- Christ gave up heaven in obedience to God's will.
- He became man to serve man in obedience to God's will.
- He died on the cross for our sins in obedience to the God's will.

Not only does Paul show Christ as **The Example of Our Work**, but he also Exhorts us for Our Work.

II. Exhortation for Our Works

Philippians 2:12b

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

work out your salvation with fear and trembling;

What does Paul mean by “*work out your salvation*”? Focus on the word salvation. What a wonderful gift! Salvation is ours because Christ gave it to us by His grace when we accepted Him as our Lord and Savior and was **immersed by baptism** for the forgiveness of sins as **Acts 2:38** teaches us.

So, if salvation is a gift from God, what does it mean that we need to “*work out our salvation*”?

Here is what it does not mean...

It does not mean to work in order to be saved. Work alone or merit alone will never save us. It does not matter how **moral** you are, how **good** you are, or how **ethical** you are, salvation is always **through faith by the grace of God; not as a result of works** as **Eph. 2:8-9** teaches us.

The “*fear and trembling*” does not refer to “shaking” before God like He is a cruel master, but more toward a “reverence” or “respect”.

A **reverence** for God will always result in a **commitment** to God.

A **commitment** to God will always result in **works** for God.

Matt. 7:16 says “You will know them by their fruits”.

Our works will be the result of our faith, not the means for our salvation.

The “**fear and trembling**” occurs within a person who lacks a trust in his own abilities or confidence in himself to fulfill certain duties for God. “**Fear and trembling**”, for the Lord, is due to our sin nature and the weakness of our flesh. “**Fear and trembling**” is a reminder that we often “cave in” to sin and selfishness.

It is our responsibility and God’s expectation that we become what He saved us to be. He saved us to be more and more like Jesus Christ.

Not only does Paul give us an example of our work, and an exhortation for our works, but he also tells us of the...

III. Enabling Power for Our Works

Philippians 2:13

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¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure.

Before you were saved, God worked **ON** you. Now that you are saved, God works **IN** you and God works through us. God works in us through His Holy Spirit. We received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit when we were saved. God never stops working. He works **IN** us to do His will and to do His work.

In **Philippians 2:14-15**, Paul goes from our Work to our Walk.

CONCLUSION:

Far too many Christians today, falsely believe that the Christian life makes no demands on those who claim to be Christian. They feel that “being saved”, going to church, and living a good moral life is sufficient for their salvation. That is not what the scriptures teach us.

Our Christian life must not just be a **passive trust in His grace**. God calls for an **active** obedience.

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¹⁶ They profess to know God, but by *their* deeds they deny *Him*, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.

A True Faith will Yield Good WORKS.
A True Faith will WALK with the Lord.
A True Faith will TALK about the Lord.

If you have not accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, this is your opportunity to come forward and let Him know that you are ready to become a part of His family.

We are also here with open arms, if you would like to identify yourself as part of this family of God in the Greenwood Christian church.

He is Lord, He is Lord.
He has risen from the dead and He is Lord.
Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess,
That Jesus Christ is Lord.