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Work Out What God Has Worked In

Philippians 2:12-13

Prayer: *Greetings, church. So good to be here. We are so thankful to have this opportunity and to see us all gathered together. Again, I just thank you, Lord, for giving us this body of Christ, this building, this group of called out ones who gather each week, and I just am grateful for that. I'm grateful also for your word. I'm grateful for giving us that ultimate gift. And Lord, once again it's that time where we're about the task of unpacking your word and so I pray for the presence of your Holy Spirit and the grace to do just that, and I pray that it would be of permanent value. And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, last week's look at the book of Philippians had Jesus emptying himself to become the ultimate of servants. We spoke how we need to look to Jesus to be of the same mind while we are embracing servanthood ourselves. *Philippians 2:5* says: *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a*

servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. As Paul pointed out, Jesus' servant humiliation went all the way to death on a cross. Jesus himself as our high priest went through the greatest suffering any human being could ever suffer. Hebrews 4:15 tells us: For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. And I said last week, for Jesus to be the one who in every respect has been tempted as we are yet without sin means that no one who has ever lived could possibly have suffered more or endured more than Jesus did. I mean think about it. If he or she ever did, then they could say to Jesus, you are not my high priest because you don't know what I went through. For Jesus to make the claim that in every respect he has been tempted as we are means that he wasn't just as Isaiah put it in Isaiah 53: A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief but instead as I said last week, he was the king of sorrows, more intimately acquainted with grief than any human will ever know. And he's the one that Paul is pointing to as our model and servanthood.

God has spoken over and over again of the necessity of embracing humility such as what Jesus modeled for us. It was a humility that took Jesus from the height of glory to the very depths of the human

experience and he did it all for the love of God and for the love of man. But now Paul's going to shift a little bit. He shifts gears and he starts to tell us about the rewards that accompany so great a humiliation. *Philippians 2:9* says: *Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* Now the term "highly exalted" in that text is from the Greek word "huperupsoo." That word occurs only one time in the entire New Testament and it refers to an exaltation above and beyond anything previously exalted because there is no higher height than that to which Jesus was exalted. *Hebrews 1:3* says: *After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.* And as one commentator put it, there are basically four stages to Christ's exaltation, three of which have happened since the cross. There's the resurrection, there is the ascension, there's a coronation. But Paul is also talking about a future consummation when according to verse 10: *At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth.* Now "in heaven" includes all of the ten thousand times ten thousand myriads of angels and it also includes the saints who have gone on before us. And "on earth" refers to those who are alive and living at the time of Christ's return, while "those under the earth" refers to those demons and

lost who are in hell, saying they too will bow the knee, not in love, not in reverence, but in complete and absolute submission, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Again that will occur in the future in the consummation when Jesus returns in triumph. But now, now in the present, it's a very different story.

The vast majority of tongues that confess Jesus today don't come close to confessing him as Lord. Instead they confess him as a slang word or a curse word, an invective or an idle word. Strangely enough one of the proofs of the truth of the gospel is the universal tendency of everyone throughout the entire world to blaspheme exclusively the name of Jesus. If someone hits their thumb with a hammer anywhere in the world and you're not going to hear the name of Buddha or Mohammed or any other religious figure invoked, the most spoken name in vain in the entire world is the Lord Jesus Christ and it's fitting because this is his world, the enemy's world. This is his turf. If every single time a person speaks the name of Christ in vain, it's a slap against the kingdom of light, then it would follow that the hundreds of millions of times that it occurs every minute, the enemy is delighting in that slap. God says the entire world stands in rebellion of him. And Jesus told us himself that this world stands in its hatred for Christ and his Father. Jesus said in *John 15*: "*Whoever hates me*

hates my Father also. If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: 'They hated me without a cause.'"

Now if you confront the average person with this level of hatred that they have for Christ, they're going to look at you sideways, they're going to look at you like you're crazy. I mean nobody admits to actively hating Jesus or his Father, but they do. I mean consider the fact that God held his name as so sacred that he made up one of the ten commandments specifically to address how seriously he takes the idea of taking his name in vain. I mean *Exodus 20:7* says: *"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain."*

You know the book of Leviticus contains a story and it's a story about a man who's in the Jewish camp who gets into a fight with another man, and during that fight he curses God out loud. So he's taken into custody and Moses is asked, okay, what do we do now? This is *Leviticus 24*. It says: *And they put him in custody, till the will of the LORD should be clear to them. Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Bring out of the camp the one who cursed, and let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him."* That's how seriously God took blasphemy.

There was also a precedent set, that is to say to blaspheme the name of God was a capital offense. I mean that's why in the New Testament in the numerous times that Jesus claimed to be God the very first reaction of the Jews was what? They picked up stones to stone him. When Jesus said in *John 10*: *"I and the Father are one."* The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, *"I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?"* The Jews answered him, *"It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God."* Well, blasphemy has gone from being a capital offense to just a normal part of our everyday conversation. And is it any wonder that on the final day of Christ's consummation when he returns, that God will have every single person who has ever used that glorious name like a trash can, they will bring honor to Christ. Every single person who's ever been born, whether they want to or not will be forced to acknowledge this one thing, *that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

So Paul acknowledges that everything in the universe, it's moving in a direction and it's headed towards one final day of consummation, and being ever so much the practical one, he follows

that up with a therefore. He says: *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, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.* You know there's an old cliché about the word "therefore," a bible study cliché, it says wherever you find the word "therefore" you need to look and find out what it is there for and this case is no exception. I mean listen to what Paul is saying. Paul is saying I'm sitting now in a jail cell and since I'm sitting in this jail cell, it's important for you to understand these things and start working out your own salvation without me, start working out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Well, what things is he talking about? Well, one thing he's been talking about is the profound humiliation and servanthood of Jesus. I mean he's discussing this within the context of how important it is to have unity and love in the church, to be of that one mind, to be of one accord. He points out that the key to that is this term "servanthood." Another thing he tells us is that the most profound example of humiliation there could possibly be is the Lord Jesus Christ. And then, then Paul describes the exaltation that God lavished on Jesus for his willingness to be humbled like a servant. And in doing so he points out a principle, and this is what he says over and over again, it's what scripture says, and the principle is this: great humility will receive a great reward. *Matthew 23*

says: *"The greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted."* James 4:10 says: *Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.* Luke 1:52 says: *He has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate.*

Now Paul has shifted from Christ's exaltation to the profoundly practical, to working out our own salvation. That means exactly what it seems to mean, putting effort into your life as a kingdom citizen. And Paul's use of the word "therefore" is truly to say Jesus gave us such an incredible example of servanthood and since God is determined to reward such behavior, therefore, work out your own salvation. Paul is suggesting that one of the most basic motives for assuming the role of a servant is the motivation that occurs over and over again in scripture, and it's one that you might have a quarrel with. You might wonder and say is that right? Is that real? Paul says if you're truly wise and you're truly looking out for your own self interest, then you will pursue servanthood simply because you're wise enough to recognize the inherent reward that you'll get. And to the extent that you truly buy what Paul is selling will be the extent that you're willing to accept the humiliation of servanthood. Why? Because it pays an astounding dividend. I mean I want to say this carefully without being misunderstood, but what God is saying is that even a base

motive can be a good thing when it's rightly applied to the kingdom. I mean if I'm truly wise then I am pursuing my own exaltation. How? By recognizing that right here and right now, I can achieve future exaltation by pursuing its exact opposite in the present. It's by doing exactly what Christ did, adopting the heart of a servant, postponing my reward until a future time when I recognize that -- quote -- *whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.* You might think that's a base motive but Jesus said that to pursue exaltation properly is a good thing. It's a wise thing. He even gives us an example of how not to do it and how to do it in *Luke 14*. This is what he says: *Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he noticed how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, "When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give your place to this person,' and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher.'* Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." I mean understand, Jesus is not denying the motivation to seek what everybody else is seeking, honor and glory. He just

says that the way that most people go about seeking it is profoundly wrong, because the real glory and the real honor and the real exaltation comes when you actively pursue its opposite, and that is humility itself. And he uses a very practical example of seeking out the lower seating as a means of humbling yourself. So understand, Jesus is not knocking the pursuit of honor. Instead he is knocking the wrong way to pursue it and he is showing us the right way to pursue it by servanthood, by humility. Paul says to work out your own salvation, and part of that work is recognizing the value, the reward and the return on investment that accompany servanthood. And the reason we pursue servanthood is that we have faith that God will reward such a pursuit. With what? With honor and with exaltation, with the very things that we wanted in the first place. *Hebrews 11* says: *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*

Joel Osteen and the prosperity preachers tell us that we are to pursue our best life now. God tells us the exact opposite. He says if you'll only delay your gratification from this life until the next, you will reap rewards beyond your wildest imagination. Speaking of the great heroes of the faith, *Hebrews* says this, says: *These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For*

people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city. Can I truly selfishly pursue a great life and great status and a great future in another country, literally meaning another kingdom, literally meaning heaven itself? Absolutely. Not only can you, you are crazy not to.

I mean think about this with regard to giving as well, can you have that same kind of base motive for giving, that you're not simply giving money away, rather you're investing it and you're expecting to get a great return on your investment in the next country that you're living in, in heaven itself. Listen to what Paul says in 1 Timothy 6. He's speaking to the church and he says: *Instruct them to do what is good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good reserve for the age to come, so that they may take hold of life that is real.* I mean you almost think that Paul is talking about working out your own salvation with a conscious eye for what's in it for me. You should pursue storing up for yourself a good reserve that comes next. Well, that's precisely what he's saying. I mean it's one of the things that we should be working towards and working for and

here's why. Again, *Philippians 4:16*. Paul says: *For even in Thessalonica you sent gifts for my need several times. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the profit that is increasing to your account.* Paul almost sounds like an investment banker, he works for TD Ameritrade or Charles Schwab. And he says, look, the gift that you're giving is going to be reflected in an increase in your account. That's precisely what he's saying. And that's precisely what we accomplish when we work out our own salvation.

Speaking of these very scriptures Randy Alcorn in his book *Money, Possessions and Eternity* says this, he says: "Christians throughout the ages have taken these passages literally and have been far less serious than we are about earthly treasures and far more serious about heavenly treasures. John Bunyan wrote *Pilgrim's Progress* from an English prison cell to which he had been condemned for unlicensed preaching of the gospel. This is how he interpreted the words of Christ and Paul: Whatever good thing you do for Him, if done according to the Word, is laid up for you as treasure in chests and coffer, to be brought out to be rewarded before both men and angels, to your eternal comfort. Is this a biblical concept? Absolutely. Paul spoke about the Philippians' financial giving and explained, 'Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account'. God keeps an account open for us in heaven, and every gift given for his glory

is a deposit in that account. Not only God, not only others, but we are the eternal beneficiaries of our giving. Have you been making regular deposits? 'For yourselves.' Does it seem strange that Jesus commands us to do what's in our own best interest? Isn't that selfish? No -- God expects and commands us to act out of enlightened self-interest. Our generosity is not only for God's glory, not only for others' good, but also for our good. Selfishness is when we pursue gain at the expense of others. But God doesn't have a limited number of treasures to distribute. When you store up treasures for yourself in heaven, it doesn't reduce the treasures available to others. In fact, it is by serving God and others that we store up heavenly treasures. Everyone gains; no one loses."

"God expects and commands us to act out of enlightened self-interest." And whether we're talking about our investment account that we have in heaven or the honor, glory and exaltation we would individually receive there, it still comes down to faith, which is *the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen*. I mean just think a minute, just think about how pleasing it would be to God that you're living your life sold out as a servant because you fully expect to be honored by God for doing so. Just imagine the same thing applying to your finances, that you care far more about your accounts in heaven are accruing

than you do about how they're doing down here on earth. I mean that too has got to be God-pleasing. So acting out of a truly enlightened self-interest means acting in genuine faith just as *Hebrews 11:6* says, it says: *Now without faith it is impossible to please God, for the one who draws near to Him must believe that He exists and rewards those who seek Him.*

So here's the question: Do you work at servanthood? Do you work at stewardship? Now you might be thinking what about this idea of the gospel of works? I mean we're classic Protestants and we believe we're saved according to *Ephesians 2:8* which says: *For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift -- not from works, so that no one can boast.* God goes on to say that if you think you can earn your way to heaven, you're going to have something then to boast about and He goes on to say in *Romans 3:27*: *Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By one of works? No, on the contrary, by a law of faith. For we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.* Well, how then can Paul make a statement like he makes? It's a statement that sounds like a complete contradiction. Listen to what he says. He says: *So then, my dear friends, just as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now even more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who is working in*

you, enabling you both to desire and to work out His good purpose.

Okay. Which one is it, Paul? I mean do we work out our own salvation with fear and trembling or is it God who is working in us, enabling us to desire and work out his own purpose? What are you saying here, God? Actually what he is saying here is both. It's literally a tension and a tension is designed in both of these verses, they pull against each other. You have one pulling in one direction, you have one pulling in the exact opposite direction and God says that's just where I want it, right there, that tension, pull both ways.

God calls us to work out what he has worked in. I've tried to explain this by using an analogy of a deer and its antlers to illustrate what Paul is saying here. You know it's hunting season, so everybody is up on hunting and deer. Deer lose their antlers every year. After the fall rutting season ends their testosterone levels begin to drop and the antlers fall off. They drop off just like babies lose their baby teeth. And the following spring the new antlers begin to grow and their covered with this soft spongy velvet material that's rich in nutrients and blood vessels and it's what causes them to grow. And as the rutting season begins, the deer rub off the velvet against trees and bushes and they're constantly seen rubbing their necks and their heads against those trees and bushes in order to strengthen their necks and to get rid

of the velvet which is apparently very annoying to deer. What that buck is doing, he's literally working out the antlers that God has worked into a deer.

So let me be theoretical here. Let's say that there's a bear walking by and he's a very, very bright bear, and he sees this huge buck's antlers and he decides, "Wouldn't it be very great if I could add a set of antlers to my claws and teeth as yet another weapon," I mean, it's my analogy, it can be as weird as I want it to be. So he observes the bucks and they're rubbing their antlers against the brushes and the trees and they're working out the horns that God has worked within them. So he decides he's going to rub his head against the bushes and against the trees in the very same way. And we all know that that bear could rub and rub night and day and no antlers are going to grow on his head because God has not worked antlers into bear's heads. And no amount of working out will make up for the fact that God has not worked them in. And what Paul is saying is that faith is a gift of God, not of works so that no one can boast, and God alone works it in. But like antlers on a deer, the gift has to be worked out. Time and again I quote *Ezekiel 36* because it states quite clearly what God's doing. It says: *And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within*

you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. See, if you are truly a believer in Jesus Christ, then God has given you a new heart and God has given you a brand new spirit, and that spirit that God has placed within you is the same one that causes you to want to follow his statutes and obey his rules.

The Canons of Dort is a statement of faith that was written in 1618. It says of God's "working in" this very thing, it says: "He infuses new qualities into the will, which though heretofore dead he quickens; from being evil, disobedient, and refractory" -- which means stubborn -- "he renders it good, obedient, and pliable; actuates and strengthens it, that like a good tree, it may bring forth the fruits of good actions." I mean I think it was Donald Grey Barnhouse who says that man is born with his will absolutely dead set against God's will because of the fall of Adam and that at conversion, God literally takes the old man's will out and he gives him a brand new what he calls "willer". It's that new willer, that brand new will that now finds itself wanting what God wants. And that's what God is working in us. Paul says to work out what God has worked in. And then he adds a very important qualifier and he puts it in the sentence in such a way that he's emphasizing it. Paul actually says "with fear and trembling work out your own salvation." Well fear and trembling of what? Of hell? When was the last time you heard of anybody being motivated to work out

their salvation because of a fear of hell? I mean one of the characteristics of unsaved people is that they have no such fear at all. There's an indictment that God has toward mankind in general that he writes out in *Romans 3*. It starts out this way, it says: *As it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."* And the indictment continues relentlessly until it reaches its damning final charge in verse 18, it says: *"There is no fear of God before their eyes."*

We are a risk averse culture. And we are surrounded by a veritable sea of warnings covering anything that could possibly go wrong, yet the greatest danger that anyone could ever face by far is conspicuously ignored. In fact anyone who warns of this danger is going to pay a price, anyone who seeks to warn people of the dangers of hell is now considered to be one of those "fire and brimstone nutcases." There truly is absolutely no fear of God before their eyes. So where does the fear and trembling come from? Well the words actually describes a sense of awe, a sense of reverence that applies to living your life for the kingdom. The world loves to think that you can approach faith in Christ as an afterthought, almost the equivalent of a hobby instead of making it the reigning passion of your life, but you can't. You see, when

God's spirit truly enters into you, he changes the way you look at everything. So if you've been living your life with the equivalent of a faith as a hobby, something you can indulge in on Sunday mornings rather than something that's the guiding passion of your life, then you seriously need to consider the possibility that maybe God has not worked into you yet that faith.

You have to understand there's a vast chasm that exists between believers and unbelievers. I mean unbelievers, those folks who have not had faith worked into them by God, they see faith as a joke. I mean that's the baseline that the rest of the world operates from. The scripture makes it clear. *1 Corinthians 1:18* says: *For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.* *1 Corinthians 2:14* says: *But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* So man thinks that God is utterly foolish. Well it just so happens to be true that God thinks that man is absolutely foolish as well. *1 Corinthians 3:19* says: *For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, since it is written: He catches the wise in their craftiness; and again, The Lord knows that the reasonings of the wise are meaningless.*

So mankind thinks that God is foolish and Paul tells us yet another reason why there's this baseline in the world. He says so in 2 *Corinthians 4:3*, he says: *And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.* So according to God we have two things working here. According to God the natural man's wisdom is absolute foolishness but his perception has also been blinded by the god of this world. He's blinded passively by his own false reasoning and he's blinded actively by the spirit king of this world who will do anything to keep those who belong to him blinded and in the dark. And against such odds you would think it is a fool's errand to even try to share the gospel. And you'd be a hundred percent correct if it wasn't for the grace of God, because God is the one who turns hearts around. I mean if it wasn't for those scriptures that I just read, those scriptures that I just read speak very powerfully to me because I still remember exactly the way I used to relate to Christianity when I was a pagan. I mean I saw it as complete and utter nonsense, not worthy of a moment's consideration. And God saw me correctly as a complete and utter fool, completely blinded by the God of this world. And for reasons known to him and him alone for which I will always be grateful, he decided to grant me the grace of faith. But if God hadn't worked that faith into me by

his grace alone, I would have never been able to work it out.

And that leads me to the next point that Paul makes. He says:

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

The quickest way to prove that it is actually God at work within you changing your very will is to compare what your will used to be before you were a believer to what your will is now. I think back and I remember my will as a non-believer was for my own personal success, for the promotion of me, myself and I. Then I remember that God gave me a brand new willer. Now my will as a believer is for the advance of his kingdom. But I didn't get that will by any other means than by God infusing his grace in my will so that my will and his will more and more line up. And we call that process "sanctification." So God is at work in me to change my will. We saw in Ezekiel that's just what he did, he said, I will give you a new heart and I will put a new spirit within you. Well my new heart and my new spirit don't think or act like my old heart and my old spirit used to think or act because I got a new willer, and it's being worked out for God's good pleasure.

You see, God's sovereignty in our lives is like any other aspect of God. The more you look into it, the more mysterious, the more wonderful, the more enormous it becomes. God says this about the

very things that we are doing to work out our faith in *Ephesians 2:8*. He says this: *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

Okay. I want you to imagine next Thursday, just pick a time next Thursday, 7:00 o'clock in the evening. Exactly what are you going to be doing? You have no idea, but God knows. He knows exactly where you will be, he knows exactly what you will be doing and he also knows what you will be thinking at that time. *Psalm 139* says: *You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether.* Not only does he know all that but he's also prepared beforehand the works that he has for us to do. People say how do I know God's will? How do I know God's will? You know, the one sure way to know God's sovereign will for Monday is Tuesday. That's your answer. See, I can look forward, I can readily see the hand of God in every single aspect of my life. I can look backward and see the very same thing but when I look forward, I can trust that what I've seen looking backwards is enough to make me trust that God will continue to work out in me what he's already worked in, and then bank on that trust. I can

trust that the God who loved me enough to become a man and live out a flawless life so that he can lay down that life for me at the cross so that by faith I could exchange his righteousness for my sin so that I could stand before God fully accepted with Christ's righteousness as my own, I can trust that that God is working within me to will and to work according to his good pleasure. Or I can worry and fret. I mean, those are really my choices. And this is what Jesus says in *Matthew 6:25*, he says: *"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?"*

So what will it be? Worry and fret over life itself, or fear and trembling with all reverence over the privilege we have of God working out in our lives the faith that he has worked in by grace? Hopefully again by God's grace we can now see what Paul's "therefore" is there for. He says: *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, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work*

for his good pleasure. Let's pray.

Father, I thank you for who you are, I thank you for what you have worked into us. And Lord, if there's anybody here in this building sitting there saying I don't know that God has worked that in, if there's anybody here who looks at their faith and says it's not much more than the level of a hobby, it's not the guiding passion of my life, Lord, I pray that even now you would be opening their eyes, speaking to them about what it means to have God's faith worked into them. Give them the opportunity, give them the heart and the desire to say, God, I want more than just a hobby, I want a passion for you. I want you to work into me that faith that I can spend the rest of my life working out, and I want to do that by your grace and by your power. And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.