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A Salvation Work Out Plan (II); Phil 2:12-18

GPBC

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Introduction – Last week for the introduction we made the observation that if you desire to improve your physical condition, you have to set a goal and then develop a step-by-step plan that will enable you to reach your goal. It may be weight loss, regaining strength or mobility from an injury, increasing your speed or endurance, or just simply to be healthier. But whatever the goal, you have to have a plan and you have to work that plan to get results.

The same holds true in our spiritual lives as believers. We have to keep our eyes on the goal, Christ. Our desire is to worship, glorify, and honor Christ, and in so doing become more Christlike. That's the goal of the Christian life. To reach that goal we need a plan. Paul says it this way, work out your own salvation. In this text Paul gives us at least three vital steps in this salvation work out plan. He tells us how, what to remove, and what to add to our salvation work out plan.

To improve your physical health, you will need to remove some things and replace them with better, healthier choices. That simple equation rings true in our spiritual lives as well. So that's where we're headed this morning. But first let's recap what we said last week and finish point one.

- I. How to Work Out Your Salvation.
 - a. Christ is our goal and our motivation to work out our own salvation. In working out our salvation, our focus should be on our faith, on our heart, on our walk with the Lord, not on everyone else's. Work out your own salvation.
 - b. How? First, Paul says with fear and trembling. Why fear and trembling? I have 2 answers for why Paul would phrase it that way. We need to recap the first point and then add the second one.
 - i. We need to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling first to make certain we even have a salvation to work out. I want to hopefully clarify and not confuse. I don't want you to be confused about your salvation. I do want you to work it out with fear and trembling.

1. If you say you are a follower of Christ, and yet you ground your salvation, on anything except Christ and what He has done for you and in turn your love and devotion to Him, then I want you, more than anything, to work that out with fear and trembling.
 2. If you love Christ and desire to worship Him and grow in Him and honor Him with your life but and your life exemplifies that you love Him and not the world, you've got it!
 3. So here's the point of clarification. As you work out your own salvation, make sure you haven't replaced the message of the gospel with a means of hearing or responding to the gospel. It's the gospel that saves, not the method or the means that brings the gospel to you.
 4. If you say I am a Christian because I was baptized, that's a means not the message. If you say I am Christian because I had an emotional experience or I said a prayer or I walked down the aisle or I talked with my pastor – those are means, they are not the message. The means do not save, believing the message and embracing Christ, that's what saves you. He saves you!
 5. So if you were baptized because God saved you and made you a new creation and Jesus is your Savior and Lord – that's salvation! If when you walked down the aisle or prayed a prayer, or talked to Martin, you were surrendering your all to Christ and receiving Him into your life – that's salvation! If through the means or the method, you became a lover of Jesus – that's salvation!
 6. So the bottom line of it all is this: Are you trusting your soul to a method or through the method are you clinging to Jesus? Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling! That's the first point of fear and trembling.
- ii. (2nd) We need to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling because there is no way we can work it out in our own strength. That's the biggest difference between physical strength and spiritual strength. We can't grow spiritually the way we grow physically – by just trying harder and committing

more and rededicating 100 times. Working out your own salvation with fear and trembling sounds like this:

1. God I can't break this addiction apart from your power. God I can't put away this worry in my own strength. God I can't control my tongue without the conviction of your Spirit. God I won't have the courage to share my faith without your grace. I need You Lord. I need your power in my life. Help me believe. My flesh is weak but Your grace is sufficient. How do we work out our own salvation? First, with fear and trembling and second
 - c. With utter dependence on God's sufficient grace – for it is God who works in you. Working out our salvation, living on the outside what we say we believe on the inside – is a work of God, a work of grace!
 - i. That doesn't mean we're passive. Oh we'll sweat, cry, plead, pray, fast, strive, wrestle, run, labor – but our working is His working in us! So if we're not working...
 - ii. We need God's grace for every part of our sanctification – both to will and to work for His good pleasure. God works in us the desire to grow and the effort we need to exert to grow!
 - iii. Often the biggest problem is our want to! God fix my want to!
 - d. How to work out your salvation – with fear and trembling and with dependence. 1 Cor 15:10 – this is Paul! "By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me!" When we flex our spiritual muscles, it's actually not us but God flexing His strong, sufficient muscles through these weak vessels! Therefore, He gets the glory and we get the joy!!

II. What to Remove from Your Salvation Work Out

- a. If you are going to improve your physical health, there are things you will have to cut out of your life. In the same way, our salvation work out plan includes some things we must remove! Namely – grumbling and disputing. Complaining and arguing.
- b. That could be complaining about the church, the pastor, or just complaining about life in general. Just stop it. Don't do it. Don't disguise it as a prayer request or try to legitimize it as a concern. A concern involves a sin. Something is being done that shouldn't be or

being neglected that should not be. A complaint is simply I'm not getting my way. I'm not getting what I want. Complaining is radically self-centered instead of radically God-centered, gospel-centered, Christ-centered. Have you ever met someone who always complained?

- c. A disputer has the same problem. He always argues because he's always right! His eyes are on self and not the Savior. Grumbling and disputing destroy unity, evaporate humility, and suck the gospel life out of the church. Paul says don't do that – why? you'll never be a gospel witness! V15. That's the goal – to shine in the darkness!!

III. What to Add to Your Salvation Work Out

- a. Holding fast to the word of life – holding fast to something means you've totally given yourself to it. If you hold fast to something, you don't have room to grip or hold on to anything else!
- b. 2 Tim 3:15-17 teach that the Scripture is the word of life. In John 6:68 Peter says to Jesus, "Lord, you have the words of eternal life." So when Paul says hold fast, cling to, grip with all your might, grasp with white knuckles the word of life, I take that to mean, cling to the Scripture and to the Christ you see in the Scripture. When we do that, we won't have room to grumble or dispute or any other sin that enslaves us or weighs us down.
- c. Let me illustrate it this way. Men, God tells us in His word, hold fast to your wife. If we are holding fast to our wives, we won't have room for another woman, we won't have room to flirt or lust for another woman, we won't have room to scroll through pornography – because she has our full attention, our full affection -we are clinging, we are holding fast.
- d. That's what we need to add to our salvation work out plan – hold fast to the word of life, our full attention to God, our full affection to Christ, leave no room for sin, Satan, or self – hold fast!
- e. What's the reason? Paul says, so that in the day of Christ – all the blood and tears that I have given for you to know Christ will not be in vain. Paul's pastor heart rings loud here! Hold fast to the word of life so that when Christ returns, and I'm with Him, you will be there too!

Conclusion – the end is joy