

Scripture: Philippians 2:12-18

Note: After Paul teaches us about humility he reminds us that God will use that humility to complete us. Remember the end goal of our lives is to live as much like Jesus as is possible.

I. We are saved by faith alone but faith is not expressed alone. It is supplemented by works.

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye 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. We need to remember what Paul wrote is **Ephesians 2:8-10** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Notice God saves us by grace but it is unto good works. That means we change and submit our will to God and do works He wants. **James 2:20-22** But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? The salvation Paul is talking about is sanctification. God molds us into the image of Christ as we work for Him.

II. We are to make serving Christ a priority. work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Dr. Gutzke has good idea on this part of the verse: *I can work out my own salvation humbly with fear and trembling, which means I would seek to obey God conscious of my own weakness. He will lead me, and I will accept His guidance as I accept His will and try to do it humbly and faithfully seeking to obey Him.* The key is for me to make a conscious effort to seek God's will in my life.

III. God will create within me the desire to do and the power to carry out His will for my life. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. You may say how could God possibly do that or better yet how can I allow God to do that. We have had many verses about surrendering our will to God. In Romans 12:1-2 we talk about presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice; followed by a transformation as our minds are renewed. We know faith comes by hearing the Bible. We know prayer is a conscious contact with God. We know the Holy Spirit interprets the scriptures for us making it real for us. The Christ in us through the power of the Holy Spirit within us empower us to produce fruit for the kingdom (John 15). Even the changes within us which are the fruits of the Spirit are not produced by us they are produced in us by the Spirit. During this process my want too's are changed from me centered to God centered.

IV. Our lives must be a true reflection of Jesus. Do all things without murmurings and disputings That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

A) Our grumbling and complaining is replaced with a sense of gratitude for the opportunity to serve. Do all things without murmurings and disputings I don't have to work at fellowship dinner I get to work. I don't have to visit someone who is sick I get to visit.

B) We must be blameless because we need to reach a perverse nation. That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation When Paul says we are to be blameless and harmless he is saying you must live your life according to a biblical worldview. It doesn't mean we are sinless it means the world sees us as standing for Christ and refusing

to compromise with the world. **Daniel 6:4-5** Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God. These men saw in Daniel a man who was above reproach; he did not cheat, lie steal or violate any other laws of society but they knew that if Daniel had to choose between obeying God and obeying the law of the land he would choose to obey God. We need to realize that God has called the church to ambassadors to the world. We can say we believe the Bible all we want but if our lives do not reflect what we preach our words are useless. In fact it would be better if we said nothing at all because if we are no different than the world we are telling the world Jesus has no power to change a person. We must be different in order to make a difference. Paul told these people they were in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation; so are we.

C) We must be sure we are lights in the world. among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; Our lives and our good works are an attraction to God. When we shine as lights in the world we bring glory to God and the only way to do that is to live according to the Bible. There is another way we fail to consider. Jesus tells us in his farewell sermon **John 13:34-35** . A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. **Dr. Henry writes:** *“The need was not for the world only to hear the Gospel, but to see love in action. As love was expressed the Roman world was turned upside down because they had love one for another. Their love for one another stood out. As is always true, the world is attracted to what it does not have. People will be moved when they see love manifested in our lives. There is no doubt that love was the key word in Christ’s farewell sermon. In essence, Jesus was saying **because you love Me, put your brother before yourself**.* Look at all the protest in our country that could be solved if people followed the example of love taught and demonstrated by Jesus. Is the church today demonstrating the kind of love that turned the Roman world upside down?

V. Paul wanted to be sure his work was not in vain. (16b; 19-21) that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.. ¹⁹ But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. ²⁰ For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. ²¹ For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s. The key is verse 21 “all seek their own, not the things which are Christ’s. In the church it has to done my way then check to see if that is God’s will. In the world my decisions are based on what I think is best for me not on what God wants for me. Paul knew there would be trouble when his immediate influence was gone so he asked God to send Timothy, someone like minded. The word Paul uses is seek.