

Working Out Your Own Salvation

Robert Martin

Therefore, my beloved, as you 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; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain. (Phil. 2:12-16, emp. added) [All Scripture references are taken from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.]

The word “work” means, “to be active, to energize and to finish the task.” The phrase “your own” means, “It is a personal responsibility that each person must accept.” The word “salvation” means, “deliverance, to be saved, for the saving of our soul.” How can we work out our own salvation?

WE CAN WORK OUT OUR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

Paul says in Philippians 2:12, "Therefore, my beloved, as you 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." In Deuteronomy 6:2, Moses set before God's people this important command, "That you may fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged." Here is a principle that never would change for God's people and would be repeated throughout the Old and New Testament. As God's children, we must reverence the Lord by obeying His instructions. The promise is that if we do this we will have a prosperous road ahead of us.

The Psalmist said, "The Lord reigns; let the peoples tremble! He dwells between the cherubim; let the earth be moved! The Lord is great in Zion, and He is high above all the peoples. Let them praise Your great and awesome name—He is holy" (Psa. 99:1-3). Jehovah is King and sitting on His throne. Jehovah sits in majesty above all the rulers of the earth. We are to show reverence to Jehovah because He is King and sits in majesty above all people of the earth. In Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, the wise man Solomon said, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil."

The bottom line is that God desires that we work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. The word "fear" means, "with reverence and awesome respect that is based on love." The word "tremble" means, "to quake

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with fear, to shake with fear." When you work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, you shrink back from all that might displease the Lord. Hebrews 12:28-29 says, "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire." In view of the fact that we have received a kingdom (church) that cannot be destroyed, we should worship and serve the Lord with a thankful heart, with holy fear and awe, because our God is a consuming fire.

WE CAN WORK OUT OUR SALVATION BY DOING ALL THINGS WITHOUT MURMURING AND DISPUTING.

Paul says in Philippians 2:14, "Do all things without complaining and disputing." The word "complaining" means, "a murmur, murmuring, muttering; to murmur, mutter, grumble, to say anything against in a low tone like in the cooing of doves or pigeons." In John 6:43, Jesus said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves." Jesus told them not to be like a bunch of irritating pigeons. 1 Corinthians 10:10-12 says, "Nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." In 1 Peter 4:9, Peter encourages us to "be hospitable to one another without grumbling." This complaining is like a bunch of cooing pigeons who are obnoxious.

Complaining is one way that the devil uses to hurt or destroy us and hurt the church. Let us take Paul's

encouragement to heart so that we do not make the mistake of hurting and destroying ourselves and hurting the church for which Jesus died. The word “disputing” means, “a person deliberating within self, a questioning about what is true and right, hesitation, doubting, disputing and arguing.” Paul says in 1 Timothy 6:3-4, “If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions.” Some people like to keep something stirred up, they like to argue. What kind of reflection is murmuring and complaining or disputing on our faith in the Lord and His Word? What kind of environment does this create in the body of Christ?

**WE CAN WORK OUT OUR OWN
SALVATION BY SHINING AS
LIGHTS IN THE WORLD.**

The Word of God says in Philippians 2:15, “That you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.” We can shine as beacon lights in this dark world when we are living a clean and innocent life as children of God, holding forth the Word of Life. God says in Daniel 12:3, “Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.” Jesus said in Matthew 5:14-16, “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to

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all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." When the world sees our good works it will dispel the darkness in the world and glorify our heavenly Father. Paul says, "Therefore be imitators of God as dear children...For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light" (Eph. 5:1, 8). When we are imitators of God, we will walk as children of light and glorify the Father in heaven. Our Lord said in Matthew 13:43, "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" We can shine forth as the sun in the Lord's church when we are right with the Lord and when we will glorify Him.

WE CAN WORK OUT OUR OWN SALVATION WHEN WE HOLD FORTH THE WORD OF LIFE TO OTHERS.

The Word says in Philippians 2:16, "Holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain." The phrase "holding fast" in this verse means, "to hold upon, to retain, and to hold forth." As God's children, let us hold on to the Word of Life and hold it forth to others so that they might have the hope of eternal life. We read in Proverbs 23:23, "Buy the truth, and do not sell it, also wisdom and instruction and understanding." We must hold on to the truth as we would hold on to God's unchanging hand. Paul exhorts in Titus 1:9, "Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict." God's Word is faithful and true, let us hold on to it.

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In 1 Timothy 4:16, God's holy Word says, "Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you." When we hold on to God's Word and hold it forth to others, we will save ourselves and others. Are YOU working out your own salvation? If not, will you start right now today?

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