

Work out Your Salvation with Fear and Trembling

Philippians 2:12-13

Introduction

So far in Philippians Paul has called his readers to bold evangelism and humble, sacrificial love for each other. But Paul knows we can come up with excuses for why we can't obey in these areas. And that's why Paul writes what he does in verses 12-13

What does it mean to work out your salvation? (v.12)

The phrase "as you have always obeyed" shows that working out your salvation means obeying Jesus Christ.

The reason obeying Christ involves working out our salvation is because salvation does not just mean being forgiven, it also means being transformed into beautifully Christ-centered and humbly loving people.

Why should we do this with fear and trembling? (v.12)

When we understand all that Christ has saved us from, and what we would face if we were not trusting him, we will trust and obey him with fear and trembling.,

But Paul knows his readers could think we should fear and tremble that we might not continue in faith, And so end up not saved. Which is why Paul writes what he does in verse 13.

What does it mean that God works in us?

When you obey Jesus Christ that is a work *you did*, but it was not just you doing it. It was also God *causing* you to do it.

That does not mean we should passively wait for God to make us do things, because v.12 does not call us to *wait* for God to make us work out our own salvation; it calls us to *work out* our own salvation.

There is mystery here. But every time we obey God, it's ultimately because God causes us to obey.

What does this mean for us?

It means that because by faith we are on the rope bridge of Jesus, *we don't need to fear losing our salvation.*

It means that because by faith we are on the rope bridge of Jesus, *we will always be enabled to obey.*



HOME GROUP DISCUSSION OF SUNDAY'S TEACHING

(Sometimes in our home groups we talk about Sunday's teaching, so we can work together on responding to God's Word — asking questions, sharing insights, talking together.)

What are some excuses that keep you from thinking you can obey?

Did these verses overcome those excuses? Why or why not?

Does it make sense that we should fear and tremble over what Christ saved us from and what we would face if we were not trusting Christ, but that we should not fear and tremble that we might not persevere in faith all the way to the end? Why or why not?

Do you work out your salvation with fear and trembling? Why or why not?

What are the benefits that come from obeying with fear and trembling?

How does it help to know that when we obey it is God who is causing us to obey?

Many people think that if God causes us to obey, then our obedience can't be freely chosen. What do you think about that? Could God have created a world in which our actions can both be freely chosen by us, and genuinely caused by God? Why or why not?

What prayer needs does this passage raise in your minds? Pray for each other about these areas.

