

## Paul's Letter to the Philippians - Lesson 7

Philippians 2:12-13

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**Bruce:** Sig and I were talking about who was going to open us up for worship today. Don wasn't here. The last thing you want me to do is lead singing. (*Laughter*) So Sig said to me, "Can you lead the song?"

And I thought, *They don't want me to do that*. In fact, at my first church in Kansas on Christmas, after I'd been there one year, they brought me a lavalier mike like this. They said, "Just turn it off when you sing hymns." (*Laughter*) So I'm not going to lead the hymn.

What I'm going to ask us to do, men, is just to pray. If the Lord leads you to pray, let's just pray individually and I'll close in a few moments. So if the Lord would move in your heart to pray for us, whoever you'd like to pray for, let's just do that. Let's go into a time of prayer and I'll close. Let's go before the Lord in prayer.

**Participant:** Father God, we thank You that we can come together and meet together in fellowship and also for Your word. Father, may Your Holy Spirit seize our hearts today, for the sake of the Lord Jesus, to Your glory.

**Participant:** Father, we just thank you that Rita Pinyot has been taken back to you and is with you and receiving her eternal reward. We ask you to be with Ernie now. While he misses her, fill his heart with Your grace and be His companion in life so he doesn't miss her as much as he knows that someday he'll be with her again. So watch over them, bless them, and thank you so much for all that both Ernie and Rita have been to us.

**Participant:** Father, I pray for the many friends and families that we have held up to You in prayer week after week. We know they struggle with either physical ailments or all sorts of challenges in their lives. And we are so grateful, Lord, that we can come to You in prayer, but also, Lord, that we can come to You to talk and to prepare our hearts for whatever You would have us do to honor You and to glorify You, to share the great news of Your Son, our Savior, with those You bring across our path. And Lord, I thank You so much for our teachers. And thank You for Jeff and for Bruce, Ted Wood and Bishop Rodgers, Don Maurer and Carl Jones and Tom Hansz, all those who have taught us over the years, to really explain this wonderful life that You've given us. And it takes time, and I thank You for Your patience with us. And I thank You most of all, Lord, for the power of Your resurrection and the power of Your word. And thank You for bringing it to us. Amen.

**Bruce:** Merciful and gracious Lord, we thank You for the body of Christ. Father, there are people, Your children all around the world, meeting just like this to study Your word, to pray, to worship, to serve. Father, we just pray that You would be with Your body, that You would draw us all closer to Yourself. And wherever Your body might exist worldwide, that there would be testimonies of Your grace, Your mercy, Your character and Your attributes, but most of all Your glory. May they see how precious You are in our sight. So Father, we just pray now that You would open our eyes once again, that we might behold You more clearly for Christ's sake. Amen.

## Paul's Letter to the Philippians - Lesson 7

**Men:** Amen.

**Bruce:** I'm sure it would benefit you if you would open your Bibles to Philippians chapter 2. The passage we're going to explore today is found in Philippians 2, verses 12 and 13.

*"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 salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."* This is the word of the Lord.

**Men:** Thanks be to God.

**Bruce:** Amen and Amen. Last week we studied the previous verses—chapter 2, verses 1-11. We examined the humiliation of Christ and the exaltation of Christ. By His humiliation I mean that He took His residency in incarnated form. In human form He took up His residency with us in order to accomplish our salvation. So He was humiliated because He left His throne in glory. But He returned to His throne in glory.

Now I want you to notice two things. In verses 1-11 we find the word *therefore* in verse 9. And then you see the second time that *therefore* is used in verse 12. Now that's significant. You've heard me say over the years that you need to ask yourself what is the *therefore* there for?, because it's referring back to those things that precede it.

Now look at verse 9. This is God's response to the humiliation of Christ, which he described for us in those previous verses. Look at verse 9. *"Therefore God has highly exalted Him, and bestowed upon Him the name that is above every name."*

Now you have to look at those verses before that to understand why Paul said "therefore." This is God's response to the description of the humiliation of Christ. And what was His response? Exaltation. He exalted Him because of His willingness to be humiliated for the glory of God. So the first *therefore* is God's response.

The second *therefore* is our response. Notice our response: *therefore*. So what is our response to the humiliation of Christ and to the exaltation of Christ? Therefore it is to *"work out your salvation with fear and trembling."* It's a very important thing that we understand the two *"therefores."*

The first thing that Paul does is to give us some encouragement. Now I want you to notice this verse, verse 13. *"For it is God who works in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure."* The first thing we need to look at is what does it mean when we say that it is God who is at work in you?

Now after the self-humbling of Jesus passage which we discussed in chapter 2, verses 1-11, Paul gives us some great encouragement, and he also gives us an exhortation, some direction. And notice first of all that working out your salvation is grounded on the fact that God is at work in you. Working out your salvation is based on the fact that God is at work in you.

Now we need to understand that as a fact, that God is at work in you. The apostle says that it is true if we are God's children. It's not something that we are to make happen or to strive for. But it is something that is a fact because of who you are, that God is at work in you. That's a fact, men, and we need to understand that. So often we get discouraged and

## Paul's Letter to the Philippians - Lesson 7

wonder where God is. Paul reminds us that God is at work in you. And the reason is that He is exalted in heaven.

And therefore our response is to understand that it is a fact; it's not fiction. It's not a wishful thought. It's not something you achieve. It's not something you work at. It's not something you grind up. It's a gift. It's part of our salvation. It's part of our redemption. We need to understand that as a fact.

And Paul wants us to know this: that this fact resonates all throughout Scripture. We don't need new techniques to motivate us. We don't need new things to motivate us to live the Christian life. But we need to come to grips and just base our activity on the fact of the Christian life. And this is one of those facts of our being in Christ: that God is at work in you. That's just one of the facts of our Christian life that we need to grasp and hold on to.

Paul does something very frequently in the Scriptures, in his epistles. He always asks this question. "*Do you not know?*" What he is doing is that he is saying, "Go back to the facts." Men, this is one of those facts that we need to understand. Do you not know that God is at work in you?

What is that going to do to you when you think about that on a daily basis? God is at work in me this day. Do you not know that? It's a constant refrain in his writing. He reminds us of that.

And the fact is this: that God indwells every believer. He indwells them. Now God's indwelling His people is one of the great themes of the Bible, beginning in the book of Genesis.

Look at Exodus chapter 29, verses 45 and 46. This is a theme which runs from the beginning of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. God indwells His people, His chosen people.

Exodus 29:45. "*I will dwell among the people of Israel, and I will be their God. They shall know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them. I am the LORD their God.*"

Now here is one of the great things about the redemptive act of Christ that we need to understand and to grasp. *God redeems in order to inhabit.* The reason God was pleased to redeem you and me was so that He could inhabit us and dwell within us, because God is at work in us. When God calls people to Himself and redeems them, it is so that He might have a place of habitation. God is looking for a place to inhabit. And where is the place He inhabits? It's us. He has a dwelling place. He has a chosen people in which to dwell.

Now during the nomadic years in the nation of Israel God instructed them to build a tabernacle in which He might dwell. Now the symbolism of that is that God will indwell His people wherever they go. That was the reason for the tabernacle. They would pick it up and move. Wherever they would go God would dwell with them. And when they settled in Jerusalem, He permits them to build a temple in which He will dwell with His people. The whole concept is that God is looking for a people to indwell. And the reason He redeems us is so that He can have a habitation within us.

Now when you compare the Old Covenant with the New Covenant, the symbolism is really quite interesting. In the Old Covenant the symbolism is physical and external. In

## Paul's Letter to the Philippians - Lesson 7

the New Covenant the symbolism is spiritual and internal. But both times God has a place in which to dwell. He is looking for a place to dwell. And the reason He redeems us, men, is so He can have a place of habitation.

So where is the temple of God now?

**Participant:** In us.

**Bruce:** Do you not know? Where is it?

**Men:** Us.

**Bruce:** It's us! God indwells us! That's the first point that Paul wants us to understand, that God is at work in us.

Now how does that work itself out in us in our practical activities? Well, this essential truth that God indwells every believer tells us that we need to instruct ourselves and remind ourselves of this truth on a daily basis. Now this is not just some hyper-super-spiritual position that we're talking about that you strive for. But it's an essential truth of the redemptive work of Christ. God has made His habitation with you. Do you not know? God has made His habitation with you.

Look at Ephesians 3:14-19. *"For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of His glory He might grant you to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ might dwell in your hearts through faith."* Do you not know? Christ dwells within you.

*"That you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and the length and the height and the depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with the fullness of God, so that Christ might dwell in your hearts through faith."* Do you not know?

How about Colossians 1:15? *"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. And He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything He might be preeminent. For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross."*

*"For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell."* Do you not know? God is at work in you. You are His place of habitation.

John 14:17. *"Even the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you."* You know Him because He dwells in you and He will be with you.

A couple of other references I'd recommend you to take a look at as you're meditating on this are Romans chapter 8 verse 9 and 1 Corinthians 3:16.

**Transcriber's Note:** Romans 8:9, NKJV. *"But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His."*

## Paul's Letter to the Philippians - Lesson 7

1 Corinthians 3:16, NKJV. *“Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”*

**Bruce:** Now that's the God who dwells in you, men. From those verses I just read, that is the God who dwells in you. He is none other than the God of the universe who dwells in you, resulting in a God who works in you. He has not only created the universe, but He created us and He is now working in us.

Now notice this. The second part that Paul wants us to understand after understanding that God indwells you is this. *God is at work in you.*

This is a great encouragement for us on a daily basis, that the God who dwells in you is the same God who is at work in you. Now this is something that you and I don't make happen. We don't strive for this or attempt to achieve it. It's a fact of being a child of God, regardless of your spiritual state.

Perhaps you might be somewhat discouraged today, or lukewarm at the moment. Know this. God is at work in you. If you're a child of God, do you not know that even in your lukewarmness that God is at work in you?

Did you ever go through a dry period? Did you ever think that God has abandoned you?

**Participant:** Yes.

**Bruce:** He doesn't do that. He is at work in you. And maybe that dry period is something He's using for His glory and your good. Remember, God is sovereign. And that means this. Whatever God permits in my life is for His glory and my good. Maybe your lukewarmness is drawing you back to Him and calling your attention to come back and worship Him. He's at work in you even in those lukewarm moments, because you're a child of God.

And notice this. *“God is at work in you to will and to work for His good pleasure.”* Again, think about it. How does God work in us? Do you not know that God is indwelling you? God is at work in you. How does He work in us? What does it look like? How do we understand this on a practical basis?

Well let me offer a couple things for your consideration. First of all I would suggest this: that *God works ceaselessly*. It's not in some sporadic fashion that God is continuing to work in you. He never gives up. God ceaselessly works in you. And even in those moments of discouragement, men, those moments of lukewarmness, know this. If you're a redeemed child of God, God is at work in you. He works ceaselessly. He never gives up.

We need to grasp this because I often think that we think that God is at work in us only when we ask Him to do it or only when we think we need it.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** Look at Philippians 1:6. *“Now I am sure of this: that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”*

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** Now men, God's work is never a work that He leaves unfinished. God has no unfinished symphonies. He has no unfinished symphonies. God works ceaselessly. And in those moments when we don't feel His presence you've got to go back to this fact. God is

## Paul's Letter to the Philippians - Lesson 7

at work in you. Hold on to that. Do you not know? Remind yourself. God is at work in me even in my lukewarmness, if that's where I am.

**Participant:** And Bruce, isn't that why faith is so important, because it's not how you feel, but what you know?

**Bruce:** Absolutely. Faith is based upon fact, not feeling.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** Faith: *forsaking all I trust Him*. F-a-i-t-h: forsaking all, I trust Him. What Paul wants us to understand is that it's a fact that God is at work in you. You may not feel it at times, but you need to realize this. God is working ceaselessly for His glory. That's what He says. It's for His good pleasure—not necessarily our good pleasure, but His good pleasure.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** A couple of cross references I would suggest that you look up at some time are 1 Corinthians 15:10, Hebrews 13:2 and 2 Corinthians 3:5.

**Transcriber's Note:** 1 Corinthians 15:10, NKJV. "*But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace in me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*"

Hebrews 13:2, ESV. "*Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.*"

2 Corinthians 3:5, NKJV. "*Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.*"

**Participant:** Could you repeat those, please?

**Bruce:** 1 Corinthians 15:10, Hebrews 13:2 and 2 Corinthians 3:5. Now do you know somebody who starts something but never finishes it? (*Laughter*) Do you know people like that? None of us are like that, are we?

**Men:** Oh, no! (*Laughter*)

**Participant:** Sore subject.

**Bruce:** One of the leadership principles that I teach is the principle of responsibility. Responsibility is made up of two words—*response* and *ability*. A person who is responsible is *response able*. They are able to respond. And that means this. They know and do what's expected of them. They are finishers. We need to be finishers.

Why do we say that somebody is irresponsible? Because they don't finish what they said they would do. Therefore we give them the moniker that they are irresponsible. Responsibility is the ability to know and to do what is expected of you.

Now men, we need to understand this. God works ceaselessly. He is not One who is irresponsible. He is the One who will do it for His good pleasure. He indwells us. He works ceaselessly in us.

Secondly, I believe that *He works effectively in us*. Yes, Don?

**Don:** Yes. I don't know if you're going to get to this, Bruce, but that was kind of what I was going to ask. You talked about the second part of that verse, that God works in us to will and to do His good pleasure. But what about the first part? We have a command that we are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

**Bruce:** I'm going to get to that right now.

## Paul's Letter to the Philippians - Lesson 7

**Don:** Okay. *(Laughter)*

**Bruce:** Thank you for the introduction. *(Laughter)* Secondly, God works effectively. Not only ceaselessly, but God works in us effectively.

Now there are two parts to every work, *the will* and *the deed*. Look at Romans 7:15-20.

**Transcriber's Note:** Romans 7:15-20, NKJV. "*For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.*"

**Bruce:** Paul speaks of two tensions that existed in his life. The will was there, but the work wasn't. And sometimes the work was there, but the willing wasn't. God is never affected with that problem, because He works effectively.

Now when God has a plan for your life and for my life, He calls on all the resources of the universe to effectively accomplish what is pleasing to Him. He has both the will and the work to do it. He is not a God who means well or has good intentions, as we often think about Him.

How often have you said this to somebody? "Oh, she means well." *(Laughter)* That's the ultimate damnation of a person. It's the ultimate damnation to say, "Oh, she means well." It basically means that they don't have the will and they don't have the work to do it. Honestly, that's something we shouldn't say to people, because it means that person never delivers the goods. They don't finish what they start. They don't have the will and they don't finish.

Now do you think that God is a God of good intentions, and that He never follows through or finishes? I'll tell you this, friends. I think it's a fearful thing to be in the hands of a God who has all the resources of the universe to accomplish what He wants in your life with what He starts. And it's a fearful thing to be in His hands if we don't know Him.

God works ceaselessly, He works effectively, and thirdly *He works purposefully*. There's a purpose for it. That means that He has a plan for your life and a plan for my life. And that is what He works toward to complete for His good pleasure.

Now the question is, *are we working for the same thing?* Am I giving myself in obedience to work for the same thing that God is working in my life? It's for His good pleasure. Do I know what His good pleasure is? Am I working for the same thing? Is that what I'm giving my effort for? Is my obedience manifested in the fact that I'm working for the same good pleasure that He is?

Trouble begins when you begin to work on your own thing. That's why oftentimes we must go through pain and sorrow and trouble, in order to bring us back to the part of His good pleasure, not our good pleasure. We work at that. It's His good pleasure. The real issue is, do I understand what God's good pleasure for me is?

## Paul's Letter to the Philippians - Lesson 7

You find that in the Scripture. That's why we meet. That's why we study the Word. We can find out what it is that God's good pleasure is. That's what I'm going to work for. It's going to be His will that's going to make me do it. He's going to give us the will to be willing. He gives us the will to be willing, willing to be obedient. That's not something I can manufacture myself. He has the will to do it and He has the ability to work it. And so He gives us the will to be willing to be obedient and to work at it.

Oftentimes children think that they know what is best for them. And oftentimes as parents, we know that the outcome will be disastrous. And there may be times when our children need to experience fears and sorrow in order to learn what is best for them.

It's no different with us. Sometimes we need to go through pain and sorrow and trouble in order to bring us back to work for His good pleasure, not ours.

Now men, I think we need to realize that the infinite God who we worship has something infinitely more meaningful for us than just our own happiness. There's nothing wrong with happiness. He's working in us for His good pleasure, not our happiness, although I would have to say that the most happy periods of my life have been when I've grasped what He's doing in my life and have been obedient to it. That's when happiness comes around.

Happiness happens because of happenings. Joy is a function of who God is. And the great joy of Christian living is when you marry His will and your will to accomplish what His good pleasure is, and you work together towards that. That's the greatest joy you have, when you can marry your will with His will, to proceed after His good pleasure and discover what that is. That's what real joy is.

So I believe that God works three ways. I'm sure there are more. He works ceaselessly, He works effectively, and He works purposefully, for His good pleasure.

Now look at verse 12. "*Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.*" Here's Paul's exhortation. He gave us an encouragement, that God is at work in you to will and to work His good pleasure. That's the encouragement. Now here's the exhortation, what we do with it. "*Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.*"

Now he is not saying, "Work out your salvation in your own way." He's not saying, "Do your own thing." He's also not saying to work out your way to your own salvation by your own methods, struggling and striving so that one day you'll achieve it. You receive it, you don't achieve it. You receive your salvation; you don't achieve it.

What he's saying is this. Because you have this salvation, which we just read in the first part of Philippians chapter 2, the humiliation of Christ,--because we do have this salvation, we work at it daily. We work at it. We work out our salvation. We don't work out our salvation to earn it. We work it out to demonstrate it.

Paul is saying that the Christian life is not one of inactivity, but of activity. We work at the salvation that God has granted to us. "*Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.*" We do that on a daily basis. It's an act of obedience. It's a life of application. It's a life of dedication.

Somebody might say, "Well, if God is at work in me, and He works ceaselessly, he works effectively and purposefully, what is there for me to do? What am I supposed to do? God does all this."



## Paul's Letter to the Philippians - Lesson 7

Now that's why it's so important, friends, that we not only get our doctrine from Scripture, but also our conclusions from Scripture. Doctrine precedes practice. We need to make sure that we get our doctrines from the Scripture, but also the conclusions from the Scripture. It's critical for us to come to Biblical conclusions and applications, as well as thinking Biblical doctrine.

And that means this. "*Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.*" That is something that we do. That is because God has granted us salvation. We now work at it every day on a daily basis.

Working out my salvation with fear and trembling means that I give myself to pursuing what He is working in my life, and do it actively. I give myself to pursuing what God is doing in my life and I work at that on a daily basis.

One of the things we studied years ago might be very practical—the 58 “one another” commands. Work at those things. Work at those “one another” commands. They teach us how to have relationships in the body of Christ. We need to work at those things. The reason we can work at those things is because God has given us the will to be willing to be obedient to work at those things that He is doing in our lives for His good pleasure. And so we give ourselves actively to working at that, whatever that might be.

**Participant:** Bruce?

**Bruce:** Yes, please?

**Participant:** Would part of that fear and trembling be because Paul went through a lot of very difficult times? And certainly knowing what Christ went through, why would we skip those steps? Why would we not go through suffering, or not go through a cross of some sort?

**Bruce:** I think it's more directed to the character and nature of who God is. It's not what we haven't done; it's who He is. Do I really consider who God is? Do we know the 28 attributes of God? Men, if you know the 28 attributes of God, there's going to be a sense of fear, a sense of respect and dignity and loyalty, a sense of tremendous fear. I'm in the hands of an angry God and He indwells me! Do you not know that? He indwells me! How can I go do that, then? How can I think that thought? How can I not bring that thought captive?

I'm trying to cooperate with what He's doing in my life. I'm in the hands of an angry God who has now granted me salvation. Sig, I think it has more to do with His character and nature than it does Paul's response to anything. Yes, Ted?

**Ted:** I want to second what you said. I think that if we focus on fear and trembling as a result of our own experience and difficulties,—excuse me, Sig!!—that point of view is the more shallow and immature understanding.

**Sig:** That's why I come here every week, Ted. *(Laughter)*

**Ted:** That's pretty funny. But it has much more to do with knowing God. The problem is that the vast bulk of Christians do not know God. They don't know who He is. They're focused on the experience of God, but not who He is.

**Bruce:** Look at it very logically. Thank you, Ted. Look at this very logically. How well do I know the One who is at work in me? Work out your salvation and get to know Him. How well do I know the God who is big enough to have His habitation in me?

## Paul's Letter to the Philippians - Lesson 7

Paul is saying, Look. God indwells you. Do you not know? Do you know the God who indwells you? Work at it if you need to know Him, and then you can cooperate with the will that He has given you to be willing to do His good pleasure. That's when joy comes out of our lives. Yes, please?

**Participant:** Bruce, you talk a lot about self-esteem, what true self-esteem is. That's kind of what you're talking about today. It kind of enforces that. The verse that's profound for me is 1 Corinthians 8:6. It says in the New American Standard Version, "*Yet for us there is but one God the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him.*"

**Bruce:** Amen.

**Participant:** "*And one Lord Jesus Christ by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.*" So just to think about that, how important we are. To think that we exist for Him, for His pleasure, is a great and awesome thought.

**Bruce:** Friends, self-esteem is the disease, not the cure.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** Self-esteem is the disease, not the cure, because you're thinking too much of yourself. Do you not know? The God of the universe, the God that is contained in the Holy Scripture, is the One who indwells you. He is the One who is at work in you ceaselessly, effectively, purposefully, for His good purpose. He has the will. He has the work. He gives us the will to be willing to work. And so we are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Men, the more you know God, the better you're going to be at working out your salvation in fear and trembling on a daily basis because of who He is. Self-esteem has nothing to do with what we think of ourselves. It's who God says we are.

And here is one of the great self-esteem issues. God is at work in you. And the reason He redeemed you is so He can inhabit you. Do you not know?

You see, we work at being conformed to the likeness of Christ. To work out our salvation with fear and trembling means that we work hard on a daily basis through God's grace, mercy and God's will to give us the will to be willing, to be conformed to Christlikeness, and equally conformed to God's purpose.

Now take a look at verse 12, please. I think we find it in one word—Christlikeness—in verse 12. It's the word *obeyed*. If you want to be Christlike, obey. Notice. "*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.*"

Now what had Paul just described in verses 1-11 of chapter 2 of Philippians? He described the obedience of Christ. Men, if you and I want to be Christlike, then we have to work hard at our obedience. God gives us the will to do that. It's not something we energize ourselves. I'm not saying that we do it by ourselves. We do it by God's grace. God gives you the will to be willing. It's God's power which works in us, not our own power.

And when you and I become more concerned about our obedience, we become more Christlike. And when we become more concerned about our obedience, we'll be equally conformed to God's purpose in our lives. Obedience and working out our salvation are linked together. Obedience and working out our salvation in fear and trembling are linked together.

## Paul's Letter to the Philippians - Lesson 7

Basically it means this. Working out my salvation with fear and trembling means this. Through God's grace and the will that He gives me to be willing, I work at becoming more obedient to the will of God. Do you not know that God takes up His habitation with you? God redeemed you so that He could inhabit you. God indwells you as His child.

We're told that God has exalted Christ to a position of unique glory. And our conformity to God's purpose means that life is consumed with exalting the Lord Jesus Christ just as God did. And that is what He is working in us, to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice the *therefore* in verse 9. Go back to that. "*Therefore God has highly exalted Him.*" And look at verse 12. "*Therefore, my beloved, work out.*" What is it that we do? We work at being obedient to the will of God so that Christ will be glorified. God puts us in the same position he chose to do Himself, to exalt the Person and work of Christ. We do the same thing by our obedience.

May God be pleased to help us to realize this. God redeemed me so that He could inhabit me for His glory and His good purpose.

Let's pray. Father, this is overwhelming. It's something that the world cannot understand, that you were pleased, through the humiliation of Christ, to accomplish our salvation. What You ordained the Son accomplished, and the Holy Spirit applies in our lives. And therefore God inhabits us with His Spirit. Father, give us the grace to understand this, to operate in it based upon the facts of who God says we are. And He says that we are His habitation. Do you not know? Amen.

**Men:** Amen. (*Applause*)