

LSB Philippians 2:12 - 18 *work out your salvation.*

16 holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to boast because I did not run in vain nor labor in vain. 17 But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. 18 And you also, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me. 19 But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be in good spirits when I learn of your circumstances. 20 For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned about your circumstances. 21 For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. 22 But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father. 23 Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I evaluate my own circumstances, 24 and I am confident in the Lord that I myself also will be coming shortly. 25 But I regarded it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need; 26 because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. 27 For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow. 28 Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly so that when you see him again you may rejoice and I may be less concerned. 29 Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard 30 because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to fulfill what was lacking in your service to me.

We hope to finish our 2nd chapter of Philippians this morning. And Paul has been working within the theme that he presented to these Christians in verse 12. *Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.*

We noted carefully that this isn't a working to attain your own salvation, rather, what Paul is describing and exhorting of us is the natural succession

to the reality of having our sins forgiven and being quickened from spiritual death to spiritual life by the Holy Spirit of God who comes then to dwell inside my heart.

When that happens, or perhaps we more rightly ought to say, if that has actually happened, all of my allegiances are changed. Redirected.

At the core of what has taken place, when I was made alive, In Christ, He dwelling in me and with me, what has happened is that I, the innermost me, has been freed from a captivity of this world to serve it's master, who is Satan.

I am set free from Satan's grasp because the sin with which he was able to hold onto me, is removed. His grasp of death from sin, on me, is broken. And in that process, I am removed from his grasp, his ownership, in a way, and placed into a new ownership.

I once was a captured slave of sin and the resulting penalty of sin, death. But now sin is removed. Big word warning; My sin is expiated, at the cross. That means it is paid for in full. Jesus received the penalty I was due. Jesus died in my place. My sins are paid for in full by His death.

And because I have believed that His work in my place, on that cross is sufficient to pay that debt, He has accounted to my account, His righteousness in place of my sins.

I'm busted out of Satan's grasp and moved, out of this condemned world, and into a new authority to reign. I'm a citizen of the kingdom of God. I am now a slave to the King who purchased me with His shed blood. I am technically a slave purchased from an evil harsh owner by a benevolent and altogether lovely owner who actually loves me.

We look upon the term slave as something dreaded. Something dreadfully negative.

Not so. Slavery is in itself only dreadful if your master is wretched. Slavery can be sweet if your owner is benevolent and showers you with gifts and blessedness and has in His heart nothing but the best things to pour out upon your head.

I've noticed lately the little acronym around the web; POV. For all you non hip, non tik tokker's (which includes myself, I had to do a search to affirm what was going on) POV stands for point of view. So I guess for that crowd hashtag this and hashtag that morphed into POV.

So people who make those little videos that they hope and pray will go viral so that some portion of an advertising company \$\$\$ will find it's way to the makers house, they use that little term; POV to set your frame of mind up to empathize with their little video.

Slavery has everything to do with POV. If my master loved me enough to suffer and shed His blood and die in order to purchase me out of the bondages of my old dreadful master who hated me and only longed for my ultimate destruction, then is slavery to that kind of love a bad thing?

If my new Master loves me and showers me with good things and adopts me into His family as a brother, and not a slave, and has set up an account with my name on it in heaven in which I am about to inherit wealth my mind cannot even really imagine, with eternal joy, is that slavery something to be thought of as negative.

It's all about POV. I am thrilled to be a purchased slave of Jesus. Everything about that transaction is benefit for me. Freed from a death grip by Satan in darkness into light and joy and peace. Freed out of spiritual death where I wandered in meaninglessness into a new life, together in a relationship with my Creator and Lord. Restored to the purpose for which He created me in the first place, which is worship.

In those moments when worship is best and truest, my cup overflows with joy unspeakable. I am filled with a spiritual longing for more of Him. We

wait for the day when we will see His face with new glorified eyes in new glorified bodies.

Slavery is completely dependent on POV. From my redeemed POV, the more I can experience of this blessed sweet slavery, the better. And that's the perspective, the POV of Paul, when he says in verse 12, work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

Nothing to do with the completed transaction. Everything to do with experiencing more and more and more of this glorious friendship with my Creator and Lord that was purchase for me.

Earlier, I snuck in the word; allegiance. Speaking of my removal from Satan's authority and placement into Christ's authority, I said; When that happens, or perhaps we more rightly ought to say, if that has actually happened, all of my *allegiances* are changed. Redirected.

Before I was a slave to a harsh and evil masters wishes on my way to hell. Now I am slave to a benevolent loving master who only wants the very best things for me, now! In this world! He gives me the best things here, and in the future, an inheritance unimaginable to my tiny brain.

With that massive change in ownership, all of my allegiances have changed from the old evil harsh master, to the new benevolent loving Master.

That word has been in the news recently. A new book by yet another guy who has discovered what the church hasn't gotten right for 2000 years. The title is; *Salvation by allegiance, alone*. By Matthew Bates.

His title is of course a play on the reformation Sola; Salvation is by faith alone. Which is an argument against salvation by works of righteousness that we perform in order to gain merit with God. Works salvation. And the reformers said, no, Sola Fide, Faith alone.

But now Mr. Bates has the chutzpah to tell us we don't understand the

intent of the word we translate "faith". We got it wrong. He figured it out. First guy in 2000 years that realized what God is talking about. That takes some hubris I don't have. But it's actually pretty common. If you had a dollar for every guy who figures out what we've all missed somehow for 2000 years, you could pay rent.

But perhaps Mr. Bates is lodging a valid concern that much of evangelicalism is in fact falling short of saving faith. My pastor and mentor, John MacArthur addressed easy believism for much of his ministry.

MacArthur wrote a whole series of excellent excellent books battling easy believism of the late 20th century and returning to a biblical, theological understanding that faith must include bowing your knees to a new Lordship who is Jesus Christ.

A gospel that does not tell you that Jesus **IS** Lord of all created things and demand your recognition and obedience to Him is indeed a false gospel. When I was a new christian it was common to hear teachings like you can have Jesus as saviour without making Him your Lord. You can choose to make Him Lord of your life at some later date if you like. But all that is needed for salvation is to ask Him to save you.

Utter nonsense. He **IS** Lord. Whether I am dead or alive or recognize His Lordship or not has zero to do with Who He **IS**.

But for me to not submit in obedience to His Lordship is to remain in Satan's kingdom. Like saying; Jesus, if it's OK with you, I'd like to stay in the enemy camp and continue lobbing bombs at you, but I'd also like it very much if you saved me.

Salvation is like a package deal. You can't dichotomize it. The Lord of everything purchased you to place you in His family in obedient submission to Him.

Within that package deal, within that necessary Lordship of my new ownership by way of purchase, Paul says, work out, or complete all of the transformation you can complete during your stay here in this world. As we walk with Him, we are changed into His likeness. Work at *that* reality.

The christian life is a walk and a work. It's not a static life insurance policy locked up in a safe somewhere. If it's real, it's alive. We're moving forward in an ongoing transformation into christlikeness.

Just to recap; vs. 12 we work towards finishing what was begun when we were saved. Vs 13 if we're real christians, it's God in us who moves us forward. Vs. 14 we're different from this world. We don't grumble and dispute. Rather we are joyful in trials. Vs. 15 we are a direct contrast to this world. black and white. We are blameless, blemish free, innocents, children of God in a crooked and perverted world full of children of satan. The contrast is polar. Stark. Huge.

And vs 16, we didn't finish last week. We stopped at how in our walk with God we hold this treasure, which is God's written word, which contains the gospel potent enough to break others out of prison, we hold that treasure fast, safely preserved! so that it retains it's power. *16 holding fast the word of life,*

And here, Paul transitions from exhortation to the result if we're obedient, which is exultation. Do this, do this, do this, do this . . . so that . . . in a future day, we will exult together.

16 holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to boast because I did not run in vain nor labor in vain.

The philippian believers are a direct result of Paul's working out his salvation. Paul made it to Philippi with the message intact and fully powerful, and bam! A church full of people in Philippi.

Paul's exhortation is that the Philippians, and by way of extension, us in

Tonopah, have the treasure intact, and full of it's power, and the result is reproduction for the glory of the King.

And a day is coming when every christian who received the word of life, and was rescued and changed by transformation, will appear together in the day of Christ. When He comes to receive the living and the dead, into His physical kingdom and presence, Paul will have a reason to boast.

I Paul, protected and carried the treasure to this person, and this person, and this person, and then they in turn protected and carried it forward to these, and these, and those over there, and in that day, we will all appear together, with Jesus, innumerable, like the sand of the sea.

There's a sense that Paul could boast, you know, western civilization, that started in Europe, in Philippi, my first church in Europe, and then spread all the way to the end of the continent, and then went in boats to the new world, and then kept spreading west until it made it to a little silver camp in the desert at Tonopah, Paul could boast, these are all somehow connected to me getting the treasure intact to them, all those centuries later.

It's like the yeast organism in the lump of dough that spreads until it's all completely leavened. Pinch yourselves, here we are. And we are all alive because of the living gospel, carried intact to us, beginning with Paul, and it traveled, alive, all the way until it got to us and made us alive.

And Paul gets to boast a bit because you're sitting here this morning. And I'm doing my best to keep the treasure pure and full of it's power carried forward to a new generation after us.

16 holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to boast because I did not run in vain nor labor in vain.

There is a sense, in the extended idea of that verse, that each of us who has protected the power of the pure gospel and helped to spread it to others who received it and were quickened to life, we all get to boast a little bit on that

day, with Paul. I did my teeny tiny part, and infected a few cells myself that carried the living gospel to others also. That's going to be a cool day.

And now, beginning in verse 17 and running to the end of the chapter, Paul is going to give us 3 examples of working out salvation, that we can copy and emulate.

It's one thing to exhort it in vs 12, and describe it in vss 13 - 16. Now Paul will give us examples of what working out your salvation looks like in real life. 3 lives we can observe and copy what they did and how they did it.

Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus. Living examples of working out your salvation in fear and trembling. This is what it looks like;

Example 1. Paul;

17 But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. 18 And you also, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.

A drink offering is most colorful for our imaginations. When the animal flesh was well consumed by the offering fires, and the odor rises up from the roasting process, a drink offering was the act of pouring wine into that roasted flesh which would turn into a steam and make the sacrifice even more savory to God.

Paul views his life as being poured out like the wine on a drink offering, sacrificially. That's a word picture for us to emulate. Paul is in prison . . . for the gospel. His efforts at spreading the treasure of the gospel to people everywhere resulted in him being in a prison in Rome. And the prospect is that ultimately, his life will be crushed out of him at some point, for the same gospel.

That's an example that is far beyond what most Christians imagine for themselves as a result of their efforts for the cause of Christ in this world.

It's not something I go to sleep worrying about. I don't have a martyr's complex, and neither did Paul.

But the prospect for him was real. Read through the list of times he had already been beaten and thrown out of places, literally left for dead. It's a good thing Dr. Luke was his traveling companion. Paul needed reviving from near death experiences often.

And his prophecy proved correct a few years later. Rome removed him of his head. Peter, a non roman citizen was crucified upside down. But citizens of Rome were exempt from death by crucifixion and Paul, a roman citizen, was beheaded according to church tradition. In Rome. Martyred because of his faith.

Allegiance. Actually a good word even if co-opted and used badly. Paul was killed because he refused to give up his allegiance to Jesus the Messiah, even to the point of dieing. What a sweet and savory sacrifice for the cause of the good news of redemption in Jesus.

We don't imagine ourselves in anything like that. But we can draw two lessons for ourselves from Paul's example. The first is to question your own allegiance. If someone, some day, tells you that if you hold onto the authority of the words of this book, you too must join the other christians who have died for their allegiance, what will your answer be?

Paul isn't the only christian martyr. Paul is the one who wrote; 36 Just as it is written. *“For Your sake we are being put to death all day long;*

We were counted as sheep for the slaughter.” Romans 8:36

That is, in fact, what you have signed up for. But part of his otherworldly example for us was how he lived in those chains.

17 But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. 18 And you also, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.

The christian life is not one of sorrow over losses. It is a life of vibrant joy over what we have already gained, in Jesus, and what we will soon gain when we see His face.

How is it that someone can be chained to a Roman soldier and live every day, not complaining or grumbling, but rather rejoicing with a contagious joy.

The answer is all about POV. *For me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

Ppn 1:21 Paul's looking at the whole predicament and saying, this life is 5 minutes long, I've got Jesus inside me pouring out His joy, in me, and in the end, I wish you guys would hurry up. I've got His joy in this life, and wild riches waiting in my account, in the next one. It's POV. I like it.

Next example for us to emulate; Timothy.

19 But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be in good spirits when I learn of your circumstances. 20 For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned about your circumstances. 21 For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. 22 But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father. 23 Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I evaluate my own circumstances, 24 and I am confident in the Lord that I myself also will be coming shortly.

Timothy was Paul's next generation continuance. There is familial training and trust. Timothy is Paul's mini me.

I can't get Jesus parable out of my mind, so I'll share it with you as mindset of what a son was in that society. Matt. 21:

33 "Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard and put a wall around it and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower, and rented it out to vine-growers and went on a journey. 34 Now when the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vine-growers to

receive his fruit. 35 And the vine-growers took his slaves and beat one, and killed another, and stoned a third. 36 Again he sent another group of slaves larger than the first; and they did the same thing to them. 37 But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' 38 But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' 39 And they took him, and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

We're not here to parse that parable for all of it's meaning, but just to dwell on the familial relationship of fathers and sons. Slaves or workers are one thing. They do the father's bidding because he owns them and has sent them to do it.

But a son goes forth from that father with the mission to accomplish that father's will with family authority and allegiance. There's our word again. It keeps popping up. The son goes in place of the father with full intent in the families interests.

Timothy was that son to Paul. The family business was caring for the saints in all of the churches. And Paul can send Timothy knowing that his son has the same level of intent to accomplish his father's business.

How sad that even Paul has to say; 20 For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned about your circumstances. 21 For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. 22 But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father.

That's our goal. 21 centuries later. Christians are to serve Christ and His interests first. Foremost. We are to be about our Father's business. That's the goal.

And a second goal intended; We are to be raising up spiritual sons who can carry and protect the gospel and deliver it intact with full power to the next generation. At my age, I should have some spiritual sons who are a

generation younger than me, who can deliver this gospel; intact, to the generation after them.

I got a late start. And I'm guilty of too often being the person Paul describes in vs. 22; *For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus.*

Our third and final example we should emulate and follow is Epaphroditus. *25 But I regarded it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need; 26 because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. 27 For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow. 28 Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly so that when you see him again you may rejoice and I may be less concerned. 29 Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard 30 because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to fulfill what was lacking in your service to me.*

We don't know how Epaphroditus traveled from his home church at Philippi in easternmost Greece to Rome in Italy. If he was able to go by boat across the Adriatic sea it was 800 miles. Like walking to Kansas. But if he walked on land the full distance it was 1200 miles. Keep walking across Kansas to Missouri.

The elders at Philippi tell the congregation, we need someone to walk 1200 miles to Rome please and when you get there, you are to be a servant to Paul. Any volunteers? And Epaphroditus says, "here am I, send me."

Well, Epaphroditus gets sick. Deathly sick and almost dies. It's a world where the flu can kill you dead and often does. Paul simply tells us, he was sick to the point of death. Very sick in a world with no cures.

But what's got Epaphroditus concerned is not himself, his illness and the

possibility of death. No Epaphroditus is beside himself with worry, because news of his near terminal illness has made it back to Philippi and he's full of concern and sorrow that he might cause sorrow to the ones who sent him.

Don't forget, news traveled slow in that world. Very slow. So the last news Philippi has about Epaphroditus is; he was at the point of death and by now is probably well dead. So they're suffering because they all loved him.

So Paul's thinking is; I've got to send Epaphroditus back to Philippi so those folks can rejoice instead of sorrowing, and Paul's confident that he himself will soon be released and get to also come to these dear ones who have such a special love for him.

We'll finish with one little descriptive phrase in verse 30 that needs to capture our imaginations in 2025.

30 because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to fulfill what was lacking in your service to me.

Five little words that should define every single christian. **for the work of Christ**

All of us, every single one who has been purchased by the Master, has work to do, for Him. Work for the futherance of the gospel. Work for the enlarging of the Master's holdings. Work to reach this world with the gospel message. Work for the building up, the edification, of this body of believers.

And yes, on Mother's day, you mom's have a huge role to play in bringing up the next generation with solid christian teaching and values, not the least of which, my mom failed me a little bit, which is self discipline.

Granted, she didn't have much to work with. But discipline when they are

tiny which later transfers automatically to self discipline is terribly important in a world which has rejected ALL discipline of any kind.

It wasn't Paul who made a Timothy. We have the record for us in Acts chapter 16 and 2 Tim. 1:5. Paul says of Timothy; *I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am convinced is in you as well.* 2 Tim. 1:5

Later we learn that Timothy was about the same age as our two little bitty guys we love so much and are blessed with in this family. Paul says to Timothy; 2 Timothy 3:14-15
But as for you, continue in the things you have learned and firmly believed, since you know from whom you have learned them. / From infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 2 Timothy 3:14-15

From infancy, Timothy was the product of his grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice. They had poured their faith into him, so that, when Paul got to Lystra, Timothy was well equipped to be picked by Paul as a son in the faith.

We don't know anything about Epaphroditus' mother but she must have been a good one. Perhaps we'll meet her in heaven along with Epaphroditus. You moms (and dads as well) have important work of Christ to accomplish in your children.

It's all of ours job to raise up a next generation who will faithfully hold fast the word of life and deliver the treasure to a generation after them, intact with all of it's power to transform and save.

Happy Mom's day.