



Old Testament Reading – Psalm 115:1-18

New Testament Reading – Luke 9:23-27

The Epistle of Joy “Working Out Your Salvation” (Part one)

Philippians 2:12-13

Wayne J. Edwards, Pastor

Paul and Silas established the Church at Philippi during their second missionary journey, which took place between AD 48-52.

- The Church at Philippi was the first Christian Church to be established in Europe.

- The Church began with the conversion of Lydia and her family, a jailer and his family, and the deliverance of a demon-possessed girl who was being exploited by men as a fortune teller.
- Those men became so angry at Paul and Silas that they had them beaten and thrown into prison, but then God used an earthquake to set them free.
- After a few months of fellowship with the new believers, Paul and Silas continued their missionary journey, arriving in Rome in AD 60, where Paul was placed under house arrest.

When the Church at Philippi heard that Paul was in jail, they took up a love offering and sent it to him by Epaphroditus, and instructed him to remain with Paul as long as he was needed.

- Paul penned this letter of thanks to the Church at Philippi and asked Epaphroditus to take it back to them.
- Paul said while their “love gift” would not change his temporal circumstances, it did fill his heart with joy, which is why his letter to the Philippians is known as **the Epistle of Joy**.
- The timeless truth of this letter is that God wants to produce **real and lasting joy** within us – **a joy** that overflows to those around us – **a joy** that is not based on the temporal circumstances of our lives but in knowing our relationship with God is secure, and our fellowship with others is at peace.
- In so doing, **we can bring joy to the Lord** as we worship Him and give Him the glory due His Holy name.
- Therefore, as those who have been saved from God’s eternal wrath, a Christian should never be without the joy of the Lord.

When it comes to the process of a Christian’s sanctification, what is God’s role, and what is the Christian’s role?

- Do we “let go and let God,” which is a popular slogan today but not rooted in the Scriptures?
- Do we develop our daily disciplines and follow them to the letter, lest we negate the freedom that can only come through our consistent and persistent study of the Word of God and prayer?
- When it comes to the life-long process of being conformed to the image of Christ, is it up to us, or is it up to God?

“In every major doctrine, there is an apparent paradox which cannot in an of itself be resolved in the mind of man.”

Dr. John Murray, Scottish Theologian

“When it comes to an apparent paradox in biblical doctrine which cannot be resolved in the mind of man, it is easier to run to one view or the other, rather than to stay in the center of biblical tension, where God left it in His Holy Word.”

Dr. Roberston McQuilkin, President of Columbia Bible College

Two views of sanctification from the 17th to the 19th centuries:

- **The “Quietists”** – the only thing a believer needed to do to develop their spiritual maturity was to “let go and let God!”
 - For a believer to strive to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord hindered the work God wanted to do

in them.

- Essentially, they took Galatians 2:20 out of context with this paraphrase: **“Not I but Christ,”** implying that God was totally responsible for the spiritual growth of the believer.

- **The “Pietists”** – believers need to do everything to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord.
- The believer must establish a daily routine of spiritual disciplines, including personal and corporate times of worship, Bible Study, prayer, and personal witnessing.
- The believer must manifest a pattern of “good works,” for **“Faith without works is dead.”**
- An overemphasis upon either one leads to spiritual pride and a cold-hearted judgmentalism, where we look down on those who are not as holy as we are, and we negate our personal testimony, and our witness to those who have not received Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord.

“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.” Phil. 2:12-13

- When Paul said **“Work out your own salvation,”** he sounded like a **“Pietist.”**
- When Paul said, **“For it is God who works in you, both to will and to do His good pleasure,”** he sounded like a **“Quietist.”**
- In 2 Peter 1:3, the Apostle wrote: **“God has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness.”** – So, Peter must have been a “Quietist.”
- But in 2 Peter 1:5-7, the Apostle wrote, **“But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.”** – So, Peter must have been a “Pietist.”

1. What Christians are to Work Out – 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.”

- As the Apostle Paul says in Ephesians 2:8-9, salvation is by grace alone, through our faith alone, and in Christ alone. The eternal salvation of every person who receives Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord is complete the moment they are born again.
 - When Jesus said, **“It is finished,”** the wrath of God was satisfied for our sins.
 - When the righteousness of Jesus Christ was imputed to us, as far as our acceptance with God is concerned, we were made to be complete in Christ.
- However, in Romans 8:29, the Apostle Paul said those who receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord are predestined to be conformed to the image of our Savior.
- In Philippians 1:6, the Apostle Paul said the same God who began a good work in us will complete it.
- So, since God has provided all that is needed for our eternal salvation, we are complete in Him.

- However, it is the believer's responsibility to access what God has provided until our old nature is destroyed and our new nature is on display for the whole world to see.
- To show our eternal appreciation for His gift of grace, we are to walk worthy of such a high calling by living every day according to His standards so that God may be glorified in giving His Son to be our Savior, and the Son may be glorified in giving Himself to the Father, to save us from our sin.
- Our salvation comes in three dimensions:
 - **Past** – those who have received Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord have been saved – we were convicted of our sins, our need for a Savior, and Jesus Christ as the Savior we needed.
 - **Present** – those who have received Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord are being saved – God is still convicting us of our sins and our need for a Savior and convincing us that Jesus is the Savior we need.
 - **Future** – those who have received Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord will be saved – we are waiting for our day of redemption, whether that is the rapture of the Church or our resurrection from the grave.