

WORK IT OUT!
Philippians 2:12-18

Musical *Oklahoma* begins:

“O, what a beautiful morning,
O what a beautiful day,
I’ve got a wonderful feeling,
Everything’s going my way!”

What about those mornings when you wake up,
& you don’t have that wonderful feeling, . . .
–when everything *ISN’T* going your way?!!

**How do we respond when times are hard,
when things aren’t going our way?**

That’s kind of morning Phil. woke up to every morning when Paul writes to them.

Things aren’t going their way!

Paul’s in prison, not certain what may happen to him tomorrow.

He *celebrates* how the gospel is spreading—both inside & outside the prison—as result of his imprisonment.

He assumes he’ll be released to minister to them again. Though he’s not sure

Regardless of what happens to *him*,
whether he’s present with them, or far away,
whether he gets out of prison or dies there,...

God’s children should conduct themselves in a manner that’s *worthy* of the gospel.

5 EXHORTATIONS TO UNITY 1:27-2:18

Live in manner worthy of the gospel 1:27-30

Stand firmly together...

* United

* Striving together for the gospel

...so we help each other when faced by opposition

Be of one mind 2:1-4

Be more concerned for one another
than for ourselves & our own interests.

Think as Christ thought 2:5-11

Follow Christ's example:

humble ourselves for benefit of others

This a.m. we consider last 2 exhortations to unity...

“Work out your salvation” 2:12-13

“Therefore, my dear friends, as you’ve always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence— continue to work out your salvation with fear & trembling, ¹³for it’s God who works in you to will & to act acc. to his good purpose.”

Reading this passage raises

2 key questions:

1. Why would Paul start talking about salvation in the middle of a series of exhortations to unity?

2. Why would **Paul** talk about working out our **salvation**?

What does it mean to “**work out your salvation**?”

When we see “save” or “salvation” in biblical context, we usually think of **eternal life** –of **salvation from sin**.

That should force us to original idea of word.

When we talk about what it means to be “saved”...

“Are you saved?”

People don’t get it!

Their natural question is “*Saved from what?*”

That’s a question *WE* don’t often ask!

(Saved from what?)—but we should always ask!

Root => “be safe, alive & well, in good condition.”

Verb in everyday language: “save or keep something.”

People are *kept safe* or *alive*—averting danger.

*“I pray that you may be **preserved** and prosper.”*

*“Sacred revenues are to be **preserved** for gods.”*

Laws are **kept** = obeyed.

Thoughts are **kept in mind** = remembered.

That’s the same original word <= “saved”

Often describes *act which rescues person from danger or physical death*– **deliver** someone from suffering

Noun describes preservation of something, security or safety –health, well-being.

It's applied to rescue from death or danger.

=> Stephen's summary of O.T. history:

Acts 7:25 "*Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to **rescue** them, but they did not*"

Moses thought they'd assume that God's going to **deliver** them from the Egyptians, by his hand.

Acts 27:31, 34 "*Paul said to the centurion & soldiers, "Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be **saved**... ³⁴...not one of you will lose a single hair from his head."*

Word's used in *broad sense* of **rescue** or **deliverance**, of keeping or preserving things or people.

Applied to *spiritual* deliverance from sin & eternal death

It never lost underlying concept of rescuing a person from danger or getting a person out of a tight spot.

=> In this passage, Paul is clearly NOT talking about...

NOT salvation from sin => "*Save yourselves!*"

Isn't about working for our salvation!

NOT even to demonstrate externally

salvation Christ has produced internally.

Passage isn't talking about that kind of salvation!

=> Because of what goes **before** it –"*therefore*"

"*What's it **there for**?* Looks back to **unity**

–standing together in times of adversity.

=> Because of what comes **after** it =>

–"*no complaining or arguing*"

*It's tied back into the **unity** factor!*

Paul's idea=>**deliverance from current dilemma**
they're facing–troublesome situation they're caught in.

Warren Wiersbe: “There are problems in life but God will help us to work them out.”

J. Vernon McGee: “He’s talking about working out problems in the church & in their personal lives. **He’s not there** to help them & isn’t sure he’ll ever be there again because he’s in a Roman prison. So he tells them to work out their salvation [resolve their problems]

We should resolve conflicts & thereby show work God’s doing in us

As you’ve always obeyed

–In my presence or in my absence

Don’t just do what I want when I’m there to watch!

Even while I’m absent, resolve this mess, since you fear

God. He cares about it more than I do;

Resolve it in spirit of fear & trembling before God.

Not something we’re able to pull off in our strength.

=> So Paul tells us where ability to solve this problem comes from –*It doesn’t come from OUR efforts!*

That’s *reason* he can urge us to resolve the conflict:

Reason: 2:13 “*For it’s God who works in you, to will & to act according to his good pleasure.*”

God’s at work in you–

God’s working in us!

He makes us want to do right–“to will”

He makes us able to do right–“to act”

He’s working *inside* to produce attitude & action, in accordance with His purpose for our life

His purpose is that we should be one!

Only GOD can produce this attitude

When conflict arises, we should work it out, so that the work

God’s doing in us –on *inside*– will be evident to people who watch us.

They can’t see what’s on the inside.

They only see what spills out—as God works in us,
it'll be evident by the way we handle conflicts
As God works in us, giving us desire & ability,

Deal with it! Resolve the conflict! Get over it!

#5 Do everything without complaining 2:14-18

14-15a *“Do everything without complaining or arguing, ¹⁵so that you may become blameless & pure, “children of God without fault in a crooked & depraved generation.”*

Complaint-free conduct shows people around us how God has transformed our lives.

Complaining, arguing, & grumbling is **normal behavior** in perverted world.

God's children should be **different**.

God's children should **stand out as light** in **darkness** around us.

When we have right attitude, we'll be blameless, without fault, in crooked, depraved society

Our behavior affirms truth of message

15b-16 *“...in a crooked & depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe ¹⁶as you hold out the word of life—in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing.”*

When our attitude is right, we'll be able to hold out God's Word to those around us & validate God's work, in dark culture.

Paul demonstrates what complaint-free conduct looks like when suffering for Jesus' name 17-18

“Even if I'm being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice & service coming from your faith, I'm glad & rejoice with all of you.

*¹⁸So you too should **be glad & rejoice** with me.”*

If we respond appropriately, it will be worth it, even if Paul is put to death.

He'll have cause to celebrate, knowing it's worth cost

In times of affliction, he's able to rejoice.

He urges us to rejoice with him.

IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR LIFE:

How do we respond when others get in our way?

How do we respond to opposition & hard times?

God's children ought to face the problem *together*.

Stand firmly together!

When tensions rise between us, work it out!

–resolve the tension, get over it!

The only way we ever respond appropriately to the pressure is when God works in us!

GOD creates in us both the desire

AND ability to respond appropriately.

It's not about ME, gritting my teeth & trying harder.

It's about H.S. working...

He produces His fruit in us.

**When things don't work as *WE* think they should,
instead of grumbling & complaining...**

instead of blaming others for our problems...

=>look for what God's doing & praise Him!

Only Holy Spirit can produce that response in us!

**When pressure rises,
how will WE respond?**