

Power to Will and to Act

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[0 : 00] Philippians chapter 2, the first 13 verses. If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interest, but also to the interest of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus, who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness, and being found in appearance as a man he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross.

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

[1 : 37] For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. Well, may he do that for us. Let's hear the preaching of God's word.

Well, this morning we're reading someone else's mail, aren't we? A letter written 2,000 years ago by the Apostle Paul to a church in Philippi about issues of unity and joy and the mission in their church. But in another sense, we're reading our mail, aren't we? For what Paul wrote is the very living word of God that he is still speaking today to his churches.

Romans 15, 4, for everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, to rebuke us, to correct us, to train us in righteousness, that we might be completely furnished and equipped for a life of godliness and serving the Lord.

So our text is just two verses today. It's verses 12 and 13 in Philippians 2, where Paul first gives us a command and then he gives us the power.

[2 : 50] Look at the command here in verse 12. Therefore, my dear friends, my dear friends, Paul loved these people and he told them so. As you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

You see the command? Work out your salvation. I want to make it very clear up front that this work of yours is not done in order to be saved.

This is not working for your salvation as if you could somehow work hard enough to merit salvation. No, the gospel denies that possibility flat out.

It's because we as sinners cannot make ourselves right with God that there is a gospel that that's why Jesus came, that through his work, we might be saved.

So the gospel says you must receive salvation as the free gift that Jesus Christ is merited by his work, his life, his death, his resurrection.

[4 : 07] But then, having been saved through faith alone in Christ alone, you now as a saved child of God are to work out this salvation in all of life, the whole of life, every area of life, continue to work it out.

Now, Paul commends them as already having done this. He were to work this out by obedience, and he says, you've already shown obedience.

Now, he tells them to continue to obey, which is to continue to work out their salvation. I don't believe it's being said enough that having saved us, Christ calls us to obey God's commandments.

Obedying God's commandments is conduct worthy of the gospel. Obedying God's commandments is working out your salvation. God in Christ has saved you, but to what end?

To what purpose or result? Not only to be forgiven of all of our sins, but to obey his commands. You remember the words of Jesus as he left us.

[5 : 26] He said, every disciple of mine is to be baptized and then is to be taught to obey everything that I've commanded. Not to save us, but because we have been saved by free grace alone.

And this obedience, Paul says, is to be done with fear and trembling. With what we heard in Sunday school, the conscious eye of, the consciousness of God's eye being upon us, that we live before him.

And so we're to be more aware of his eye than we are of any human eye, whether apostle, pastor, or parent. Obedying not only in my presence, Paul says, but now much more in my absence.

So these brothers and sisters at Philippi might not have argued with each other to get their way when Paul was there. But as soon as Paul left and was out of sight, then out came selfish ambition and vain conceit in their dealings with each other.

Epaphroditus has gone to Paul from Philippi to see how he's doing and to report on the church at Philippi. And he must have told Paul that the humility they once knew toward each other had given way to pride.

[6 : 50] And their one spirit and purpose and love and mind had given way to everyone's own little selfish agendas. So Paul writes, this obedience is to be done with an eye to God's presence, not mine, even when I'm far from you.

And then he also says this obedience is to be done with fear and trembling, afraid of ourselves and the potential that we all carry in our breasts to shatter the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace and to grieve the Holy Spirit and to quench his work among us.

There's a holy fear, a fear that doesn't make us run from God but makes us draw near to him. And it's the fear of displeasing him. Our greatest delight is his smile and our greatest dread is his frown. And it's that kind of awareness of my remaining sin that causes me to be careful and to watch over my life, to pursue this working out of my salvation in fear and trembling.

Now, though this command to obey and work out our salvation does have a general application to all God's commands, you can apply in one sense verses 12 and 13 to all the commands that our God has given us, I don't believe we ought to jerk it out of its context.

[8 : 28] And the context that we find it in is a very specific application to certain commands that have already been given. And so notice the first word in verse 12.

It's therefore. And as all good principles of interpretation would let us know that when we see a therefore, we ask, what is it there for?

And it tells us this one is pointing back to all that Paul has just said. In light of what I've just said and commanded, now obey these commands and work them out in your salvation in these particular ways.

Well, what ways? Well, in harmonious relationships within the body of Christ. That's what I've been talking about, Paul would tell us.

So in many ways, I think verse 12 is a summarizing restatement of the very first command that we find in this letter. Back in chapter 1, verse 27.

[9 : 34] Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel. What does that look like, Paul? Well, it's standing firm in one spirit. And it's striving together for the faith of the gospel of Christ as one man.

So, conduct worthy of the gospel is to live and work together in unity. That's worthy of the gospel that reconciles men to God and to one another.

And that is where he first meets us with the first command then in verse 27. But you know that the theme of unity carries right on over into chapter 2 as he continues to make that appeal with other further commands for unity.

Have the same mind, the same love, the same spirit, the same purpose. And don't do anything out of selfish ambition and vain pride but in humility consider each other better than yourselves.

And don't just look after your own interests but the interests of others. And then he takes the biggest lever of all and he says and let the attitude that was found in Jesus be in you.

[10 : 49] The attitude that brought him who is God of very gods out of heaven to become a servant, a slave, a human being that he might die for us and thereby serve our greatest need which

is salvation.

Choosing to save us instead of himself. Such great cost to himself. Now let that attitude be in you. So that's where we've been. That's what Paul has been talking about. Augustine said that if you're too proud to imitate a lowly man then imitate a lowly God.

And that's what is being set before us the humility of God the Son in serving us. A God who delights to serve us and did so a great cost to himself.

Now all of that you see it's not like well we just turn the page and forget what Paul's been saying. No all of that is still in sight as we now go on with the next two verses.

[11 : 58] That's the context of what he's now speaking about. Therefore in light of all of those commands obey them much more in my absence than my presence with you.

Working out your salvation in this area of your unity in church life and mission. Now I alluded to this last week at the conclusion of last week's message.

The question is just how in the world do we do that? the attitude of Christ that found no limits and how low it would stoop to serve another.

How in the world? That's the issue before us today. How? How? How can we conquer that which is inbred in us? Inbred pride?

Inbred selfish ambition? Inborn self importance and self righteousness? My preoccupation with me. To the neglect of the good of others and interests of them around me.

[13 : 08] How am I to overcome my fleshly instincts to insist on my rights? To defend myself? To treat others as they treat me? And what Paul is telling us is that if ever these commands are to be obeyed by me, if ever this attitude in Christ is to be reproduced in us, it will only be by the power of God that flows like sap from our union with Jesus Christ, the fruitful vine, into us who are branches in that vine.

It will only be by the person of God, God the Holy Spirit, living within us and there producing the fruit of the life of God in the soul of man.

Nothing but divine grace is strong enough to make us live like the divine. I mean, doesn't that stand to reason? That it takes God to live like God.

It takes Christ to live the Christian life. A supernatural, divine energy must be found, and it's not found in me.

Not in myself. And it's to this divine power that Paul now turns. Having set before us once again the commands to work out this unity, he now, having humbled us with the command, encourages us with the power.

[14 : 45] I want you to drink in the good news of verse 13. It reaches back, but I think there's the sense in which it reaches forward too. Into every command that Paul's going to give in this letter, where do we find the power to do that?

He's now telling us. Verse 13, for it is God. The same God who said, let there be and there was.

It is God who is at work within you, both to will and to act according to his good pleasure. Not to will and to act according to your good pleasure, but according to his good pleasure.

And here's the ability to do all of this. We need to remember that all the commands in the Bible do not give one ounce of ability to keep them.

Isn't that true? You can have, just multiply the commands, but they don't bring with them in and of themselves the ability to do them.

[15 : 53] No, that must come from the Holy Spirit of God. Holiness cannot be produced by legislation, passed by Congress, or by God.

No. Something more than law is needed to bring us into conformity with it, namely the very supernatural energy of God himself, who gives the commands.

did you know that's why the Holy Spirit of God has moved into you and taken up his home in your heart? For that very purpose, because God knows how hard it is for you to follow and keep his laws. Because God knows how stubborn your remaining sinful flesh is, and how it wants to cling to its own way. He knows how powerless you are to manufacture that attitude of Christ that brought him out of heaven to save us.

So God has put his very own spirit into your heart, the third person of the Godhead. I don't want you to miss the heart of God in this.

[17 : 01] He's coming to help us. He's pitying us in our weakness, our inability. Just as he pitied us when we were lost, he's now pitying us in our struggle with sin.

And so he sends his very own spirit, Acts 2: 33. He comes from the Father and from his reigning and risen Son, sent by them to live in you.

And so he brings the Father to us, he brings the Son to us, he's their representative and agent of change to exert his power that will actually move us to obey these difficult commands.

So the reason you can work out your salvation and obedience to God's laws is because God is at work within you.

You can work it out because he is working it in with divine energy. Now that's good news indeed. Think of this.

[18 : 08] The Holy Spirit is God's on-site agent of change. No, he's not like some construction managers a hundred miles away in an air-conditioned office trying to manage the project from a distance.

No, he's on-site. That's right, he's moved his home right on-site. And he's down in the foundation hole with you.

He's got concrete splattered all over his clothes. He's got dirt in his boots, sweat in his brow, calluses on his hands because he's not only overseeing the project, he's working.

He is actively working. He's at work too. So he is God's on-site working project manager.

And brothers and sisters, you and I are the projects. You and I are the work projects. Ephesians 2, 10, having been saved by grace alone through faith alone, we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus.

[19 : 22] to do good deeds that he has planned for us to do before the creation of the world. I'm sure you've seen signs posted along the highway, men at work.

What is this that verse 13 posts? Above every child of God, God at work.

That's the reality. For every true Christian of your life, God at work. And that's good news.

That's good news. What's he doing? Well, we're not left to guess. We're told. He's working in you both to will and to act according to his good pleasure.

Now, in anything that you do, there are always these two aspects that must be present. the will or the desire to do it and then the power to bring it to pass.

[20 : 27] So, you're here today. Both of those things were present. There was a will, first of all. You chose to be here. You made a decision.

Your will decided, I'm going to church today. But you were in need of more than a willingness to come to church, weren't you?

Because we often will to do things that we're not then able to carry out. So, you also needed good health and strength when you woke up to not be sick this morning.

You needed to wake up in time. You needed to have a car that didn't break down on the way to church. You needed to not have something else come up and distract you and lure you away to do something else today.

All kinds of things that you needed alongside of that first initial willingness to come to church. And the beauty of what our verse is telling us is that God, this divine agent on site to work on us, he does both.

[21 : 34] He gives us the willingness, the will, to do his commands, and he gives us to be able to do them, the ability, the power to bring it into our lives.

You see the encouragement then in this. Are you ever lacking the will to do what God commands you? I do.

I lack that often. Well, this is good news for me. The Holy Spirit lives in my heart and has direct access to my will.

And he's got the skill and power to work at the very level of my heart's desires and choices to create in me the want to, the will to, the decision to do his good pleasure.

And that's where obedience begins, isn't it? In the will, with the heart. And that's something that God does.

[22 : 36] Some have been poorly taught that God cannot and will not influence our free will at all. It's hands off, God. That's my will. Aren't you glad that's not the way God operates?

If God just hands off with me, I'd still be on the high road to hell and I wouldn't want to get off until I got there. I'd keep choosing my way, my way, my way.

Blessed be God, he does influence our wills. Psalm 110 says that his people are made willing in the day of his power, that God has a power to exert upon the dead, sin-seeking, self-seeking will to

actually turn the will to want God and salvation through Jesus Christ.

And then even after we are believers, what Paul is telling us is that it's God who now is at work giving us the will to do what pleases him. There's a wonderful example of this back in 1 Chronicles 29.

There was a need for financial gifts for a building project to build the temple at Jerusalem. But people love their money and don't like to let go of it.

[23 : 54] Yet, David and the leaders, quote, willingly responded, willingly, with their will, all in. responded by giving freely and wholeheartedly to the Lord.

And then the rest of the people did the same, causing King David to praise the Lord. And here's what he said to the Lord. I have seen how willingly your people have given to you, O Lord.

Keep this desire in the hearts of your people forever. He speaks as if God actually has the power to create and keep this willingness in the hearts of his people forever.

That's not hands-off the will. That's a very hands-on God dealing with our wills. David is acknowledging that their willingness came from God.

It's the work he's able to do and he does do in our hearts. But as we all know, it's one thing to will and it's another thing to act, isn't it? And Paul knew that reality, which we find as well in Romans 7.

[25 : 10] The will to do good is present with me. He's got the willingness, but I can't carry out what I'm willing. And I find this principle at work, that when I want to do good, there's the willingness evil is right there with me.

And so I don't end up doing what I was willing to do. You felt that? Of course you have if you're a Christian. It's just the normal Christian life while we still have this remaining corruption in us, striving against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh.

But again, it's encouraging to know that that's a mark of the spirit. He's in there working, you see? Or you just go the way of the flesh every time. So it's encouraging.

God works in you both to will and to act according to his pleasure. Now that's everything then from the willingness in the heart, the beginning, all the way to the action in the life and everything in between.

This is the very thing that God promised to us in the new covenant that Jesus sealed with his own blood. Ezekiel 36 27. God says, I will put my spirit in their hearts and move them to follow my decrees and to be careful to keep my laws.

[26 : 42] I will move you. I will move you. My spirit in you moving you to follow my decrees to be careful to keep my laws.

So here I am. I'm over here. And here's God's commandments, those difficult ones. How do I get from here to here? God says in the heart of every child of God, I'm going to put my spirit and I'm going to move you.

I'm going to cause you. I'm going to move you to to keep my commandments, to be careful to keep them. That means he's got to put in the willingness and the ability to do so.

And that's what he promises us. We're not powerless. God does not give us demands of the law and not give us straw to make bricks with.

No, he gives us the Holy Spirit to enable us to do the very things that he commands. So that after willing and doing anything good, I have God to thank for it.

[27 : 47] Not one holy thought has ever entered into this mind. Not one holy motive. Not one holy desire. Not one holy act in my life, but that I must say thank you, God.

Thank you for working in me, to both will and do the things that please you. Isaiah 26, 12, Lord, all that we have accomplished, you have done for us.

Now, if you're thinking, well, if God's at work, then I'll just sit back and watch him work. If he's at work, well, I'll just let go and let God. Well, such thinking is exactly wrong.

It's completely out of joint with the passage. These words are meant to encourage our activity as believers, not to encourage some passivity. The point is, God is at work within you, so you get to work.

If he wasn't working, there'd be no incentive or reason to work. It would be an exercise in futility and failure, since without him, we can do nothing. Oh, but since he is at work, our work is not in vain.

[28 : 59] So work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for God is at work in you, both to will and to act according to his good pleasure. God's busy, so you get busy.

That's the pressure of these two verses coming together. And it's not that God works for a while and then we're to take over and work the rest of the time. No, not at all. No, he's working in all of my working.

Now, what is our work to look like? What should his work stir up in us?

Let me say it in just two words. Dependent activity. What kind of work should we be doing to work out what God is working in?

Dependent activity. So as we work, we're not trusting in our work, but in his. That means the activity of prayer, doesn't it?

[30 : 00] Because prayer is the language of dependence upon God. Prayer is the shifting of the weight off of me to move me off of myself to put all my weight on God that he would move me, that he would work in me both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Prayerless activity then is not dependent activity. It's rather leaning on the arm of the flesh. And that's what gets us in such trouble rather than getting us out of it.

And I know of nothing that sends me running to the Lord more for help than a true knowledge of myself. The true knowledge of myself, which is what humility is, just knowing myself before God. and if I clearly see that there's no such strength in me to live this way, well then I'll be looking to and leaning on him for his strength.

But as long as I think, well I can handle this when we've done this before. You see where my weight is? I'm putting my weight on myself. Oh, but if I distrust myself and I realize what potential is here, I'll say, God let me lean on you and your strength.

[31 : 24] Sometimes I turn to the valley of vision just to pray, to use those Puritan prayers and to pray them myself to God. I found myself yesterday doing it.

And you'll see why I was taken up with the one that my little bookmark was in for yesterday. day. Here's the prayer that I prayed. Every good work or thought found in me is the effect of thy power and grace.

The sole motive in working in me to will and to do is for thy good pleasure. Oh, God, it is amazing that men can talk so much about man's creaturely power and goodness.

When if thou didst not hold us back every moment we should be devils incarnate, this by bitter experience thou has taught me concerning myself.

Yes, I learn it here. Yes, I see it. I see what happens to Peter when he's leaning on himself. But not just in scripture.

[32 : 40] this is something that I have learned by bitter experience, we pray.

Well, that's knowing yourself, isn't it? How many times have you lacked the willingness to genuinely love difficult people in your life? The willingness wasn't there.

You had no willingness to return evil for their good for their evil. And no will to dry up your self-defense and bitter thoughts and malice within.

No strength in yourself. And when empty, we're invited to that fountain that's full of grace. It's self-knowledge.

It's seeing how empty we are. That we look independent activity of prayer to the Lord. Maybe at other times, you have had the willingness and you sought to move into a broken relationship and the willingness was there, but oh, it quickly evaporated with unkind words received and stirred up acts of the flesh in you.

[33 : 53] Oh, yes. We come away totally defeated. We've been overcome, conquered with evil when we're commanded to overcome evil with good.

And so I learned by bitter experience that there's more in my heart than I can handle of ill will, feelings of revenge, bitter, unforgiving spirit that nurses a grudge.

And it was just such experiences, life, bitter experiences that caused Thomas Watson, the author of the book that we're studying in Sunday school, to cry out to God, oh, this base, cankered heart of mine that has received so much mercy and can show so little.

I've been forgiven millions, yet I can hardly forgive hundreds. Lord, pluck this root of bitterness out of me. that's the cry of a man that says, I've been pulling and I can't get it to move.

Lord, you pluck it out of me. He's transferring his dependence on the Lord. Lord, you pluck this bitter root out of me. Perfume my soul with love.

[35 : 07] Make me a dove without gall. Now, when has been the last time that the felt presence and power of sin within you has squeezed out of you, the heart cry, oh, what a wretched man I am.

Romans 7, 24. What a base, cankered heart of mine. Lord, you come. Change my heart. Pluck out the bitter root. Lord, deliver me. I find my tongue as a pipeline to hell. And without your working in me to will and to do, I can slice and dice with the best of them. Tearing down instead of building up. And it's the humbling sense of our utter need for God's almighty power that sends us running to him, desperate and dependent upon him in prayer. I don't have it, but you do. I can't do it, but you can help me do it. I never will unless you give. Are you that dead honest with your heart before the Lord?

[36 : 25] If you are, you know what you'll find? You'll find that God's heart moves towards you, not away from you. And he comes toward you with needed grace.

You do know, don't you, that he is powerfully drawn to acknowledged need. And when we cry, Lord, I'm in need and I'm looking to you.

He gives grace to the humble. It's his delight. Just waiting for you to get to that point, John. Took you a long time, but I'm here.

Here's the grace you need. Here, let me give a jerk on that root. The spirit, he's come to be on sight with me. For this and every other sin that I struggle with.

And he has enough grace to dry up our bitterness at the root and to replace it, not just to leave a vacuum, but to replace it with the plant of brotherly love. Genuine brotherly love.

[37 : 30] There's enough power to turn my concern outward, to get me thinking outside of this suffocating box of me, to where I'm actually seeing and being moved by your interests as well.

He can do that. He's God. He's at work with supernatural energy. So failure works for you, Christian, if it brings you empty before God with a cry, a fresh cry for help.

Failure works for you. That's just Romans 8, 28. He is able, this great God, is able to work all things together for my good. Those who love him and are called according to his purpose.

So our work of dependent activity is praying for help. Desperate dependent prayer for God's help. Let's get desperate with God about the true condition of our hearts.

But that's not all. We don't just pray. And by that I'm not saying prayer is a small thing. Please. But that's not all we do. We also pursue peace. Peace and the things that make for peace.

[38 : 40] You say, but I don't have any peaceful, loving feelings in here. I don't feel like relinquishing my rights. You don't wait to feel anything. That's the devil.

That's his way. Just wait around until you feel like loving people. Well, what do you have more than the world? They love those that love them and they love those that they feel like loving.

No, no. You pray for and pursue peace actively. You don't wait to feel anything. And that's what Paul tells the church in Rome. Don't repay anyone evil for evil.

That's to be overcome by their evil. Instead, overcome evil with good. And you do that if they're hungry, you feed them. If they're thirsty, you give them something to drink. Peter says the same thing in 1 Peter 3, 8-11.

It's a call for harmonious relationships with each other. Peter quotes Psalm 34, whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue for evil and his lips from deceitful speech.

[39 : 38] He must turn from evil and do good. He must seek peace and pursue it. Now, there's nothing passive about that at all.

No sitting around, doing nothing, waiting. If your child was kidnapped, you wouldn't just sit there. You'd pray and pursue. And it's the same thing here. Has the devil kidnapped peaceful relationships?

Then pray and pursue peace. Get after it. and it calls for the active constructive constructing of a bridle for our tongues. Few things destroy unity faster than our tongues.

And it's not just a bridle to keep nasty evil speech from coming across our lips, but it's to positively replace it with speech that is seasoned with grace.

grace. You see, there's this principle of putting off and putting on. So when you receive a harsh word that stirs up anger, you give back a gentle word that puts out the fire of wrath.

[40 : 42] And when they curse, you bless, and when they persecute you, you pray for them. And when they tear you down, you seek to build them up, and you put off what comes natural to the flesh, and you put on Christ-like behavior.

You put off the works of the flesh, you put on the fruit of the Spirit. So you put off fits of rage, and anger, and you put on self-control. You put off quarreling and fight, and you put on patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness.

And there's all kinds of activity in pursuing peace. He begins the list in 1 Peter 3, 8, this way. Finally, all of you live in harmony with one another.

Now that takes some real doing. It's easy to read those words, live in harmony with one another.

That's not something that you'll get to passively.

It's going to take some real action. You know what harmony is? It's a musical term, and it refers to several notes that get along real well with each other.

[41 : 47] And its opposite is dissonance, several notes that don't get along well at all with each other. And even the most untrained ear here can tell the difference.

One's jarring and grating to the ear, the other is pleasant and beautiful. I'm going to ask Tom to come and play for us something, not to tell us which. You see if you can tell the difference, which is dissonance and which is harmony.

So, have your ears trained. Let's hear it. How many of you think that's harmony? All right, I'm glad.

Again. Give it us again, yes. Do you feel the jarring? Those notes are fighting each other, aren't they? They're not getting along. There's no harmony in that.

Now give us the harmony. Those notes belong together, don't they? They're getting on very well together. So, all of you live in harmony with one another.

[42 : 59] Not jarring and grating and rubbing each other wrong, but learning how to get along together, like the notes of a sweet chord.

How good and pleasant it is when brethren dwell together in unity. It's pleasant. Isn't it pleasant to hear harmony? Even when you sing the praises of God, that'll take some activity, some sensitivity, learning to be sympathetic, which he follows up with.

Learning to love his brothers and be compassionate and humble, that'll keep you busy for a while.

Not repaying evil for evil, insult for insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called.

And that's what it means then to work out your salvation, because God is working in you. To pray and do nothing is not the answer. Avoidance is natural.

Seeking peace and pursuing it with grace is supernatural. And the Spirit of God is there to help you do just that. King Hezekiah got the balance right.

[44 : 03] It says, in everything he undertook in the service of God's temple, in obedience to the law and the commands, he sought his God, prayer, dependent prayer, and he worked wholeheartedly, working out with activity.

And so he prospered. May we do the same. The Holy Spirit within us is all that we need for harmonious living together. Let's not grieve him.

Let's not quench him. Let's keep in step with him. Let's pray for his help and pursue his peace, making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit.

in the bond of peace. So we've seen this morning God's working in us as the encouragement for our working. That's how Paul did it.

I work struggling with all his energy, which works so powerfully in me. That's our privilege as Christians. What a privilege to be a temple of the Holy Spirit, a project work site in which the Holy Spirit has moved his home and is making us more and more like Jesus.

[45 : 15] If you're unconverted, I trust you'll see the heart of God, that he does give what we need to follow him.

And sometimes Christian or non-Christians can pause from coming to Christ because they're afraid they won't be able to live the Christian life. Of course you can't. Of course you won't.

Not without Christ. So as you stand here without Christ and you look at the Christian life and you say, I can never live it, so why even seek Christ? Because once you come to Christ with nothing good to say for yourself and throw yourself on his mercy, he forgives you all and he gives you the Holy Spirit.

So then, work in you to will and to do with his good pleasure. Well, the Savior is willing to help us. Let's turn to him for whatever our need this morning.

We're going to stand and sing from the overhead, thanking the Lord for his gift of God the Holy Spirit.