

Work Out as God Works In

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[0:00] Our brother Stan has asked me to read a portion of the scriptures here at Philippians chapter 1 and we're going to begin reading in verse 27 and read into chapter 2 and verse 13.

! Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel, without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you.

This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved, and that by God. For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

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.

[1:47] 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, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

It's a great blessing to be here. I want to start off by asking you a question. Have you ever had a situation where you wanted to be able to do something, a particular skill, play the guitar or bake bread or golf, and you wanted to be able to do this?

[3:32] And there was somebody that was very good at it, and they would basically say, yeah, come on and play the guitar, play golf, bake bread, make a pie, and they would call you to do that, and maybe they would even say, and I'll show you how, but then you were left with the frustration of, they're so good at it, and I still can't do it.

Or have you ever looked at somebody that's really good at something that you want to do, and on one hand, you're kind of excited by seeing them. Maybe you see a good guitar player, you see somebody baking a pie, like my daughter does, and just rolls it up and puts it together very easily, but then you can't do it, and they can't help you do it.

They can kind of tell you about it, but they can't help you. Have you ever had something like that take place? How about this in the Christian life?

We know that we're in Christ, and we know that God is leading us, and we know that the Holy Spirit leads us, but we also know that we're supposed to be responsible, and we're supposed to be doing what God tells us.

And then, do you sometimes get a little frustrated? Well, how much am I supposed to strive? How much should I work hard, versus how much should I be passive, and let God lead me?

[5:12] Do you sometimes think about that? Or, have you heard people say, God gave me a piece about this, and you kind of don't experience that piece in that same way?

Well, these are very important issues, and there's a wonderful text that God has for us this morning out of Philippians, that's really going to help us to understand that we're to work out because God is working in us.

All right? We're to work out because God is working in us. And we're going to see in that that God wants us to work, and we don't have to feel, is God leading me or not leading me in this?

But God wants us to work out what he's told us, and at the same time, we're going to know that God is in us, leading us, and that he's there helping us to accomplish the very things that he's called us to do.

So it's like seeing that great guitarist, but then he holds your hand in a certain way or helps you, and it's that one that makes that pie so great that as you're doing it, you're actually able to bake the pie.

[6:31] And that's Philippians 2, 12 and 13. 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, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

God is working in you, and you're to work. We're going to consider this by first looking to whom this is written, and then we're going to have a short overview of these two things.

You work because God is working in, and then we're going to have a more detailed examination of that, and we're going to close by saying this is really the gospel.

So first, and very helpfully, let's consider to whom this is written. Well, we know it's written to the Philippians, and then in verse 12, it says, therefore, my dear friends.

Paul is writing to those that he's calling dear friends, and in other translations, this is my beloved, and the Greek there is, agapiti, which means those on whom God's agape love has been given.

[8:07] So this is written to those who are experiencing God's agape love. And when Paul writes to people, and when this terminology is used, it's used of Christians.

It's not used of unbelievers, but it's used of those who have experienced and are in God's agape love. And we further see this.

This is written to those who are saved. It says, work out your salvation. Continue to work out your salvation.

You already have it. It's already yours. And so, what we're going to be speaking of is what God is saying to those who are already saved, and then, let's use a little more precision here, saved in this context, meaning justified.

He's not talking to earn your justification. He's talking to those who already have justification, who already are forgiven for their sins, but he's telling them to continue to work out something here called salvation, which is then not justification, but it's something else.

[9:26] Very important. He's not talking to unbelievers. If he's talking to unbelievers, he wouldn't say, work out your salvation, but like the Philippian jailer who was probably reading this letter, and in the church, he would tell them, believe.

If somebody's not saved, they aren't instructed to work out their salvation, but they're told to believe and to come to Christ. So, this is written to us, and it's written to you, and it's not that you might be forgiven for your sins, but it's somebody who's already forgiven, and then let's take a quick look at the two main things that are here.

One is what we are to do, and the other is what God has done, and is doing. We have an imperative, which means a command, and we have an indicative, which means an ordinary state of things.

We're commanded to work out our salvation. That's what we're told to do. And then, regarding God, it says that he is working in us.

That's already taking place. There's nothing that we do to activate his working in us. He is. It's a statement of fact. He is working in us. But we're told, you work out your salvation.

[10:52] This salvation, looking a little bit more, is another way of saying obedience. In verse 12, it says, Therefore, my dear friends, as you have already obeyed, not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence, continue.

So what you've been doing, continue. So working out your salvation is another way to say, continue obeying and doing the things that you've been doing.

And as we look at this letter, what has Paul told them previously? He's told them to be unified. He's told them to strive and to work together.

He's told them in maintaining that unity, don't let anyone do things out of spite or for vain glory or empty glory. And so he's telling them now, that which you've been doing, continue to do.

And then later on, he's going to tell them more. So to work out salvation means, in this context, to continue working in your salvation, working in obedience, working in what we call sanctification.

[12:06] Justification, the forgiveness of our sins, is something that immediately happens. We don't do anything for our justification. God has done it all and we receive that through faith.

Sanctification, growing in the experience of salvation, growing in holiness, that's something that we do need to work in and it's something that's progressive throughout our whole life.

There's a definitive sanctification that takes place when we're saved or when we're converted, when we're justified, but there's a part of it that goes on in our whole life where we grow and grow and grow.

If I can use that bicycle illustration, and I wasn't planning on doing this since Pastor John said that, so you're given the bicycle and what does the parent want?

The parent wants you to enjoy riding it. Well, you start riding it and you're wobbly at first but then you start getting better and you start being able to go faster and pretty soon you can go, look, mom, no hands.

[13:04] And then you learn to use the speeds and then you learn to go up hills and down hills and you learn to steer and there's a continual growth in that. God gives us something wonderful that's called salvation which is really a relationship with himself and he wants us to grow in that.

Further, regarding what we're to do, we're to work and I'm going to be repeating this several times during the message. It says we're to work out and you know, if you want to have little buzzwords that are just going to be in your mind all the time, work out, work in, work out, work in.

You're to work out, God is working in. And even when we say work out, what do we usually think?

Going to the gym and lifting weights and running and bicycling and that sort of thing and that's even strenuous thinking of that but we know work is something that's strenuous and the Christian life is filled with a lot of work and I hope this message will be an encouragement and a comfort.

Sometimes we get discouraged because we think the Christian life is going to be carefree bliss and then all of a sudden we find out it's not carefree bliss and we get discouraged.

We find out that there's hard work and hard decisions and hard situations but if we know ahead of time that the Christian life is full of hard work, if we know that ahead of time, then when we find ourselves doing hard work, we're not surprised and it's not a discouragement and when we know that God is there all the time helping us and that's a further encouragement but as we consider what we're to do, work out your salvation, salvation is obedience, growth and sanctification, growth in our experience of salvation and all that God has for us and it's work and so think of the images that the Bible uses for Christians, workers, workers in a vineyard, Paul tells Timothy to work with the Bible as a worker who's not going to be ashamed.

[15:11] We have the image of farmers sowing seed, plowing, reaping. We have images of Christians as soldiers and the full armor of God. We have images of Christians as athletes.

You know, Montenegrans have a reputation for being lazy and I don't have time to go into all this and you know, the Cretans, those living on Crete had that same reputation and sometimes those reputations are well earned as Paul said about those in Crete at that time.

But Montenegrans love to sit around and they have all kinds of jokes about sitting around and laying around. Well, the Christian life is not sitting around and it's not laying around.

It's being a worker. It's being a farmer. It's being a soldier. It's being an athlete. So, that's one part of this, what we're to do and then, consider the other part, what God is doing.

This is an indicative. It's a statement of fact for God is at work in you. God is working in us and it's good to note, you know, those indicatives and imperatives.

[16:19] It makes a big difference. What are we told to do and what is already taking place that we're not told to do? We're not told to do something so that God works in us but it says God is already at work in us.

He's at work in us regarding our will. He's at work in us regarding what we're doing in a mysterious and wonderful way.

We're to work. God is already working out. It's not an either or. Both are taking place at the same time and God affects and works in us so that our mind grows and what we want to do gets more and more in line and at the same time God is helping us to do the very things that he calls us to do.

That's what God is doing. All right? And now we're going to go look at those things in more detail. I'm going to say it now. I'm going to repeat it later. It's very important. We don't wait to feel what God is doing.

All right? God is at work all the time. We don't wait to feel him moving our minds. We are to do. But at the same time we know that God is doing.

[17 : 37] Well, let's take a more detailed look at this then. And I want to start off by saying this is a great encouragement. I'm going to be saying some hard things in a little bit.

But before I do, I want you to know that this is a great encouragement. God is with us all the time. God is with us. God is with us whether we feel it or not.

And God is actively working. And that's part of the gospel. And that's part of salvation. God is working. God is helping me in my mind, in my will. God is helping me in what I do.

Life is full of work. Obedience is a challenge for Christians. Now, you know, somebody might, you can visualize somebody really, really, really, really holy and they say, oh, obedience is never a challenge for me.

But that's not the normal Christian life. All right? Why is it that we're continually reminded and instructed in the Bible in various aspects of obedience?

[18 : 44] Why is that? It's because it's hard for us. All right? It gets easier, but it's hard. And obedience is a challenge. It's not carefree bliss.

Again, that's why we're told continually, don't do this, do do this, as Christians, because most of the New Testament is written to Christians, because obedience is a challenge for us.

And, as we're being obedient, we're not always going to have spiritual feelings. We're not always going to feel God's presence. In fact, most of life is simply living what God has told us, knowing he's with us, having an ultimate joy, but not always feeling that in a particular special way.

You know, sometimes we call each other, you know, what's new? And usually when you call somebody and ask what's new, not much is new. You know, usually it's the same old thing. Well, in the Christian life, you know, sometimes God works in some very special ways, but most of the time we know what we're supposed to be doing, and a lot of times we don't feel a special presence of God.

At least that's how I am. How is it with you? You know, do you feel a special presence of God every minute of the day? Now, do you find yourselves in situations where you're having a hard time, where you're being challenged, you're persevering in righteousness, and you're doing it, but it's not easy.

[20 : 20] Well, God wants you to know that that's okay. That's part of life. Salvation and living in salvation is God's work.

It's your work, but God is with us, and so this should be of an encouragement to us. God is with us, and then this ties in so wonderfully with Philippians 1, 6, and he will finish the work that he's begun. And so, as we're growing in sanctification, one day we will be fully sanctified, and ultimately all the glory will be to God for that. You know, now we're working, by God's grace we're making progress, but we have a hope and encouragement that he is with us.

He's working in our will, and he's working in our actual doing, and one day he's going to complete his work, and that's a great, great encouragement.

This being an encouragement, then, I want to repeat that work is hard, and I said I repeated this, and I'll repeat it several times.

[21 : 31] Work is hard. A lot of the Christian life is hard, and one of the words that were used, and that is used to describe how we should be going about things is the word striving, and in Greek that comes from the agonismos, you know, the agonizing within myself.

We're told to strive in the Christian life. We're told to work hard, and we're told to strive. So, 1 Timothy 4, 10, for it is this that we labor and strive.

Romans 15, 30, I urge you, brethren, to strive together with me. Philippians 1, 27, I want you to stand firm in one spirit, striving, or contending together.

Colossians 1, 29, whereof I also labor and strive, labor striving, according to his working, which works mightily in me.

And you see both of those as well. So, the Christian life has striving. Now, have you ever heard, and we'll touch on this later, have you ever heard you shouldn't strive as a Christian?

[22:51] Have you ever heard that you should be passive and let go and let God? Well, the Bible says we should be striving and laboring. And so when it says work out your salvation, sometimes, and oftentimes, you're going to have to exert a lot of effort to grow.

You're going to have to exert a lot of effort to shift that bike into that low speed so you can get up at the hill and you're going to be sweating and you're going to be pumping and you're going to have to strive.

So, that's a more detailed look. It's hard work. And now, I want to consider with what attitude should we be living out our salvation?

With what attitude should we be working? And it says with fear and trembling. So, as we're growing in salvation, we should have a holy fear and a holy trembling.

Now, what does that mean? Well, it means at least this, and this is a very important thing, we should be serious and sober in our Christian life.

[24:07] We shouldn't be flippant. God is closer than a friend, a brother, a sister, or a mother, but God is not our peer.

God is not buddy-buddy. And so, we have to have a holy reverence as we're working with God, and we should have a holy fear. And so, we read verses, I like this one, Hosea 11.10, they will walk after the Lord, he will roar like a lion, indeed he will roar, and his sons will come trembling.

I like the C.S. Lewis imagery here. God is a lion, but not a tame lion. And so, we need to have a sense of the most holy God as we're working with him, he's helping us, but it's a serious business, and we need to take it seriously, not flippantly.

Oh, it's not very important whether I work or not, it's not very important if I strive or not, it's all, you know, life is easy, I don't have to worry about these things, God is love, and I've trusted in him, and that's enough.

But God wants us to have a holy, and a reverential, and a self-conscious, looking to him in a holy fear, and a holy trembling. That fear and trembling is wonderfully combined in the Bible with words like joy and celebration.

[25:27] Psalm 2, serve the Lord with fear and celebrate or rejoice with trembling. And so as we have a holy fear, as we have a holy trembling, we also have a rejoicing.

So that should be the attitude that we're working out, our salvation. And now I want to deal with this interplay more.

We've looked several times at what we're to do and what God does, and now I want to see an interplay, and I'm going to go back and forth, back and forth between the two and see how they're both going on at the same time.

We've said the Christian life is filled with a lot of hard work. The Christian life is not effortless. It's not a life of carefree bliss. It's not a life of letting God and letting go.

It's not a life of letting go. It's not a life of totally yielding and totally surrendering if by that we mean I somehow have to get into this passive state that somehow I'm going to feel God moving me.

[26:39] Certainly we surrender and yield our self-will to God, but we don't surrender and yield to a way that he's moving us, like a robot. That's not a biblical notion at all.

We're not called to be passive like a funnel where God will move and work through us. And there is no secret, you know, and there's books, the secret of a Christian life.

There's no secret, what can I do so that I don't have to struggle and strive anymore? You know, I listened to one of the brothers that were working with a preaching seminar, was we're going through Luke, and he was preaching from Luke 4, the temptation of Jesus, and he helped us understand, the nature of the temptations.

The devil was tempting Jesus to get something good without the effort that God wanted, to have a kingdom without the cross.

And so a lot of times we want a happy Christian life, we want carefree bliss, that's what we want, and we don't want effort, and we think that there's a secret to that, and so we look in books for the secret.

[27:51] Well, hopefully I'll save you some disappointment, there is no secret, and there is no carefree bliss in this life. Ultimately, it is in Christ, and in the full state of glory that we're going to be in.

So that's very important. And then, there's all kinds of wrong theologies and folk Christianity knowledge that comes up.

And sometimes there's this notion and this suggestion that if you struggle, if you wrestle, if you fight, that's fleshly, that's not being led by the Spirit.

And then sometimes we can feel anxious. Well, am I being led by the Spirit or am I not? And I get confused. And people keep saying, stop struggling, stop, stop, let go and let God.

Well, this ends up making people very anxious. And it has terrible consequences, and it's crippling, and it leads to all kinds of subjectivism.

[28:59] You know, is this right, is that, am I feeling this, am I not feeling that? It leads to antinomianism. You know, it doesn't matter what I do. It leads to kind of a mysticism, waiting for a special revelation of what I should do and how I should do it.

And this keeps being perpetuated. But here, we see that we're to work, and that at the same time, God is working.

My work is not suspended because God is working. God is working all the time. I'm not supposed to be, try to be passive and to experience God's changing my will.

You know, God is working in my will, but I'm not supposed to wait to experience that. I'm to be renewing my mind by reading the scripture. I'm to be renewing my mind by doing what God has told me.

I'm to be improving both my will and I'm to be doing. It's both. I'm to work and God is working in me.

[30:05] if I'm really working hard, that doesn't mean I'm being fleshly and that the spirit of God is not with me. And if I know that God is working with me, that doesn't mean, no, I don't have to do anything now because God is working.

No, it's I work. I'm told to work, but at the same time, God is working in me. The necessity of our work is not negated, and we must focus on doing what God has told us to do.

We're not to wait for urgings, for impulses, for leadings. We're not supposed to sit back and wait for God to show me what to do.

He's already showed us in his word. And what is it that we're supposed to be doing? Well, in this context, what Paul has already told the Philippians, starting in 127, live your whole life worthy of the gospel of Christ.

And how do I know what is worthy of the gospel of Christ? I look in the Bible, and God has told me what I'm going to be doing. So, that's what we're to do. We're not to put our minds in neutral.

[31:23] We're not to think, well, if I feel dull today, if I don't feel a peace about something, then God is not working in me. No, God is working in me, whether I feel dull or not, whether I feel a peace or not.

And I'm supposed to do what I'm supposed to do, whether or not I feel a peace. And feeling a peace is not the criterion that God has given us. And I just, you know, sometimes as your guest preacher, you don't know what people are going through.

But I hear a lot in my circles around me where people talking about, well, I have a peace about this and I don't have a peace about that. That's not the criteria that God has given us to decide what to do.

We're to do what he's told us, whether or not we feel a peace. You know who says you should wait until you feel a peace? The Mormons say that.

You know, they say, look at what they've told you and don't believe it just because they said it, but pray about it and see if God doesn't give you a feeling in your bosom. That's what they say. In Montenegro, there's this monastery that people go up to.

[32:30] It's very superstitious. It's very medieval. It's not gospel at all, but people will go up there and they'll feel a peace. Feeling a peace is not the criteria that God has given us. Well, but what do we do when we're really feeling dull?

Well, God tells us to set our minds on him. And to consider his ways. I'm reading from Psalm 19. I meditate on your precepts. I consider your ways.

Verse 15. I consider. I don't wait for you to fill my mind, but I look and I consider what you've given.

Verse 30. I have chosen the way of faithfulness.

I have set my heart. I run in the paths of your commands, for you have broadened my understanding. We always know that God is working in our minds, but the commands are given to us.

And we're the ones that are doing them. And so this is very important to realize. The commandments that we have in Scripture, to whom are they given? Are they given to the Spirit

within us? Are they given to Christ within us?

[33 : 35] No, they're given to us. And so as we read the commands that God has given us, we joyfully do them. And so in Philippians, later on, he's going to say, do all things without murmuring and disputing.

In Philippians 3, he says, brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet, but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and reaching toward what lies ahead, I press on.

And so the Christian normal life is working, doing what God has told me.

when I feel dull, when I don't feel God, I enrich my mind by looking to scripture, by meditating on his precepts. I don't wait for God to put his precepts in my mind.

But by Psalm 119, I read and I fill my mind with God's precepts. All the while, he is working in me.

Further, part of this work is putting to death parts of the flesh that resist the work of God that I would do.

[34 : 50] Romans 8, for if you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if by the spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. And you have that wonderful juxtaposition and simultaneousness.

We have this power of the spirit, but we're the ones that are to put to death the remaining sin that we have in our life. Put to death therefore whatever belongs to your earthly nature, Colossians 3, 5. And putting to death, that's the old English mortify, and when we used to do family devotions with the children, we would illustrate mortify by having them get swords and cut and hack like Christian pilgrims progress, but it's work, and it's something that God wants us to do.

When we're doing this work of putting to death, we don't always feel God's presence, we always don't feel God's peace, we always don't feel God's leading, but God is with us, and God is leading us, and he is helping us.

That's this simultaneousness, both and, together and. and now as we're considering this more detailed look, I want to note, somewhat briefly, that our working is an evidence of God's working in us.

[36 : 20] You know, we're told to work out, and as in our life, over a period of time, we see progress in certain things, we're constantly failing, we're falling, but we see that we do have a heart for God's things.

He has worked in our will, so we have a will that's being conformed to Christ, and we can say, thank you, Lord, this is your evidence, and as we see our working out in obedience, it forms a wonderful evidence of God's working in our life, a positive evidence, regardless of how we feel.

But, if there's no desire to do God's will, and there's no action doing God's work, then it's questionable, is God working in me?

Somebody can say, I raised my hand, or I went forward in an altar call, but if there's no active love for Christ, and there's no active doing, then there's no change in that person, and if it's totally absent, then that person's not a Christian, regardless of what they say.

Now, sometimes the saints can be very weak, and it's hard to tell, and sometimes unsaved people can do external things, and so these things aren't infallible, but God has given us this, and he's tied this in this way, that if God is in us, then we're told to work out, and we should be working out various things.

[37 : 57] So this ends up being a kind of evidence. It's also an antidote to another extreme. The other extreme is, you know, Christianity is basically duty.

I don't want you to get that idea. There is duty, but it's not only duty, it's not only work, and if you say that you feel God's presence, oh, that's mystical, I don't know about that, but you know, as we are working out, if not all the time, but we will feel the joy of Christ, and we'll feel success, and we'll feel progress, and we will know that God is working, and I kind of like the example that was put in the mouth of Eric Little in Chariots of Fire, and that is when he does what God has gifted him to do, he feels God's pleasure, and so if not all the time, over a period of time, as we're working, we do know that God is with us, and that's not only an intellectual knowledge, but that's a reality, and we will experience a close fellowship with God in our lives, we will know that he's in us, so this is an antidote against some kind of a cold, experience-less, only doing things out of duty, and in terms of this greater examination in detail,

I want to note that as we work out, as we know that God is working in, this is to the glory of God, and we are going to experience his pleasure, and verse 13 says, for it is God who works in you to

will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose or good pleasure.

We all know the great question, what is the chief end of man to glorify God and to enjoy him forever? Well, how do we glorify him, and how do we enjoy him?

Well, as we're working, it says that we're accomplishing his good purpose or pleasure. So as we're working, God is pleased, pleased, and God is pleased as he's placing and working in our will and in our working, and as we do this then, we experience God's pleasure, and we know God is pleased.

[40:34] It's a wonderful thing. I can say being obedient, God is pleased in that, and God is experiencing pleasure, and when God is experiencing pleasure, I'm experiencing pleasure.

there's in our Montenegrin translation or Serbian translation of this text, when it says work out, it says build your salvation, and the word in the Greek really is closer to work, but it can also mean to accomplish or to fashion, and so building is a possible translation, but you can think about as God has called you to do what he's called you to do, which is given in the scripture, and as you're using the gifts that he's giving you, it's like you're painting a picture, or you're building a building, you're building your picture of salvation, you're building a building of salvation, and as that grows and grows and one day is completed perfectly in Christ, but while it's being built, there's great joy in seeing what God is doing, what God is doing in you, so I want you to see in this working together that there's great joy to be had and that this is very pleasing to

God, and I want to wrap up by considering that this is the gospel, this is the gospel, you know, were we born wanting to do what God wants, were we born doing what God wants us to do, no, we were alienated from God, we didn't care about him, we weren't thinking about him, our thoughts were not inclined to his way, our doing was not inclined to his way at all, we weren't doing what was pleasurable to God, we were willing and doing what we wanted to do, and our willing and doing was against God, and that is our problem, and that is sinful, and that deserves God's punishment, and so our wanting to do what we want, and our directing ourselves only for only our pleasure, and only our glory, is the essence of sin, but God looked at that, and said,

I want to rescue a people out of those who are only thinking of themselves, who do not have my mind in them, who are not doing my will, and Jesus Christ went on the cross, taking our sin upon himself, and giving us his righteousness, and changing us from the inside, and giving us a will, where we want to do what is pleasing to him, and giving us his spirit, so the father makes the plan, and sends the son, and the holy spirit makes it known to us, and we're filled, and empowered, and then we want to do what God wants us to do, and we're able to do it, and we're told to do it, and as we do it, we live out the gospel, God has done what he's done so that we can, God has united himself to us,

God has called us, God is with us, and he never leaves us, and he never forsakes us, he's instructed us to work out our salvation, it's for his glory, it's for our good, but he's always with us, even when we're not working it out, that's the gospel, now, as we consider that, there may be some here, that have no interest in this, I, you know, sounds interesting, but I don't have a desire to do God's will in my heart, I don't even know exactly what that is, and I'm really not doing it, well, that's a problem, and God is calling you, and awakening you, through the hearing of his word, to realize that you're empty, you don't have a desire for God, and you're not doing, and you're not working out, because he's not in you, and you haven't looked to him, and then

[44:56] God calls you to look to him, and then he will be with you, and he will give you a new heart, and new desires, there may be another situation, you've been attending church, and you hear about these things, and you've come to a place where you see that they're good, yeah, you know, God is good, and I would like to do, but I can't, you know, I always feel overwhelmed, I never make any success, I try, I try, I strive, I did what he was saying, I strive, but I make no progress, well, it may be that you haven't truly looked to Christ, and it's not, we don't strive to earn his forgiveness, we receive his forgiveness freely, without effort, we look to him completely, and in justification, there is nothing that we do, but if you're having a complete impossibility, you know, sometimes, again, saints can be so weak that they make little progress, but there is, but if there's nothing but failure, then God calls you to truly look to him without any effort, without any striving for his forgiveness and for his presence, and then everything else will come out of that.

Let's pray. Lord, this is an important topic, and our time is short, and we cannot touch every possible aspect, or even important aspects, about what it means to come to you, but Lord, help us, those who have come to you, help us, Lord, to be working out the salvation that you've given us, to be enjoying the life you've called us to, to be making progress, and Lord, we confess and know that

whether we feel it or not, that you are with us, and we thank you that you are always with us, and we thank you that you will never leave us or forsake us.

Thank you that you are with us, and because you are with us, Lord, we will make progress, and one day you will complete the work that you started. We give you all the glory, we pray in Jesus' name, amen.

Amen.