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## Working Out Your Salvation

This will be the eighth and last message in a series having to do with salvation. We've spent a good deal of time in this series trying to convey the reality that salvation is infinitely bigger than what we comprehend at new birth.

Salvation has to do with a catastrophic ending, and a all new beginning. An ending of what? An ending of going to the bars and cussing? An ending of heading towards hell? Well...maybe, but that's not salvation. Salvation is an ending of one "life", one creation, and one covenant. And it is the commencement, inauguration of a new life, a new creation, and a new covenant. And that means so very much.

We really have only scratched the surface in the last several weeks of all that this means. But hopefully, we've at least demonstrated that we must turn our hearts and allow the Spirit of God to make real in us all that it does mean.

A whole new life – not I, but Christ. A whole new realm in which to live and move and have our being – the reality of being in Him, crucified to the world. And a whole new relationship with God – union with His only begotten Son. What an amazing reality. You can understand why Paul has to stop writing his letters at times and say "Oh...the depths of the riches and of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and his ways beyond finding out"

Today I want wrap this series up by sharing a bit about letting this salvation work in us. In and of itself, this salvation is a wonderful, perfect, and unsearchable reality. And yet it must come to have expression in you and I. It (He...our salvation is a Person) is in you by new birth. But it must work out of us. It must have its intended effect on our soul. It is not enough to know that you have salvation. You must know the salvation that you have. You must allow this salvation to work in and work out of you.

Philippians 2:12-13 says this – "work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is at work within you both to will and to work for His good pleasure".

For years, that verse hung on me like a heavy weight for several reasons. First of all, because I never read the next verse, "for it is God...". Second, because I didn't know what my salvation was. I knew there was such a thing as salvation. I believed I had it. I just didn't know what it meant. And third, because I figured that whatever it was, I bore the responsibility of having to "work it out"...whatever that happened to mean.

So, basically I could have translated that Scripture like this – "since you have been saved, you better work hard, with fear and trembling, to produce something to show for it."

And I would have understood it that way completely ignoring the next verse "for it is God who is at work within you both to will and to work". And there we have another wonderful demonstration of the carnal mind. However, that is not what that verse says. And it is not what that verse means.

You have come to a finished work. You have come to an unthinkable wonderful salvation. We just talked about that. A salvation that means so much. But is that salvation truly having its work in you. Do you realize that this salvation is in fact God Himself living in you, seeking to manifest His will and His work through you? You see, that is what's going on in this verse.

That's what Paul is saying here. "Listen," Paul says "it should cause you to tremble with awe to realize that your salvation is actually **the living God Himself working in you** both to will and to work for His good pleasure!" "This salvation that is in you must work in you, must be expressed through you".

Can you see what he's saying? The living God, in the types and shadows, shook a natural mountain in the giving of natural words. In the giving of the letter. Now, let the reality of this salvation shake you to the core. Why? BECAUSE IT IS GOD who is at work in you both to will and to work. Can you see that?

Paul, why should we allow this salvation to work out of us. What is the big deal? Paul answers – the big deal is that your salvation is God Himself living in you both to will and to work for His pleasure. Your salvation isn't like the old covenant – words on a page of how to act like Jesus. Your salvation is not a list of instructions on how to be a spiritual person. The big deal is that your salvation is the LIVING GOD taking up residence in your soul seeking to transform you into the expression of His will and work.

Can you see that that is what Paul is getting at here. Its not "get out there and make a big deal about being saved" Its "God in you is the big deal about your salvation". Its not "hey, now that you're saved, go show the world what you've got!" No, God knows what you've got, and crucified it in His Son. And now it is God living in you both to will and to work. That's wonderful if you'll get ahold of it.

So it is essential for those of us who have come to salvation to work out this salvation. It is critical that those who have been born of God's Spirit, we who literally have God living in us, allow God to "will and work in us for His pleasure".

Why? Why is it so essential? I want to stop and give some time to this question this morning. I want to pause here and really let the Spirit of God convince us that its not just "better" to know the reality of our salvation. It is vital. It is crucial.

I've had a number of people over the last few years ask me a question something like this:

"Jason, why is it so important that we allow Christ to be formed in us while we're on the earth. I know its true, I know its real...but if we're already born again, we're all going to the same place, right? I mean...does it really matter that this person or this fellowship doesn't ever talk about the reality of new life, or new covenant, or the truth of the cross?. Does it really matter that this person or this ministry just goes out and tries to do things for God in the flesh. Sure they're not seeing the cross

clearly, but sooner or later when they die the truth will catch up with them and they'll be happy in heaven, right?"

That's not always the exact wording of it, but that's the general thought. "Hey, there's one truth for all who are born again. Is it really a big deal if a bunch of people don't really see that truth right now? Should we really allow it to be a point of variance or conflict in relationships or marriages or churches? I know it's the ideal for us to grow up in Him, but is it really mandatory? I mean, Christians are all still saved, right? "

I am completely guilty of asking this question. But may I suggest to you that, once again, this question only exists in our hearts because of an unbelievable dark cloud of blindness and self-centeredness.

I received an email this week that was really great. It was from a person in our fellowship that was dealing with this very question. I'd like to just read a quote to you from her email because it answers this question in a very real view of Christ.

She writes

And as I was driving, I had that same question surface...And the Lord peeled back my view and gave me a glimpse of His view.....All of a sudden I could see the reason it was so important (for us to know the truth, to walk in the truth) was because it was just that - the total truth. It's God's view of us, His view of reality, His view of salvation, His view of the cross WAS the truth and thinking I had any life was a lie...Even asking the question "why can't we still live with ourselves or something else as our life" is a false question...He already IS our life...and we have no life of our own and there is life in nothing else...That was the deal/covenant we entered into at salvation...So to live under the false assumption that we have any life other than His is just that...A false assumption...An affront to God...And living in that mind or from that mindset, nullifies/ignores/disdains, through ignorance and I guess, a hard heart, God Himself.....And just because 50 million Christians might not KNOW He is their life doesn't change one iota the fact that He is,...So for us to live robbing Him of what He's purchased puts us in direct opposition with Him - like those who failed to enter into the land and therefore died...And it makes everything we do hollow, no matter how noble or lovely or how good intentioned...

I saw the seriousness of it and how even asking that question reveals that we haven't seen deeply enough yet, the truth that He is our life, because if we knew as we were known, there'd be no reason to even ask the question.

Can you see what she was seeing? Refusing to know as we are known, refusing to know Him in the reality of death, burial, and resurrection, in other words, refusing to know the reality of salvation - new life, new creation, new covenant - and allow it to work in us amounts to **refusing God's purpose and rejecting His Truth.**

It is exactly the same thing that the Israelites did when they refused to abide in the Promised Land and fill that Land with the kingdom of God. God put up with all sorts

of grumbling and hard-heartedness. But when they came to the bank of that river, when it came to stepping into the very purpose for which He had brought them out of death, out of Egypt, and they refused Him...then "He swore in His wrath" that every one of them should die and none would enter His rest.

What were they refusing? They weren't refusing to come out of Egypt. They weren't refusing to eat manna that fell from heaven. They were refusing to grant the Father the very purpose and reality of their salvation – the manifestation of His Son in the Promised Land. The increase of His Kingdom.

Can you see that when we fail to know and walk in our salvation, we are doing exactly that. Can you see that what we're doing is refusing to allow His truth, His kingdom to conquer our very soul. We are, in fact, refusing to give the Father His Son. We are refusing to give the Father "His inheritance IN THE SAINTS". (Ephesians 1:18) We are refusing to walk in the very purpose we were brought out of Egypt.

We say, in our hearts, getting out of Egypt was enough for me. I don't really want to abide in that Land. I don't really want to have another King on the throne of my heart. I'm glad I'm not going to hell, but I'll take my inheritance on this side of the Jordan. I'm glad you provide for my natural body, but I won't let you conquer every city of my soul with conformity to Your death and the reality of Your new life.

Do you see that it is a lot more serious than a person just "not focusing on that message right now". Its much bigger than just "oh, that's not part of this church's vision".

Think about it. If you are a God's field (which you are according to 1 Corinthians 3) and God the farmer comes and sows his seed into you, what do you think He is after? You can sing out "Oh how I love the Farmer" until you're blue in the face, but if you really love the farmer you're going to give him the increase of what he sowed. **You're going to concern yourself with what it means to work out that which He has planted within.**

And of course that is not a work of the flesh. I know I don't have to say that again and again in this fellowship. But it is not a work of the flesh, it is a work of the Spirit in the revealing of His Son. But we must turn our heart to know Him as the Spirit would reveal Him. We must allow the Spirit to make real in us everything that is real to Him. We cannot revel in the darkness. We must "awaken O sleeper, and let Christ give you light". Otherwise, are we really loving God?

You couldn't really say that you were loving the Farmer if every time the seed tried to pop a shoot out of the soil you sprayed it with *Round Up* plant killer. (The carnal mind IS *Round Up* Seed killer). That wouldn't be loving the farmer regardless of what words you use to sing of your affection. If you refused the Farmer the increase of what was His, then you would have to admit you were bad soil, and your affection amounted to little or nothing.

Jesus told a few parables to illustrate this very thing. In one, he compared it to a money lender that gave a certain amount of money to three different people. When he checked back on the three, two had brought forth an increase of what they were given. One, the one Jesus calls an evil and slothful servant, simply took what was

given and stuck it in the dirt. He just dug a hole, and put it in the ground. There was no increase. No interest. No investing.

Have you ever noticed that the money lender condemned the man for failing to bring forth an **increase** of what was given? He didn't condemn the man for losing it, or squandering it. He condemned the man because it was given for one purpose – that it would gain interest. That it would increase. That the lender could reap the increase.

The evil servant in this parable said that he even knew that the money lender would reap where he did not sow. In other words, he knew that he was not just coming back for what He planted. He was coming back for a harvest of what He planted. He wasn't just coming for the talent. He was coming for the talent with interest.

In another parable its not a money lender, it's a man who sows seed in a field. And, without going into all of the detail, you can see very clearly at the end of the parable that the "good soil" was that which brought forth an increase "100, 60, or 30 times **what was sown**".

What am I saying? I'm simply saying that the salvation that we have come to in Christ must find good soil and be allowed to increase – "30, 60, 100 times what was sown". Its not just about "well, I'm pretty content knowing what I know and holding onto that. I'm pretty happy with whatever my view of salvation is". Do you see that's like taking money from the lender and putting in the dirt.

"Paul, I don't really know much about this 'conforming to His death' stuff, I'm just glad my sins are forgiven." That's taking the money and putting in the dirt. "I'm not terribly interested in losing my life and gaining His, I just want to move in the gift of healing". Taking the money and putting in the dirt. "I don't know what it means to walk in the newness of His life. I just want to be a worship leader". Taking the money and putting it in the dirt. "Paul, I don't have a clue what you mean when you say 'crucified to the world' and 'raised up and seated with Christ in the heavenlies'. But I'm too busy being a missionary to look into it." Taking the money and putting it in the dirt.

Sooner or later we have to come to the recognition that truly loving God has to do with walking in the reality of His salvation. Loving God has to do with giving Him His inheritance.

God's inheritance in the saints is the working in them and out of them all that the cross has accomplished. Working in them and out of them the reality of salvation. And so loving God, at its core, is letting that work have expression in you.

And I'm not denying the existence of emotional feelings of love towards God. But that is not the reality of loving Him. Emotions are more of a byproduct. And they can lie. Why am I saying that? Because its very possible to have all sorts of feelings of what we would call love toward God while simultaneously resisting, refusing, rejecting the reality of His finished work.

I don't know about you, but the Lord has uncovered some awful things in my heart having to do with what I would have previously called my love for Him. He has shown me that so much of what I used to call loving God was really a loving of myself.

You see, He began to show me that apart from truly seeing the cross, what I really fall in love with is something that I think God offers me. I fall in love with something of religion and it comes to mean "loving God" to me. For years I'd say "Oh how I love Jesus", but what I meant was "I love thinking about going to heaven. I love experiencing spiritual gifts. I love conferences. I love teaching a small group. I love the way this song makes me feel." And yet all the while I refused to walk in the reality of salvation.

I don't know if you're tracking with me. But allow me to take this rabbit trail for those who will follow. Without the revealing of Christ in you, you cannot act or think or feel or desire anything apart from yourself. **You are necessarily the end behind every means.** You are not even conscious of another way to think, feel, desire, live.

Apart from beginning to see and know the otherness of Christ, there simply is no other mind working in you. There simply is no other nature working in you. There is no vantage point working in you out from which you can see yourself. You can't help it until, as Paul says "God severs you from your mother's womb and reveals His Son in you". (Galatians 1:15)

And that's not off our topic. Because you cannot love God, live for God, or know God apart from coming to share His view of your salvation.

We have to take this seriously. This isn't ever going to be a church were we get together on Sunday's and learn about spiritual things and then go live natural lives. We must never allow that to happen. Why? Because our salvation is "God who lives in you desiring you to will and work for His good pleasure".

We've come to a new life, a new creation, and a new covenant, all of which are NOW in Christ. We've come to the end of Adam, a crucifixion to the world, and an altogether different relationship with God. All of which are NOW in Christ.

And so I'll say it one last time for this salvation series. It is not enough to know that we have salvation. We must allow the Spirit of God to show us the salvation that we have. Once again, for visitors or new people, this is not a work that you will do. This is a work that He did, and now must be revealed in you.

How does Paul say that we come from the old covenant to the new in our hearts? 2 Corinthians 3 "beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, we are transformed into the same image, from glory to glory". How does Paul say that we put off the old man and put on the new "by the renewing of the Spirit of our mind".

Our salvation is the finished work of God in Christ Jesus, and yet it is a work that we can refuse to know. Salvation is a new life, and yet we can walk in the flesh even while born of His Spirit. Salvation is a new creation – one new man where Christ is all and in all – and yet we can find our treasure, purpose, identity, reality in the old. Salvation is a new covenant – a relationship of union with the living God – and yet we can still relate to Him in our heart according to our imaginations of the old.

So I'll conclude simply by saying – let us agree together to allow Him to work in us the reality of this great salvation. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is at work in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure.