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Yacolt EV Free

Our Work-out is His Work-in
Philippians 2:12-13

Turn with me in your Bibles to Philippians the second chapter. We have just been studying one of the greatest examples of humility in the Bible. The humility of God son Jesus, becoming man taking on the form of a servant to tell us the way out of the mess and to show us how to live a life of triumph and victory and purpose and life. To model for us a strength in humility and incredible dependence on God the Father. We need to see the model. We need to be shown how it's done. We have great need of selfless humility in our homes. We have great need of selfless humility in our churches, at our workplaces. We have great need of servant thinking people that say, "I want to make God's desires my own desires. I want to make God's hatred my own hatred. I want to make God's affections my own affections. We need models to follow and inspire us. We need to see those who have gone before and done it...but just being inspired by a model or hero is not enough..is it?

When I was a kid I loved to watch the Olympics every four years. My dad would rent a television just so we could watch. Anticipation and excitement ruled our home as we watched some of the world's greatest athletes compete for the prize..a gold medal. My wife Erin loved the Ice Skaters. She wanted to be Peggy Flemming the greatest skater gliding across the ice with poise beauty and grace. I loved the track and field events. Bruce Jenner, the decathlete was my man. The best of the best. Some of you may love to watch Michael Jordan or some other athlete. Some of may even try to duplicate some of their moves. We may try to be like Mike...just like Mike... But, I found out that it takes more than just having a great model. It takes more than sweat and performance. It takes power, it takes ability and skill. And I know even though I'm the exact same height as Michael Jordan...I will never be able to jump glide and move with the basketball the same way that Jordan can. Oh I can stuff the basketball, but not like the way Michael can. You see it takes more than just a model...it takes something that comes from within and if you don't have it within...it's not going to happen.

Frustration could set in if you were told to perform but you couldn't. Look that guy is doing it...you have the model example now do it! Why aren't you performing like the rest of them. Trying to perform without the power or ability leads to frustration. Performing without the desire, without the heart leads to a duty bound cold kind of legalism. It sucks the life from you.

Do you ever feel frustrated that in your Christian life you are called to be obedient but you just don't have the power in yourself to pull it off? Do you ever find yourself doing what is right but the desire is not there? This morning's passage in Philippians 2 is an encouragement for us. I need to know that things that are true about God in Philippians 2 verses 12-13. I need to hear the Words of God because it's easy for me to feel frustrated by my lack of power, my lack of ability to obey. And sometimes I get discouraged when my lack of desire has plunged my efforts to do good into a functional legalism. No heart..just rules. Can anyone relate? Let's READ.

I think there are many Christians who play the game. They look like they're singing the Christian life of obedience in God's power...but they are just lips-syncing the words. They lip sync their way through doctrine faith and practice. It really looks and sounds like the real thing...but it's all an act. It's all image and no substance, no real power behind it and soon they will be exposed by their imitation. I think there are too many Christians that are lip-syncing their way through life. Folks we don't have to be Milli-Vannilli lip sync Christians. We don't have to fake the faith. It merely produces plastic Christianity and were not interested in duplicating that. There is a power that God wants to work inside all of us, so that we don't have to fake a religiosity but it come springing forth out of our hearts in real power and desire and motivation. My purpose this morning is to encourage believers that our Almighty takes great pleasure in seeing His work in us...working out in us.

How do we tap into that power? How can we keep ourselves plugged in? I have this electric shaver. It had a cord that is plugged into my shaver and into the wall. Every morning while I shave, the electric motor stops at least once. What has happened? The plug is loose. It keeps coming out from the wall. I could get upset at the wall outlet for

being faulty, or the Electric company for failing to provide the power it promised to me. But that's not my problem. The power is there, it is available. My problem is failing to keep that shaver plugged in. It keeps slipping out and I have to be constantly aware to keep it plugged in.

Are you staying plugged into God? Obedience is essential to appropriate the power. Here's point number one. Your obedience to God reveals what you think about Him. How do you act when you are all alone? That exposes your view of Who you think God is. Look at verse 12. So then. That tells us Paul the author is going to lay out some logical conclusions based on what he has previously said. He has just given us the incredible model of Jesus humble obedience to His Father God. As Christ was humbly obedient...just as you have obeyed. in my presence. Now much rather more in my absence. Paul is encouraging them to build on the obedience he's seen in them in the past. Be obedient to God. Be dependent on Him. If you have a very small view of God. If you have a weak and powerless view of who God is. If you think He does not care or is unable to care about what you do when no one is around. If you think He is unable to see what you do or will not choose to discipline...then you will act the way your self desires when no one else is around.

I'm not sure why Paul encouraged the Philippines to live obedient lives even more when He wasn't around, but my guess is they struggled with it just like I do. I am much more aware of my speech and thoughts and actions when I'm around other people...then when I'm alone. I am much less tempted to sin when others are watching. That is so convicting. These are hard words.

These Philippians may have been waiting for Paul to stimulate them to obedience. Looking to a leader for cues of obedience. Folks we need leaders and models, as many of you are, but we need to be obedient to God, not just when the deacon or pastor comes knocking on the but even much more in their absence. That will reveal obedience not to some human leader that may let us down. That will reveal an obedience to Almighty God. True obedience comes whether or not anyone is watching us. We need to be pleasing God not other men or women. Who do you fear more? God or man? Who do you have a greater respect for? God or

man? Even when man is not watching be assured that God is. The One whom every knee shall bow and every tongue will confess as Lord.

Paul's command imperative in the progressive present middle tense tells us to keep on working out our salvation. The middle voice gives a reflexive sense which some of your translations have picked up on. Keep on working out your own salvation. Paul connects obedience very closely with working out ones salvation. We are to make it our own. Teens you can't work out your parents salvation. God has no grandchildren. He deals with people strictly on a first person basis. God has a creative plan for each of you..if you will only stay plugged into an obedience life with Him. It will be filled with purpose and excitement and joy. Ephesians 2:10. We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works." We are specially crafted by God Almighty. Should that not inspire Awe and Reverence. A healthy fear and trembling before God. This is a natural response when we realize how weak and dependent, how helpless we really are. Spiritual growth comes when we realize our need for growth. We do little to give reverence to God and so we short ourselves on wisdom. Proverbs begins "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Why don't we tremble more before God? Where is that sense of worship and Awe in your personal times alone with God? Obedience is essential to appropriate the power, the outworking of our salvation. The outworking of obedience that springs from a relationship that is vibrant and vitally connected with God. It's a relationship where we catch ourselves seeing the outworking of God's in working. We say. I'm not cussing near as much as I used to. I'm not yelling at people in anger quite as much. I'm starting to be more other focused and less self centered. I find myself wanting to encourage others. I'm desiring more and more to be with God's people. Be in LIFE Group, going to church. And I'm starting to even enjoy it. Beware....God must be working in your life because those types of things do not come naturally.

Now, on a fast read through this last line in verse 12, someone may think that we must work for our salvation or work toward our salvation. But we know from Ephesians 2:8,9 that Salvation does not come by the works that we do. "For by grace are you saved through faith and not of yourselves it is a gift of God not of works lest anyone should boast." We know from the first verse of this book that Paul was writing

to believers, he called them saints, holy ones who have received salvation from God. It's important to understand that Salvation can be viewed in two parts. Positional and experiential. Or to use the theological terms. Justification and sanctification. Justification is positional. We can only be justified, saved by grace through faith. That salvation is worked out in the daily conduct of one who has been justified. Deliverance from sin is salvation. That working out is experienced daily in a sanctification process of being set apart. Set apart from the world and set unto God for righteous living and acts of service. So we see salvation as not only an initial act of belief but as a process. The act is justification. The process is sanctification. The working out of our salvation comes from God's working in us.

Point #2. God must work in us before He can work through us. If we have not come to belief and accepted Jesus as Lord of our life. If we have not yet joined the millions who have bowed to the name above every name, Jesus. Then we do not even have access to the power for right living. The utility company has not even run a line to our home. We may even try to keep our shavers plugged into the socket...but it will result in nothing. Your face will remain full of stubble. It will not clean you up because you have no access to the power. God must first work in us before He can work through us. Look at verse 13. For it is God who is at work in you.

Billions worth in gold and diamonds are extracted from the earth every year by mining operations. But they cannot work those precious stones and metals out of the ground unless God has first worked them into the earth. When we work out our progressive sanctification in obedience to God. When we do right, we are merely acting on what God has already worked into our lives. He will do this differently with different lives. Each of us is specially crafted for good works. We are His workmanship.

The outworking of a new life in Christ requires a response of obedience and faith on the part of the believer. It is not that God gives salvation and then the believer must work to complete it. Sanctification is not by self effort either. Yet, Salvation by it's very nature must be lived out. If there is no life or fruit, one must question whether life was ever placed there in the first place. James 2. If a man says he has faith but

has no works to show for it...what use is it? I think this passage of "working out with fear and trembling" recognizes human responsibility to keep connected to the power source and yet even the desire and strength to do that comes ultimately from God. We are incapable of choosing what is good unless God implants that desire. It is a balance of Human responsibility and Divine enablement. It's not an either or. but a both and. All of God who wants all of me.

Paul did not write this to hold a threat over the heads of the Philippians that if you don't get working, God will cut off the power. NO. It was not a threat of loss of salvation. It was not a bargain deal. Better hold your end of the load or God is going to cut out. Not at all. I think Paul meant it as an encouragement. Folks you are not alone. God is pulling for you.

Look at verse 13. It is who? God who is at work in you. He is the power source. All the power we have is available in Him. You are not alone. But before God can work through us, ...He must first work in us. We owned a Volkswagen Fox while we were in Dallas, Texas. During an ice storm the wheels of the car came into a closer contact with the sidewalk then was outlined in our owner car care manual and the alignment of the wheels were terribly out. Left to it's own, it ran for the ditch every chance it could get. One had to work terribly hard to keep the car going straight. We took it in for an alignment. The car then desired to keep the straight line much better. Oh, you had to make sure you didn't fall asleep at the wheel. There were still the bumps in the road and turns. But, the desire was to move straight. Keeping connected with God is keeping your life in alignment. There will still be challenges and temptations, bumps and turns. But, it you keep yourself plugged in. You will keep yourself connected with the power source for right living. Obedience will be less of a battle and more of a delight. Obedience will be less of a show and more of a shine, a reflection as we mirror Christ's image to those around us.

We keep ourselves connected by staying in Gods word. How's your personal time in God's word? Are you reading it daily? That's our very food. If you aren't eating you will grow anemic. You cannot live without food. Do not think you can live for God if you do not feed you heart. I Thess 2:13 "You received the Word of God which also performs its work

in you who believe." This is not just another self help book on your shelf. Its words hold the power to energize our lives. Have you received it? Not just heard the words but taken it in. That's more than just studying, listening and reading. It is working to make the words a living part of your character, applying it. The word of God is quick and powerful, it is sharper than a double sided razor edged knife. James 1 "receive the Word implanted which is able to save your souls." Keep plugged into the word.

Keep plugged into prayer. Ephesians 3:20 Paul is praying for the believers for the Ephesian believers that Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond all we ask or think, according to the power that works within us. Keep plugged into the power through prayer. How is your work out on your knees? God must work in us before He can work through us.

Point #3 God's power is on display in us. Is that not an amazing thought. Verse 13. It is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. How big of a God is currently at work inside of you? Do you see Him working in you? Do you recognize God at work? He is at work. Both to will. Implanting in us the desire to live righteously. And empowers the action for His good pleasure. It brings God great pleasure when He sees what He has worked into us finally work it's way back out! It works it way out in many different ways. Humble acts of selfless service toward others. A heart of worship. A desire to encourage someone who is down. A rejection of temptation. Rejecting that temptation to sinful anger, resentment, gossip, lying, cheating, lust filled thoughts. That brings God great pleasure. Obedience enabled by His grace proves He is at work in me. His work in us brings Him great pleasure.

Friends around us are watching to see how big a God we have working inside of us. His power is displayed through us...How much of God inside of you do they see? Isn't it encouraging to know that we are not alone. Isn't it encouraging to know that God is pulling for us, implanting the desire and the energy for the action. We who are believers don't have to strive on without power....that would be too frustrating. We don't have to live righteously out of duty void of desire...that's legalism. God's takes great pleasure in implanting not

only that desire for obedience but also the power for right living. Keep connected to the power source. Allow what God has worked into your life..work it's way out.