

Philippians 2:12-13

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[0 : 00] In my presence, but much more in my absence. Work out your own 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.

Do all things without grumbling or questioning, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God, without blemish, in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain, even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith.

I am glad and rejoice with you all. Likewise, you also should be glad and rejoice with me. And that's all flowing together. They're not disconnected, but tonight we're going to talk about just verses 12 and 13, because that's kind of a loaded two verses I think we could really benefit from.

So at the beginning of chapter 2, if you remember when Swanson taught a few weeks ago that Paul is calling the Philippians not to live with selfish ambition or conceit or rivalry because that's what causes division.

That's what causes people to be torn apart in the church. But he rather calls them to live in love and be united in humility, which is the fruit of what God does inside of us as believers.

[1 : 28] So he calls them to do that, and that's the beginning of chapter 2. And so when God saves us, he produces a fervent love for the other believers as well as like a humility before him as God.

And so we live that way. It binds us together as his people. And that's verses 1 through 4. I kind of talk about that. But then Paul gives us the supreme example of that in Christ in the following verses, from verses 5 through 11, how Christ dwelt in eternal glory, but he left the glories of heaven and came to earth as a man and humbled himself, took on the creator, took on the created, and he lived a life of perfect obedience to the Father and eventually completed that obedience by dying at the cross.

And because of such an amazing act of love and sacrifice, God has rewarded Christ with the name that is above all names, that every knee should bow and every tongue will confess that Christ is Lord.

So that's what Christ's reward will be. And so that's where we find ourselves after verses 1 through 11. But now we get into 12 and 13.

And so following that example of Christ, the example that Christ has left us to walk in in love and humility, we are by God's power to strive to live as lights in a dark world.

[2 : 53] That's where we're going with this later and live by his strength in us. So if we look at verse 12, we'll see that he calls him to live in continued obedience.

He says, Therefore, my beloved, as you always have obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence, but much more in my absence.

And it's such a great joy for those that you have poured your life into, those that you have disciplined or spent a lot of time with, younger believers in the faith that you've given your life to, and you've tried to, as it says in 1 Timothy 2, to take what you've been entrusted with and to pass that on to other faithful men or women that will be faithful to teach others also.

It's a picture of, like, discipleship. And so nothing is more encouraging to someone who is making disciples than seeing those people that they've poured their lives into continue on and make disciples on their own and remain steadfast for Christ and giving their lives away to the lost world and just giving their lives to the church.

As John wrote in 3 John, you don't have to turn there, everybody said, For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in truth.

[4 : 20] I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. And it's this idea that, like, it just brings you great joy to hear that you don't have to be there to babysit them.

Like, I know guys like that that I spend a lot of time with. Unless I'm there telling them to do it, they're not going to do it. And they drive me crazy. So if you just need to smack in the face, sometimes I'll quit behaving like kids and be men.

And other guys, you think about them, you look at them, you think, I just don't have to worry about him. Man, that's encouraging. He gets this. He's doing this. He's being faithful to pass this on.

And so Paul is experiencing that joy that comes from that. He's like, you're continuing obedience, even though I'm not there with you physically. You're pressing on in these things.

And he doesn't have to worry about the Philippian church. He's excited to hear about what's going on there. But then in the end of verse 12, we start getting into a mystery that exists in the Christian life.

[5 : 24] And a mystery that we fully don't know how it works, but it is there. And it's the mystery of what the Bible would call sanctification. The mystery of sanctification.

And if you want to spell that, S-A-N-C-T-I-F-I-C-A-T-I-O-N. Sanctification. Big Bible word. It's not made up.

It's in the Bible. But in the study of salvation, which we call in theology, soteriology, the study of salvation, there's a lot of things that we understand to be completely the work of God alone.

Like salvation is nothing that we achieve. It's not something that we work with God on. It's something that God has done completely in us. Salvation. And I've talked about these terms in the past, but I don't say these to sound, whenever Nathan or Chris or myself, Wes or Swanson, whenever we use big words, it's not to sound smart.

It's so you'll remember it because it's different. You'll be like, ah, that word. You'll remember a concept that's behind it. So use these words. But the truth is that salvation is what we would call monergistic.

[6 : 42] M-O-N-E-R-G-I-S-T-I-C. Monergistic, meaning that it's the work of God alone. This was a big debate throughout a lot of church history.

That's where others said that salvation was synergistic. We get the word synergy from two pieces or more, working together to accomplish something. We're not synergistic in how I think about salvation here.

We're completely monergistic. Salvation is the work of God alone. Things like justification that you read about, in Scripture, which is the instantaneous legal act of God, where he declares a sinner righteous in his sight because of the work of Christ and the righteousness of Christ that has been put on him.

That's all the work of God alone. Regeneration, we're born again, and the Holy Spirit imparts to us new spiritual life. All the work of God. We don't agree, or we don't cooperate with God to be born again.

It's the work of God alone. And the Holy Spirit applies the work of Christ to our lives. So, but when we get to sanctification, it's a little different.

[7 : 50] And sanctification, if you want, you can go online and find probably four or five different definitions for what sanctification is. And they're not all disconnected from each other, but it's used in a lot of different ways in Scripture.

That's why. That's why the confusion. But, I'll try to give you a definition that I think is helpful. It's a progressive, not instantaneous, it's a progressive work of God and man.

So, it's a synergistic thing. We work with God to accomplish this. The progressive work of God and man that makes us more free from sin and more like Christ in our actual lives, like right now, present time.

It's progressive work of God and man that makes us more free from sin and more like Christ in our actual lives. Or, it's another way, it's the outworking of the new life that is in us that we've been born again, we've been regenerated and sanctification is the outworking of that in our actual lives right now.

And, it's more of a gradual, incremental, spiritual work that, of putting the flesh to death and putting sin to death in our lives as we remain here and putting on the likeness of Christ and becoming who God has actually made us.

[9 : 16] And, so, we're going to look at three different things about sanctification and they're all right out of the text tonight. So, the first thing, and they're in the form of questions, what is, first question, what is the goal of our sanctification?

And we see that in verse 12 where it says, your own salvation. Okay, now, I've hardly, there's been a lot of people I know that have read this and, and like, didn't know how to interpret that because they thought it was saying, like, you need to work to figure out your salvation, like, you need to work with God to achieve your salvation.

And, not really at all it says, not even by the original language, but just to keep reading what Paul is saying around that. but, remember that sanctification itself is not the goal of the Christian life.

It's not the, not the ends. Our own salvation is the goal and the ends for what we're striving. So, though the work of salvation is completely God's, God's alone, monergistic, however, though we have been fully saved by God and fully redeemed by God, in this life we never rise to the totality of that.

We never fully get the taste of fullness of what is ours yet in this life because we still live in fallen flesh that's going to die, like this is going to die.

[10 : 42] That's what I see in my eyes is not going to be around forever and that's the consequences of sin in our life. And, and even as followers of Christ, as you know, you can still, you can still experience like the devastating effects of sin in your life.

Pain, suffering, fallen to temptation, that's all things that we have to deal with. So the fullness of what is ours in Christ, what Christ has won for us, by his work is not fully ours yet.

And there's a lot of language. The Bible says things like we are saved, we are being saved, and we will be saved. It kind of talks about it in three different tenses. It'll be a good study for you to do sometime.

And so, God's accomplished a work and is being worked out in us now and is going to be brought to completion. And so, you are in the process of becoming what you are.

You're a new creation, you're a child of God. And so, when we think about that, we are sanctification, we're becoming who we are, we're just kind of pressing into the fullness of who we are in Christ in this life.

[11 : 51] And so, when it says the goal is our own salvation, what I want you to focus on, I guess, out of that is that as children of God, it's very, very easy to grow weary in the fight and want to quit and just say this is just too hard and I want to quit.

I've been there all the time. I'm there all the time. And we want to love Christ with our heart, soul, mind, and strength, but we fail to rise to the totality of that.

And it's easy for us to get discouraged and focus on our problems and our shortcomings and inadequacies and we constantly fall into the same sins, same temptations and you just want to quit. You're like, I just can't do this. I can't reach what is mine and you want to stop. And so, this is calling us to focus on what is ahead of us which is our salvation.

It's going to come and if we keep that in sight, it'll give us strength to keep moving on. And while I was, I have just a lot of hiking analogies, sorry, because I'm not a runner.

[13 : 07] I can't really run that far. Most of you know that because I'm a lunger. And so, this summer that I was climbing, it was a mountain in Northern Ireland in Donegal and it was a pretty tall mountain.

It was raining, really, really misty. Nothing new about raining over there. And so, like before that, I was just like so excited, like jacked up, like bring that mountain on, you know, kind of attitude, had all the right gear, like had everything ready to go.

And I was pretty like going to conquer this mountain kind of feeling, you know, some of you probably know what I'm talking about. But so, when I was climbing up it though, like it was just kicking my butt.

Like it was like a lot of the trail wasn't really marked and so you just kind of had to figure it out and which means you would just go to places that really weren't trail cut at all and like sink into mud and bog and you were just, God, it was just, it wore me out.

And finally, like we got a little further up and, and the trail like started getting, like you're like walking in the mist. All you could see was like maybe five feet in front of you. And I knew that if I went too far that way, I would fall off the mountain.

[14:19] so it was getting pretty treacherous. and I just remember asking my friend with me, he was a pastor that I know and really good friends with over there named Ronnie. He used to be in the military and I asked him, man, like are we there yet?

Like are we, is this even close? And he's like, oh no, we're only about halfway. And I thought, oh my gosh, I'm going to die. Like I'm not going to make this. And my heart's pounding like I'm just, you know, headache and everything.

And finally, like the mess cleared a little bit and I could see the top. And I thought, man, like it's right there. And I just kind of kept going. And like seeing like the end made me just want to keep pressing on.

And I knew that I was close to what was being mine. And the Christian life is like that. Like we're told to run the race with endurance and with perseverance and to keep before us what's ours. Because if you just focus on your present circumstances and the problems of the Christian life, you just want to quit. Like you'll want to stop. You have to keep like your salvation that is yours in Christ. [15:24] It says in Hebrews 10 that Christ has perfected for all time those being sanctified. Which is like, what? It's one of those verses that is fully ours. But we're reaching out in this life to become who we are in Christ.

So the goal of sanctification is our salvation. The second thing, number two, okay, this is that mystery. What is our role in sanctification?

Yours and mine, what is our role in sanctification? And look at the verse 12, part of verse 12. It says, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

In verse 12. So, it's not saying, what do you think that means? Like, you can read that out of the hat and think, wow, that sounds like we're having to work out being saved.

I don't know what that means. And it's not saying, save yourself, justify yourself, adopt yourself, clean your life up on your own, and hopefully you'll be accepted and be good enough to be saved at the very end.

[16:31] It's not kind of what it's saying at all. Not even the language talks like that. But we all know that, as we said, salvation is a work of God alone. Paul's taught in Romans 3, Romans 4, Ephesians 2, the whole book of Galatians, that salvation is completely by grace.

It's not something that we earn. It's not something that we can merit by being good or observing the law. It's like, not there. You can read the whole New Testament and you don't see that. And even the Old Testament, they couldn't keep the law and so they were looking forward to a Messiah who would come and save them from their sin.

And so what it is saying though, what it is saying where it says work out your salvation with fear and trembling, it says that we are to be active in our own salvation.

We are to become what God has already made us. We're to press into the fullness of what that is. Greek there really means to carry out or to bring to completion something that has already started inside of you.

That's what it really is implying. So, really, really cool thing. So in light of that, God has started this work in us. He saved us. He's made us a new creation.

[17:45] We're adopted children of God. We have a new identity. In light of all that, now it's like God is saying, now just live, press into the fullness of who you actually are in Christ.

Become what you are. Get rid of the old and put on the new. This is who you are. No longer walk contrary to your new identity in Christ. And Martin Luther said this.

He said, this life, therefore, is not righteousness, but growth and righteousness, not health, but healing, not being but becoming, not rest, but exercise.

We are not yet what we shall be, but we are growing towards it. The process is not yet finished, but it is going on. And this is not the end, but the road is ahead of us.

All does not yet gleam in glory, but yet is being purified. So it's this process of how we're to work and toil and strive in this life.

[18:47] And so flip over to Colossians 3. I'll show you a verse there. But if you remember that man was originally created in the image of God, he was to mirror forward to reflect who God was, God's holy character, God's dominion and rule over the earth.

Man was to be the image bearer of God. And sin destroyed that, we know. We know that sin, after the fall, after Genesis 3, is what we call the shattered image of God because of sin.

And so since then, God has been in the process of reconciling man to himself. And Christ came in one way that when we're saved, we're born again, we become a new creation, we are again able to reflect the glory of our creator like we should.

That's what's being done, like that image is being restored. So if you look at Colossians 3 verse 8, just an example, he says, do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new, which is being renewed in the knowledge after the image of its creator.

So this idea that that's the image of putting it on or taking it off and putting on clothes is what that is saying. This is who we are and we're being renewed, being like in the process of becoming like we originally were intended to be, image bearers of God, like the perfect image bearers of God.

[20 : 27] And we all know that Christ came here and showed us what a perfect image bearing life looked like. He showed us what a life completely devoted to and obedient to the Father looked like.

and so since he is that apex of what that is, that's what we're told in Romans, we are to become the image of Christ who is the image of God, to press into that.

So we're going to talk some more about our role, but I'm just going to keep moving on. Where it says fear and trembling, you might be like, what's up with that?

Like, if God's our Father and we're saved, like, why are we fearing, why do we need to be in fear and trembling? And, do you think it means we should be utterly terrified and depressed and unconfident and jittery like in the presence of God, like a lot of people might think?

No, but in Scripture, it's filled with like, this image of how a godly person has a fear of the Lord. Like the Old Testament says this kind of stuff a lot, like even in the beginning of Proverbs it says, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.

[21 : 38] This is what it says, a godly man fears the Lord. And, so Paul is simply saying that we're, as we continue to follow Christ and joyful obedience, that we're working out our sanctification, we're to live like in reverent humility towards the living God.

And, in sanctification, like, it's like having a healthy fear of offending God or hurting God, in a righteous awe and respect of Him, we don't just kind of throw that part of God away, He's God. Like, He is our Father and we can come to Him and call Him Abba, but He's not just like another earthly father, like He's God Almighty. I mean, read just the encounters of Moses on Mount Sinai with God or any man that, like, encountered God in the Scripture and there was like a sense of reverence and awe and fear and trembling and not just, Jesus is my homeboy, like, let me prop my feet up in the presence of God and have a cigar with Him, like, not that kind of image.

and it's a healthy knowledge of, like, knowing that God is God and that God could, He holds your very life in His hands and it's like a reverent fear, like you might have, like some of you might have for somebody in your life, maybe your father or something, that where you know He loves you, you know He would die for you, He provides for you, but you know also He could put it on you, like discipline you in a second if He needed to.

I have that about my dad. So, turn to Hebrews 12 real fast, I'll show you an example of this.

Hebrews 12 verse 28 As we revere God and look to Him as God, it will cultivate a humility in us.

[23 : 30] And remember what we've been reading in Philippians about living in humility towards one another. And how you do that is by looking to God. Hebrews 12 verse 28 says this, He's talking to the believers and He says, Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken.

That's awesome. And then He says, And thus let us offer to God acceptable worship with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.

It's that idea of like, man, we have a kingdom with Him, we belong to Him, we have a salvation in Him, but let us live in reverence and awe of Him. And why? Because our God is a consuming fire.

This idea that God is God and He should humble us to be in His presence. So a quick answer. I want you to remember that it's like statement one, I'm going to have statement two in the next question.

Statement one, as far as our role in sanctification, salvation, we are called to be faithful, obedient, to labor, and toil in the work of living godly lives, like we are.

[24 : 42] We're to work, labor, toil, be faithful, obedient. That is our responsibility, that's what we're called to do. And remember that, that's statement one.

Moving into the next part, question three. And hold your hand in Hebrews, we're going to go back there, but go back to Philippians. Question three is, what is the Holy Spirit's role in sanctification? What is the Holy Spirit's role in sanctification? Verse 13, back in Philippians, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

Okay, now, there you go, there's the mystery. Go out there, and go for it, but know what? It's God at work in you, His will, and to work for His good pleasure. And this is the mystery.

And so, since God has brought salvation to us, He's not now left us on our own to work out the Christian life. He's not, He's not done that.

[25 : 48] God has saved us, and now we're on our own. Like, it doesn't work that way. Like, I've done my part by saving you, and now you need to do your part to straighten yourself up, get your life straight. It's not how it works.

We have that idea that, you know, it's me and Jesus mentality, and like, I can, I'm on my own, and I thank Him for what He did, but now I can work this out on my own.

If you remember in the book of Galatians, they did the same thing. They began to forget, like, how they were saved, which was by the grace of God and by God's power. God's power, and Paul says to them, having begun by the Spirit, or by the Spirit's power, are you now being perfected by your flesh, by working on your own?

He calls them you foolish Galatians. It's like, he's kind of like, don't forget, like, God started this work in you, and he's continuing it right now. And, jump back over to Hebrews, and go over to chapter 13, and show you something else.

He has given us the Holy Spirit to energize us to live godly lives, to give us the strength we need. Hebrews 13, verse 20, it says this, Now may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, all right, now, may Christ do this.

[27 : 13] It says, verse 21, equip you with every good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom glory, belong glory forever.

Amen. So, see that? Like, it's this idea, like how Christ did this, and now he's continuing this work inside of us, equipping us with every good work so we may do his will, working in us so that it would be pleasing in his sight.

It's this idea that God is now in us, and working in us. This is the Holy Spirit. So though we're responsible for being obedient and being responsible and stepping out of the faith, but it's not by our own strength that we do, it's God's strength that's going to be working in us, and it's God's grace, God's power, God's energy that enables us to live the Christian life.

And guess what? It pleases the Father. It pleases the Father. And let's jump back to Philippians again. The second part of that, verse 13 in Philippians, where it says, to work for his good pleasure. So, as we live upright lives and we're obedient and we follow Christ, it brings joy and delight to our Father to see that. He's not like we have to earn his salvation or he's going to love us more or love us less, depending on how obedient we are.

[28 : 39] It just means that he takes delight when he sees his children walking in the truth, when he sees his children living as they ought to live. I've heard of many stories of fathers who have delighted in hearing that the stuff that they put into their children at a young age is now being tested by, you know, girls and guys tempting their children to be sexually active or to live a certain kind of lifestyle and they hold fast to like what they learned from their parents and it brings great joy to their parents and encourage them to see God's work inside of them and they're holding on to what they were taught and in the midst of trial and temptation.

And so whenever, I mean, think about how God spoke about Christ when Christ was, he resisted the temptation in the wilderness. He pressed on when he was baptized and then again, the transfiguration, he said this same thing.

He said, this is my beloved son with whom I'm well pleased. This idea of how he just delights in seeing us walk in the truth. He doesn't hate us when we mess up, but it just brings him joy to see us walking in the truth.

It's for God's good pleasure. And so, so statement two, I told you statement one, the last question, number three. So where's the Holy Spirit's role in sanctification?

And here's the answer for statement two. As we step out in faith and obedience, the Holy Spirit will empower, encourage, guide, and comfort us to live godly lives.

[30 : 23] All right. As we step out in faith and obedience, the Holy Spirit is faithful to empower, encourage, guide, and comfort us to live godly lives.

This is what he does. He gives us the strength to do it. So jumping into some application of this, that's the three questions and that's kind of walking through the text. But bringing your group, Tom, you're going to have a question about this.

So listen carefully. There's, I see, at least in my own life, in the lives of others, two camps of people that kind of can be on one extreme or the other.

And one camp is like the working camp. And they believe this idea that go out there and get busy. God did all this work for you.

Now you need to go out there and get really busy for him and you need to work hard and do all this stuff. He's dependent on you. Come on, go out there and do something big for God. It's all up to you, so get it done.

[31 : 24] That kind of attitude is if it just all was on your shoulders and like God has an employment problem and he needs people to go out there and get busy and start working.

And you need to realize like no, like God needs no man. Even people who are in rare conditions, I know that something happened to me.

It wouldn't be the end of the world. God will continue the work. He could raise up ten of me if he wanted to. The same thing within global missions. Like God could raise up as many people as he wanted to, but this idea that God needs us for something is not appropriate.

God can do as he will. It says in Acts that God is not served by human hands as though he needed anything. And so he's invited us to be a part of what he is doing.

And if you live in that camp, you're usually going to end up just very whipped, burned out and tired because you're trying to work in your own strength all the time and your own skills and your own talents and you're just going to burn out.

[32 : 29] And you love like the hype about the Christian life, but you rush out there and before you know it, you're wiped out. And, you know, I've been also hiking with some people who, who, one guy used to teach here a little bit.

We'd go out and buy like all the best gear, all the stuff. And then he would go out there and he hated it. Like he would just like want to quit, want to turn back. We're like, no, bro, you got to keep going. And he was all excited about it, but he was just trying to, he didn't really understand why there was something behind it that kind of pushed us on.

That was like our love for what we did. And so the second camp is, is this camp. Let completely go and let God.

Now I understand there's a measure of truth to that, but it depends on which way you're implying that truth. But let completely go and let God. And, and it's this idea of like, well, if it's all God's power inside of us, is God a sovereign, if God is going to give us the strength of the Christian life, he can just, if he wants to get me off the couch, he can just get me off the couch.

If I, I'm just going to sit here and wait for something to happen. Like, hope he just hits me with a wave of emotion. And then all of a sudden I'm going to get up and do something. This idea that you're just waiting for God to ignite something in you.

[33 : 47] And he doesn't need me. So I just sit here until he does. And he'll just do something really dramatic and emotional and I'll get off my butt and be obedient. That's the other extreme idea, like the lazy boy of grace kind of idea.

And so let's marry those two statements together. The two statements I mentioned earlier. So the first statement, we're called to be faithful and obedient, to labor and toil and live in godly lives.

And the second statement, as we step out in faith and obedience, the Holy Spirit will empower us and give us the strength and energy and the will, the desire to live godly lives.

And the mysteries, you'll see these right beside each other in Scripture. And we're going to turn to two examples of that. first one in Colossians chapter one.

Go to Colossians chapter one. You need to see like how these are just right beside each other. It's not saying one or the other. It's saying how both of these work simultaneously together.

[34 : 52] Colossians one and go to, let's see, verse 11 first. Colossians one verse 11. And he says, May you be strengthened with all power according to his glorious might for all endurance and patience and joy, giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

First part, jump down to verse 27, same chapter. To them, God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you the hope of glory.

Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom so that we present everyone mature in Christ. That's what I'm talking about. You know, I get out there and get busy, get busy teaching, get busy warning, proclaiming.

We want to make everybody mature. That's that camp. And then look at verse 29. For this I toil. There you go. Labor. Labor. Struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me. There's the other part. See that? It's like this idea. And last example. This one's a great one. It's the last place you have to turn. 1 Corinthians 15.

[36 : 15] Jump over to that. 1 Corinthians 15, verse 9. 1 Corinthians 15, verse 9. Paul kind of giving a defense of his ministry to the Corinthian church.

He says in verse 9, For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God, a reference to his old life.

But the grace of God, excuse me, by the grace of God, I am who I am. And his grace towards me was not in vain. Listen to this.

On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them. See that? Got there and worked hard. I worked really hard. Paul saying, Though it was not I, but the grace of God that is in me.

Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so we believe. So, I worked hard. I was out there pouring my blood, sweat, and tears out for you guys.

[37 : 20] But guess what? It was the power of God. It was the grace of God working in me as I did that. So, we step out in obedience and we cling to God. We beg him to give us what we need to live the Christian life.

And that's the mystery that is there. We clearly have a part. We need to be responsible. God will hold us accountable for being disobedient. He's not going to say, Well, we can't plead that cause with God.

Like, You just didn't give me the strength to do it, God. He's going to say, You weren't obedient. You didn't step out in obedience. And, we'll be consequences for our actions. But, but as we step out, it's God's work and He'll get the glory for it.

Hudson Taylor, missionary to China, awesome guy, he wrote, God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supplies. So, we, we step out and we work, God will provide for us.

God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supplies. Hudson Taylor, St. Augustine, 5th century, he goes, this is what he said, work as if everything depended on you and pray as if everything depended on God.

[38 : 32] And, he wasn't saying it depends on you, he's like just saying, work, as if it did, but at the same time, pray in humble recognition that you need God's grace. Augustine said a long time ago, God, you know, command what you will, command us to do what you will, but give us the grace to command, or give us the grace to, to follow those commands.

And so, I remember, back in Philippians, the first message, I think, of this, this series in Philippians, Philippians 1.6, let this encourage you, that God has promised to finish this work.

He said, Paul said, I'm sure this, he who began the good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Christ Jesus. That's Philippians 1.6. He began it, he will bring it to completion.

He's not going to just stop and abandon the work that he started. He's going to finish it. And so, in conclusion, I have a, kind of a little brief story here that I was going to read to you.

There's a, there's a pastor, an awesome guy, Presbyterian dude named Harry Reeder. Some of you went to New Year's conference last year at campus outreach. He spoke there.

[39 : 46] He was the older guy that spoke there. He said, and really loves the Lord. And, he told a story about relating how God's power works within us and that we have, we are, um, his, and he has something inside of us.

This is something that he wrote. He said, when I was 16, so, this was like, good way back for him. My father bought me a car at an auction for \$75.

He said, it was pink. A 57 Ford, which my dad insisted was coral color, not pink. He said, I couldn't drive a pink car to school.

And then I heard the words that he always said to me, um, that I would one day say to my future children, son, it is, a poor ride is better than a proud walk. And he said, he said it so convincingly

that I knew that it probably was from the Bible.

He said, um, he said, then my dad opened the hood of that car, that 57 Ford. And my dad opened the hood of that car.

[40 : 52] And to my surprise, underneath it was a 390 engine with two four-barrel carburetors. Some of you don't know what that is.

And then he said, um, the car had been a South Carolina State Interceptor, a highway patrol car. Nothing, nothing had more power under the hood.

Space and conviction prevents me from detailing the surprises that Corvettes and Roasters would get after they looked at and laughed at my pink 57 Ford while I was sitting by them at the stoplight. So in other words, like he dusted them, like in races, they just, he just like left them behind in his car. He says, it didn't look like much, but there was power under the hood. And it's this idea that we feel inadequate and broken.

There's not a lot to us at all. I mean, just look at me, look at yourself. There's not really much, much to us. Nothing really to brag about. Um, but God has chosen to put like his power inside of us and remember like there's power under the hood in your life.

[42 : 03] We can, there's not a lot to us, but because of what Christ has done and the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we have power to live the Christian life, to, to present to the fullness of what God has for us.

He's made us his and we can press into that by his grace and by his power alone. So, that's the mystery of sanctification. Step out, be obedient, be responsible, um, work, labor, toil, pour out your blood, sweat, and tears for the cause of Christ, but at the same time look to God and be like, I need you to help me.

I need your grace. I need your strength. Um, I need your power. I need your energy. I don't want to do this. I need your, to work in me. I need you to give me this desire to do this. And that's how we live.

And that's the, that's the mystery. Both are there. You can't, you can't get rid of one or the other. They're both there together in Scripture. And so, let's, uh, let's pray together and then we'll respond in just a time of singing and then we'll break up into groups.

So, um, Alex, bags, actually, you can come up. Father, uh, we give you praise for just allowing us to be together tonight to open your word, to read about the work that you started in us, the work that is going on and is now, um, God is, your power that is work within us, both to will and work for your good pleasure.

[43 : 41] And Lord, that you promised to bring that work to completion. You would finish the work you began in us. and, so, Father, help us to understand, experience, apply the, uh, the mystery that exists between us and your power that works within us, Lord, um, to step out in obedience and to work and, um, to make disciples, to reach the lost, to expand the kingdom both here and around the world.

God, and we would look to you for every, every grace, every strength that we need to accomplish that and, you would empower your people to that end and help us to remember there is, there's not a lot to us, um, ordinary people, Lord, we don't have anything cool about us getting to save us because we had something good to offer you.

Um, you saved us out of grace and because of that we have power in our lives, the power under the hood to live the Christian life and, so Lord, be glorified and be honored.

Help us, Lord. We love you in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.