

North Christian Church -

Pastor Ed Collins

www.nccdighton.org

5/17/16 - The Gospel, Salvation, and Sanctification - Part 87

1 Peter 2:2

like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation

"work out your salvation"

Refers to your involvement in sanctification. Sanctification is salvation come alive in you, it is living in the Gospel reality, it is realizing God's eternal love for you. You do so "with fear and trembling" in awe of and respect for all that He's done.

Our Role in Sanctification

The key is to understand the "willingness" to do so...AS A RESULT of what God has already done in them!

Experiential Sanctification

By grace, God changes us. By grace, He's made us new creatures "in Christ". We have new natures that are perfect, therefore can only do His good will. The new "us" is "willingly humble" and supernaturally fellowships with God, making our fruit-bearing a collaborative, joint-labor.

Experiential Sanctification

To avoid assigning any creature credit in the production of divine good fruit in our lives, we simply refer back to scripture, which says, "By the grace of God I am what I am" (1Co 15:10). God has qualified us to work with Him, "in Christ".

Experiential Sanctification

We are not somehow passive robots, whose free will is merely an academic construct that God invented to appease our flesh's desire for independence. At salvation, He literally changed us. It's because of that grace activity that we are able to join Him in accomplishing His will in time. We desire obedience!

Php 2:12-13

In v12, scripture states that we are individually responsible (via volition) to God for the work we complete... and vs. 13 reveals the supernatural nature of this calling and how it combines with God's will and work in you.

The New You

He takes that changed vessel, even though it's still dragging around "this body of death" (Ro 7:24), and He empowers it to bear good fruit to His own glory.

The Vine and the Branches

John 15 depicts the supernaturally wrought reality that is a believer's intimate relationship in/with their Savior. There is an eternal, familial relationship established between our Lord and His disciples.

"to will and to work"

God doesn't merely desire that His children "do" His will, He changes them so that they "will" to work for His good pleasure. This is one of the hallmarks of a true believer - their new creature desires to please God.

"to will and to work"

The desires of our heart change more and more. He is bringing us to love, and therefore the desire to be a willing, joyful servant of His.

Php 2:12 [Amplified]

So then, my dear ones, just as you have always obeyed [my instructions with enthusiasm], not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence, continue to work out your salvation [that is, cultivate it, bring it to full effect, actively pursue spiritual maturity] with awe-inspired fear and trembling [using serious caution and critical self-evaluation to avoid anything that might offend God or discredit the name of Christ].

Php 2:13 [Amplified]

For it is [not your strength, but it is] God who is effectively at work in you, both to will and to work [that is, strengthening, energizing, and creating in you the longing and the ability to fulfill your purpose] for His good pleasure.

The Parable of the Flower

Just like the flower and its growth is simply accomplished through God's grace, so goes the spiritual life. Intellectual striving is the antithesis of grace, and it leads to bondage, not clarity. Freedom is afforded to those with the faith of a child.

"in the defense and confirmation of the gospel"

This sums up the nature of Paul's ministry. He "fought the good fight" (2Ti 4:7) to preserve the Gospel complete and unstained. He preached "by grace through faith" (Eph 2:8-9) as the lynchpin of a believer's confidence in Christ. He just wanted others to know Christ (Eph; 1Co 2:2; 2Co 11:3).

The Book of Ephesians

In his "confirmation of the gospel" (ala Php 1:7), Paul refers to grace a LOT in the Book of Ephesians. This makes total sense, given the "stewardship of God's grace" was given to him to teach. Grace is the lynchpin of the Gospel, hence it was frequently extolled and defended by Paul and others.

Pastor Collins on Ephesians

Paul is proclaiming the virtues of the Gospel on the merits of God's grace through Christ Jesus...it's beautiful.

