

Work out your salvation

Philippians 2:12-18

Introduction

How long have you been a Christian for and how did you come to hear the gospel and believe?

The Philippians had been believers for around a decade or more. We know that Paul and his companions had brought the gospel to Macedonia after Paul had a vision of man of Macedonia begging him to come over and help them. Paul and his companions left Troas believing that the Lord had called them to preach the gospel to them (Acts 1:6-15). Arriving in Macedonia Paul headed to Philippi. Although Paul was not able to stay long in Philippi several people believed, and obeyed the gospel putting their faith in Jesus. Paul wrote and told them just as they had always obeyed, now more than ten years on that they were now to continue to work out their salvation. Please read verses 12 to 18 where Paul has exhorted the believers to keep working out their salvation.

Working out

The main idea in this passage that is introduced in verses 12 & 13. Please read these verses again to understand what might be involved in this.

1. In what we do believers work out their salvation? What is it that we must continue to keep doing?
2. Why was it even more important to be doing this in Paul's absence?
3. The word "therefore" connects these words in verse 12 to 18 not only to the previous paragraph but to the whole section that began in verse 27 of chapter 1 where Paul told the believers to conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel. Please have a quick look back over this section that began in verse 27 of chapter 1 and list down those things that Paul has commanded believers to be doing?
4. Paul again mentions the fact that God was working in the believers (see also Phil. 1:6). What is the work that God is doing?

Think about it

What's involved from day to day in working out your own salvation?

Why are we to do everything without fear and trembling?

How might Paul words here be taken as both a warning and comfort?

Children of God

Paul wrote these things to the Philippians because he wanted them to be blameless and pure children of God. He wanted them to be the sort of children he could be proud of on the day of Christ. Please read verses 14-16.

5. What did Paul tell the Philippians that they were to do to be blameless and pure children of God?

6. What's wrong with grumbling and arguing?
How might the story of the Israelites in the wilderness be a lesson for the Philippians (see 1 Corinthians 10:10 and Deut. 1:26-36)?

7. How were the Philippians to shine as lights in the world and what does Paul mean by this?

Think about it

How can we today avoid grumbling and disputing as God's people and how are we to shine as lights in the sky?

Be glad and rejoice

Paul went on in the final two verses to explain why he was glad and rejoiced with the Philippians. He talked about his life and that of the Philippians as though they were sacrifices being offered up to God (see also Romans 12:1). Please read verse 17 and 18 to discover what Paul says about being glad and rejoicing.

8. What do you think Paul meant by him referring to his life as a drink offering?

9. Why was Paul rejoicing and why was he encouraging them to rejoice with him? What did he and the Philippians have to be glad about?

Think about it

Although Paul and the Philippians were going through difficult times, Paul was glad and rejoiced and he encourage them to rejoicing with him.

How can we be people who continue to be glad and rejoice?