

## It is God Who Works in You

### Philippians 2:12-13

#### Introduction

1. Paul exhorted the Philippian brethren to be active concerning their responsibilities to the Lord, and to their own salvation – **Philippians 2:12**
  2. He encouraged them further by noting they were not alone in their spiritual endeavors – **Philippians 2:13**
  3. The fact that God works in each individual toward salvation is a most comforting doctrine, and an indispensable one.
  4. That being so, it is imperative that we understand how it is that God works in an individual toward their salvation.
- I. God Works Toward Our Salvation
- A. God Has Worked
    - a. **John 5:17** – God has been working.
    - b. Eternal purpose – **Ephesians 3:11**
    - c. Saved chosen in Christ before world's foundation – **Ephesians 1:4**
      - i. Not individual, but locational – **"in HIM" ("if ANYONE is in Christ, he is a new creation" – 2 Corinthians 5:17)**
    - d. God has worked and brought salvation in Christ:
      - i. **Acts 2:23-24, 32, 36** – crucified according to God's will, raised by God, seated on the throne by God.
        1. **"the working of God, who raised Him from the dead" (Colossians 2:12).**
        2. **Romans 1:4** – God the Spirit active in raising Him from the dead.
      - ii. **Hebrews 10:5, 10** – God prepared a body for Christ – **"once for all"** – *ephapax* – *epi* (strengthening prefix), *ephapax* – strengthened form of *hapax* (what is of perpetual validity, not requiring repetition, VINE)
      - iii. Even though God has accomplished the offering of the ONCE FOR ALL sacrifice He is not done working.
  - B. God Is Working
    - a. **Philippians 1:6** – God will complete the work He started. (toward salvation)
    - b. **Philippians 2:13** – **"works"** – present active verb – working.
    - c. God has worked, but He has not stopped working. He is continually working to bring salvation to each individual, and to complete the salvation started in individuals.
    - d. But how?
- II. How Some Think God Works
- A. God works directly on each individual's heart through a miraculous operation.
    - a. Man is totally depraved – "From this original corruption whereby all are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly

inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions." (Philadelphia Confession of Faith, p. 24)

- b. Since man is "utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil" there must be a miraculous operation on the heart for there to even be the desire for salvation.
  - i. "The *Holy Spirit*, in order to bring God's elect to salvation, extends to them a special inward call in addition to the outward call contained in the gospel message. Through this special call the Holy Spirit performs a work of grace within the sinner which inevitably brings him to faith in Christ...Although the general outward call of the gospel can be, and often is, rejected, the special inward call of the Spirit never fails to result in the conversion of those to whom it is made." (David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas, in *The Five Points of Calvinism, Defined, Defended, Documented*, PG. 48-49)
- c. Proof? – **Romans 7:21-24** – Paul being incapable of doing good?
  - i. But what about his obvious desire? – **"THE ONE WHO WILLS TO DO GOOD"**
  - ii. **"I DELIGHT IN THE LAW OF GOD"** – how if he is totally depraved?

B. Example of Lydia:

- a. God worked in brethren at Philippi (**Philippians 1:6**) and continued to work in them toward salvation (**Philippians 2:13**).
- b. Lydia was the first Philippian convert – **Acts 16:11-15**
  - i. **(v. 14)** – the Lord opened her heart.
  - ii. Was this by miraculous operation?

III. How God Works in You

A. In Conjunction with You

- a. God is at work in those who are **"working out" (v. 12) – Philippians 2:12**
- b. Initially:
  - i. **Acts 16:14-15** – Lydia – HER, SHE, ME TO BE FAITHFUL – these were things left up to HER to do.
  - ii. What about the other women? – **Acts 16:13** – not of the elect?
    - 1. **1 Timothy 2:4** – God desires ALL to be saved.
    - 2. **2 Peter 3:10** – God is not willing that ANY should perish.
  - iii. **"Your own"** – it is up to the individual.
    - 1. As was the case with the jailer – **Acts 16:30**
- c. Continually:
  - i. **Philippians 2:12** – indication that their salvation was not completed (**Philippians 1:6**)
  - ii. **2 Peter 1:10-11** – make you call and election sure.
  - iii. **2 John 8** – don't lose what you've worked for.
  - iv. **Hebrews 10:39** – believe to the saving of the soul.

B. Through His Word

- a. After Philippi – Thessalonica:

- i. **Acts 16:40-17:4** – Gospel preached to the Thessalonians.
    - ii. **(v. 4) – “some of them were persuaded”**
    - iii. Those who weren’t persuaded – **Acts 17:5** – caused an uproar.
  - b. In Philippi, God worked in Lydia toward her salvation – **“The Lord opened her heart.”**
    - i. Saved the same – **Acts 15:11** (Jews talking about Gentiles)
    - ii. What is said of the Thessalonians? – **Acts 17:2-4** – **“reasoned...from...Scriptures...explaining...demonstrating...were persuaded”**
      1. Was God working in them? YES!
      2. How? – **1 Thessalonians 1:5-6; 2:8-9, 13** – preached the gospel, the word of God, effectively worked and is working in them.
      3. Their hearts were opened too! – **cf. Luke 24:44-45** – understanding opened – **Luke 24:25-27** – expounded to them (disciples on road to Emmaus).
  - c. Lydia – **Acts 16:14-15**
    - i. SHE HEARD – what? – THE GOSPEL – **Acts 16:10** (Macedonian call)
    - ii. OPENED HEART TO HEED – “HEED” – *prosechō* – to hold the mind (h3563 implied) towards, i.e. pay attention to (STRONG)
      1. In what way? – Already payed attention by hearing/listening **(v. 14)**.
      2. “to apply one’s self to, attach one’s self to, hold or cleave to a person or a thing” (THAYER)
      3. She heeded by obeying – **(v. 15)** – was baptized.
    - iii. She was persuaded like the Thessalonians – **Acts 17:4** – then obeyed.
  - d. God works in us through His word – **Romans 1:16; 10:17** (power; faith); **Hebrews 4:12** (living and powerful); **James 1:18, 21** (brought forth by word, word able to save)
- C. What is God working in you? (through His word toward salvation)
  - a. To will (incentive)
    - i. Fear of judgment – **Philippians 2:12** (fear and trembling); **Hebrews 9:27; 10:31**
    - ii. Desire for a better life – **1 Timothy 4:8**
    - iii. Compelling love of Christ – **2 Corinthians 5:14-15**
    - iv. Desire to be transformed into Christ’s image – **1 John 3:2-3**
    - v. Desire for heaven – **Philippians 3:12-14, 20-21**
  - b. To do (instruction)
    - i. Not according to the flesh, but the Spirit – **Galatians 5:16-26**
    - ii. Thoroughly equips for every good work – **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

## Conclusion

1. It is a most comforting thing to know that God works in us continually toward our salvation.

2. However, we must understand how, and our corresponding responsibility.
3. We must not despise His work, but trust in it by following His direction – **1**  
**Thessalonians 5:19-24**