Philippians 2:12-16

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 07 October 2014

Preacher: Peter Lofthouse

[0:00] When I was at school, and that was a number of years ago now you'd appreciate, I had a headmaster who was quite a ferocious kind of a guy. He'd been through the Second World War and he was some kind of a military man and he used to lose his temper fairly quickly.

And he used to take us to maths. Now maths was never a good lesson because he was there. He always brought his cane with him. And if the answers were wrong he'd whack his cane on the table at the front and it would make you jump to say the least.
And if you happen to be nearby, well you might get it as well. So we tried very hard to do whatever it was he wanted us to do. And he had his own sort of peculiarities of the way he taught maths, apart from his cane, algebra.
He'd always insist upon, you had to have your working out, you had to be able to show your working out how you got to the position of an answer. And when you got to the answer you always had to write, therefore equals.
And if you didn't do that then you were in great trouble. I didn't get caned that often but it was an experience that made me absolutely sure that I was going to learn as much maths as I could.
[1:17] And it was probably my best subject on the basis of what he was like. The word therefore. So this passion we've read today starts off with this word therefore.

What our headmaster was saying to us, it's all very well you working at all that. It's all very well you giving us an answer. But you've got to that answer as a result of the work you've done before. That's what I want to put therefore. And this is why Paul writes therefore here. It's because of what's gone before. So what has gone before? And we've been looking at it over the last few weeks.
And there are two or three things that we should just review I think very very briefly. First of all Paul commends the Philippian church. And of course the people there.
And he commends them. He talks about them being his partners in the gospel. He talks about thanking God. Thanking my God in all remembrance of you.
[2:20] They were lovely folks. They laboured with him. And he commended them for that. And then we looked at how he encouraged them to live worthy of the gospel.

That was in chapter 1 verse 27. We've got to the back end of chapter 1. He encouraged them. So he commanded them and encouraged them. And then he reminded them of the beauty and the wonder of the Lord Jesus.
And last week we had that wonderful, wonderful hymn. That starts off. Had this mind in you. Among yourselves. Which is also in Christ Jesus.
Although he was in the form of God. Did not commit. Did not count equality with God. A thing to be grasped. But he emptied himself. And so on and so forth. It talks about the beauty.
And the wonder. Of the Lord Jesus. And the gospel. And the glory. Of all that we have. In and through the Lord Jesus. How he made himself humble.
[3:23] How he became a servant. How he has been his death. Even death on the cross. And how he has been exalted. And the name that is above every name. That the name of Jesus.

Every knee shall bow. So Paul says. Therefore. In view of all this. And he now has some instructions for them.
So. He has commended them. He has encouraged them. He has reminded them. And now comes. The instructions.
So what are those instructions. And what do they have to say. Very simple really. Paul says. I want you to be. Obedient. Sounds very simple.
Doesn't it really. Obedience. We all. I suspect. Understand what it means. The keenness to obey. Is not always there. Is it. He also says.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-05-25 04:44:50

[4:20] That he wants them. To be obedient. In his. In his absence. They were obedient. When he was there. He was. Blessed. And pleased. By that. But in his absence. He wants them.

To be obedient. You and I know. Don't we. That the Christian life. Is one of obedience. To God's. Word. Not something.
We necessarily. Find. Terribly easy. But it's something. We expect. We expect. Of others. Don't we. When we're. Travelling. In the car. And the lights.
The traffic lights. Go red. We expect. The other traffic. To stop. If they didn't. And we're. On the green. We'd be in. Real trouble. Wouldn't we. And we expect.
That. Of life. And God. Expects us. To be. Obedient. To his word. And Paul is. Telling these Philippian.
[5:16] Christians. That's what they. Need to be doing. Of course. It's easy. And very often. In this day and age. Sadly. People want to. Question God's word.

And say. Well. Yeah. But does that really mean that. And is that the right context. And have we got this right. And let's. Let's. Let's have a look at this. And let's change it. It doesn't quite mean that. And there's many voices. Nowadays. Isn't there. Saying that. That's not right. This is God's word. This is God. It's an unchanging word. And we trust. And rely. Upon.
That word of God. I was with my. Son. Who lives over in. Southeast London. Just a couple of Saturdays ago. And. He has three grandchildren. He has three children. I have three grandchildren there.
All three girls. One of them. A baby. But the other two. Are. I think. Two years old. And four years old. Or thereabouts. And. We were trying to do some. Clearing up in the garden.
[6:10] It was a. It was a bit of a mess. And a bit of a problem. And a quite difficult task to do. And what we needed. Was time to ourselves. To get all this done. And of course. These little girls would come.

And they wanted to join in. Can we do some. Granddad. Well. Well. You know. You work across there. And do a little bit there. While we can. Well. I want to come and do that. With you. Granddad. And we'd explain. Well. Then I'd go. You.
You carry on over there. And of course. Just for a couple of minutes. And then they'd come across. And they'd want to. Join in. Obedience. It's. Right from a young age. It's difficult.
Isn't it? It's something that we. We fight against. Paul said. Of course. Be obedient. As you were. When I was with you. I wonder what he had in mind there. I guess it's easier. Isn't it? Going back to the school analogy. When the teacher was around. Of course. I was the perfect little pupil.
[7:06] But of course. Once the teacher had gone out of the classroom. You revert to time. Don't you? And I wonder if this is what Paul. Had in mind. Was it that they were. In some way lacking.

Now that. That he wasn't around. Were they not. Any longer being obedient. And therefore. He was calling them. Back. To. Obedience. But he goes on.
And this is. All part of this obedience. Where he talks about. Working out your own. Salvation. That's a strange thing. For Paul to say. Isn't it? Surely Paul.
Is the. Is the great preacher. Who tells us that. Salvation. Is. By faith alone. In Christ alone. Wasn't it Paul who wrote. For by grace.
You have been saved. Through faith. It's the gift of God. None of us. Lest any man should boast. So why are we now. Working. For our. Salvation. Let's be very clear about this.
[8:03] Paul says. Work. Out. Your salvation. Not. Work. For your salvation. Yes. Salvation. Salvation. Is a gift of God. I would encourage you.

This afternoon. If you haven't received. Christ's gift of salvation. It's for you. It's for all who believe. And trust in him. It's available here. This afternoon.
But this is not about. Working for our salvation. This is. Working. Out. Our salvation. I was thinking. As I was preparing. These notes. About all the gyms.
That are all down the road. Here nowadays. It's become a popular thing. To have a workout. Hasn't it? But. When you say. You're going for a workout. You're not going to go.
And build the gym. The gym's already there. You're just going to go. And use it. And this is what Paul is saying. Here. He's saying. Look. Your salvation is secure. In the Lord Jesus Christ.
[8:58] But now. Work. Work it out. Work it out. In your life. We work it out. By obedience. To his. Word. Paul tells us.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-05-25 04:44:50

There's two more important things. I want to draw from this. Particular. Heading. And it's this. Paul tells them. To work out. Their own.
Salvation. Wonder what he meant. By that exactly. And as I've been. Thinking about it. I wonder if he meant this. Many a Christian.
Wants it were. To let someone else. Work out their salvation. For them. They're happy. To go to the home group. And let the home group leader. Tell them what it's all about. They're happy to go to church.
And let the church. Tell them what it's about. They're happy to have Christian friends. And let them. Let them show. Them what it's all about. I was reading an article. Quite some little while ago now.
[9:56] And. It was saying. That. About the. Particularly amongst. The professional classes. How many professional. People. With. With. With. With. With. With. Big.

Vast. Difficult. Hard. Jobs to do. Were Christians. And how. Their understanding of the Christian faith. And their working out. Of their salvation. How it was at much lower level.
Than was their professional life. And I think there's a danger for all of us. Isn't there? That. Well. Well. I don't know about that kind of thing. I just know that I believe in Jesus. That's wonderful. That's excellent. That's great. But there's more to it than that.
Paul says. We need to work out. Could it be. That in fact. These people. Were relying. On Paul. And saying. Oh well. You know. Paul's got it all worked out.
We're just going to listen to him. Paul says. No. Work out. Your own salvation. There's a lovely story. I tried to research it. I couldn't find the details of it. But. As far as I know.
[10:51] This is a true. And an accurate record. There was a tremendous minister. Of the gospel. A man called Horatius Bonner. Who was in Scotland. And. He had a great church.

And people loved to hear him preach. And they would go there. In groves. And there was a lady. Who used to go there. And. And for some reason. She. She. She couldn't go anymore.
And. She wasn't able to get to the church anymore. And she was very. Depressed. She just felt. That she'd been fed. Wonderfully. By. Dear Horatius Bonner.
And she just felt. She was losing. Everything. And she got somewhat. Depressed. And one day. She was in a park. Somewhere in Scotland. And. She was feeling.
Very very low indeed. And. While she was there. A nanny came in. Who was looking after. A couple of children. A couple of lads.
[11:48] And. The lads. Parents. Had also been members. Of that great church. And they. In honour of the church. In honour of Horatius Bonner himself. They called. These boys.

Horatius. And Bonner. And. As she was sitting there. And the boys were. Messing around. And playing around. Those boys.
Sometimes do. And. She heard the nanny shout out. Stop leaning on a Horatius Bonner. And. She realised. That was God speaking to her.
Don't lean on others. Get on. With your own salvation. Work out your own salvation. And Paul tells us. That we're to work it out. With fear. And trembling.
Fear and trembling. Well of course. We know God's a. A mighty God. We know he's a God. Who will. One day. Judge the world. Are we to be fearful of him.
[12:44] For his judgments. Well. Paul tells again. Doesn't he. There's no condemnation. To those. Who are in Christ Jesus. So that's not what he meant at all.

And I think this word. Judgment. As far as. Fear and trembling. As far as I can make out. Seems to. Mean. A respect. An honouring.
A reverence. Towards. Almighty God. When you love someone. When you care about someone. You're most anxious.
You do things. In the right way. You don't want to upset them. You try to. To. Cater for them. To. To. To love them. To respond to them.
And that's surely. What's meant here. Surely. In view of all. That the Lord Jesus. Has done for us. Then there should be. A. A. Tremendous. Degree of respect.
[13:39] And love. And honour. And reverence. Towards. Our God. I. We had my father. Living with us.

For. For ten years. Before he died. The last ten years of his life. And they were very good years. And we enjoyed it very much indeed. And there was a period of time. When. I was just out of sorts.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-05-25 04:44:50

Happens sometimes. Doesn't it? I don't excuse it. I shouldn't have been. But I was. And. I found myself. Arguing with my dad. And he would say. So and so. Oh no dad's not like that.
So and so and so. And. We had one or two. Just. Silly disputes. Pointless. Non-sensical. But they existed. And I remember.
After one of those. Sessions. I heard my dad. Going back upstairs. To his bedroom. And all the way back up. I heard him say. Do you know. I don't know what's happened.
[14:36] Peter and I used to get on so well together. But it's not happening now. Oh. That pierced my heart. I realised that I was. Not in fear and trembling.

He was my father. He was. A lovely guy. He'd done everything he could for me. He was so kind. And so generous. And so good to us as a family. And here I was.
Finding him. Picking petty quarrels. With him. How we need to. Be careful. And fearful. Of how we work out. Our own salvation.
Then. Paul talks also about. Do all things. Without grumbling. Or disputing. That's easy. He said to me. Don't grumble anymore.
Stop grumbling. I don't know about you. But I think if you spoke to Sue afterwards. She might well say. He's always grumbling. He's an old grumbler. Grumbling or disputing.
[15:34] Well. What about that? That's what Paul tells us. That's what the word of God tells us. That we're to do everything. Do all things. Without grumbling.

And disputing. Who likes a grumbler? Grumblers. You know. When you get amongst a group of people. And you find someone. Who's. Who just wants to sort of bend your ear. With all their problems and complaints. You know.
I usually try to find an excuse. For getting away. It's. Oh. I just must go and see you. So you're out of the room. You know. Whatever. You don't want to be there. Do you? Do you remember about. The children of Israel.
When they were in the wilderness. Do you remember. How. How. Moses. God had brought them out. Moses would leave them out. Into the. To the promised land.
And they got away. From being. Slaves. And servants. And everything. That was bad and wrong. They were working. Seven days a week. No rest. You remember.
[16:29] The straw and the hay. Which they previously. Made the bricks from. Was taken away from. You make them anyway. Just get on with it. Don't. Don't ask us. And. There they were free.

They'd been able to bring. Some of the. The precious jewels. From. From Exodus. With them. And they'd got some flops. And there was. They were on their way. To the promised land. They were. They were going to be able.
To see. And experience. What God had arranged. For them. And organized for them. And promised them. For so many years. What a thrilling time. So what did they do. They were rejoicing.
They weren't. They were grumbling. They said. Oh gracious me. Well we met off in Egypt. At least. We had some meals every day. And we had water. And we had food. Grumly.
We had a. Had a friend. A young lady. And. She was a pleasant girl. And we tried to be friendly. She was quite lonely. And. She was a Christian girl. And we.
[17:23] Used to have her around for meals. And. Would just be. Her friend. As much as we possibly could. But she forever moaned. And it was.

A real problem to us. What do we do about this. So one day I said to her. Look. We. We. We really want to be your friends. But we. We just don't quite know. What we can do about.
All your problems. Tell us what would really. Solve. Your problems. So she said. Three things. She said. I need a. A really good job. The job I'm doing now.
Is boring. I need a boyfriend. I need. Somewhere to live. So. I said. Well we'll pray about that. We'll just. Just ask God to work on that situation.
No. It was quite a few years later. Probably two or three years later. When. I was taking her home. In the car. With Sue. And we dropped her outside. The house. Which she now had. And she was moaning.
[18:18] And she was going at it. And she was bending my ear. And nothing was fair in life. And I didn't understand. All the rest of it. And I said. Look. I said. I've just got to stop you here. I've got to remind you.

That you said. If you had a home. If you had a new. Good job. If you had a boyfriend. Friend. All these problems solved. You've got them. What's the problem now?

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-05-25 04:44:50

It's easy to grumble isn't it? It's easy to moan. We should remember. As Paul was encouraging his people to do. The blessings that we have. In the Lord Jesus Christ.
I don't know about you. But I've often found. That the poorest people. That I know. That sometimes the weakest people. I know. Are those with the greatest blessing. Paul was telling us on Sunday. About. I can't think of her name now.
Tarda. What's her name? Joni Erikson. In fact. Joni Erikson. And how. As a fairly young girl. She became a paraplegic. And how she. She blessed even the.
[19:16] The chair that she had to live her life in. Because she found that brought her. Close to the Lord Jesus. What blessings we have. And how we should be. So encouraged to be.

Not moaners. Not groaners. Not grumblers. So. Supposing. We were obedient. And we were. Sorting out. And seeking. Our own salvation. With fear and trembling. Supposing we weren't moaning. And grumbling. What would the results be?
What Paul tells us here. The results would be. That we would shine. As lights. In the world. That there would be others. Who would see and recognize. There was something different about us.
We had a lovely. Passage. Passed to us. At the church. Just last week. Where we were told about. A lady who had been.
[20:15] It was a professional lady. And she had become alcoholic. She'd lost all her money. Through bad investments. And was finding herself. Derelict. And some friends of the church.

Had gone to help. And counsel her. And she'd accepted. That advice and counsel. And one of the things she'd done. Also was gone to AA. Alcoholics Anonymous. And she was finding that helpful. As well. And the man at Alcoholics Anonymous. Had clearly told this lady. That he was a Christian. But nothing more was said about that. And after a while.
She said to him. You know. You've been such a help to me. How is it you're able to help me? What is it that guides you? And he lifted up his Bible. He said. This is what it is. And she said.
I want to read that. She read it. And she's been gloriously saved. Wouldn't it be good. If we live such lives. Obedience. Such lives. With lack of grumbling.
[21:13] And moaning. That others said to us. What is it that motivates you? And we could point them. To the Lord Jesus. If.

We comply. We will encourage. Our fellow believers. Paul said. He just wanted to be able. To boast about these folks.
He was so proud. That they were living. Such a. A glorious Christian life. They were doing. So well. And he longed. To be proud of them. Isn't it lovely.
When we see someone. Meet someone. Who you really feel. Is glorifying. To the Lord Jesus. It's such an encouragement. To us isn't it? And then thirdly. Thirdly. We will please God.
Surely that must be. Our chief end. Mustn't it? To please God. For it says. It is in God. It is God. Who works in you. Both to will. And to work for. His.
[22:09] Good. Pleasure. Isn't that what you want to do? Don't you want to please God? Isn't that your chief aim in life? And here we are. As we obey. Then we will be.

Pleasing God. As we. Live lives. That. With lack of grumbling. And moaning. And complaining. Then we will please God. Excuse me.
I just want to say finally. That obedience. Is our choice. You can choose. To be obedient. Those little girls.
I was talking about. Two Saturdays ago. They could have chosen. If they wanted to. To be obedient. But. They chose. Not to be.
But you say. It is all like choosing it. But it is sticking with it. How am I going to make it work? How is it going to work out in my life? I have been a Christian for. Years. And I still find myself.
[23:10] Wandering. I still find myself. Lacking a beard. I still find myself. Moaning. And groaning. And groaning. How is it going to work? Well I tell you this. If you are trying on your own.

You will never succeed. You will never succeed. Because Paul tells us. That how we are going to succeed. Is this way. It is God. Who works in you.
Both to will. And to work. His good pleasure. It is a work of cooperation. One of the commentaries I was reading.
Just today. Used this expression. It was dependent actism. We trust in our earth. On God completely. And at the same time. We work at it.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-05-25 04:44:50

And that seems. That is what Paul is telling us here. Dependent activism. Is that what you want to do?
[24:06] Do you want to be glorified to God? Do you want to please him? Do you want others to come to know the saviour? Here we have Paul's instructions.

Paul's directions. As to how that can be the case. As we recognise. And allow God to work in our lives. And then we work with him.
That our lives might be changed. To bring glory to his name. God promote that we may so wish and so be. In Jesus name. Amen. Let's close in prayer.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-05-25 04:44:50