

## “Work Out Your Own Salvation.” Philippians 2:12

I thought that salvation was a free gift. Aren't we saved by Grace, unmerited favor, not by keeping the law? Doesn't Paul tell us, “for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” Aren't we told to come to Jesus just as we are? True, we are saved by Grace and Grace alone but what is grace? Is it just unmerited favor....does it allow us to continue to live in sin while expecting to go to heaven just as we are? When Jesus accepts us just as we are, does he leave us there to wallow in sin?

Jesus tells us: “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” John tells us “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” 3 John 3:4-9. Paul tells us “For sin shall not have dominion (power) over you. Romans 6:14.

In the book of Revelation we are told, “And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed,” Why was the Dragon wroth with the woman? Lets continue reading.... “which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Why is he wroth, angry? Because they are keeping the commandments of God. See Revelation 12:17. Later in Revelation we are told again, “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” Revelation 14:12. So God's people keep His commandments.

When Marry was dragged before Jesus for committing adultery, Jesus told her that He did not condemn her, but His very next words were, “go, and sin no more.” See John 8:11. So it seems obvious that God expects us to keep His commandments, but why must we keep them? Doesn't Paul tells us that “by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified” (saved). If keeping the law won't save us then why do we need to keep it? Why? Because we will be judged by our works and deeds. See Revelation 20:12, 13. Why will we be judged by our works? Because it is by our works (actions) that a person is known. How can we prove that we are followers of Jesus if there is no evidence of it in our lives. You may say that you love someone but if all of your actions point in another direction who will you convince that you love them?

So, even if your actions (works) won't save you, you can't be saved without them since they are the evidence of who you are loyal to, who you love. It will be your actions that you will be judged by not your profession. See James 2:13-26.

But I still have a big problem because I am powerless to keep God's laws, and Paul agrees with me. He says “I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good,

evil is present with me.” Romans 7:14-21 So, how on earth do I keep a law that I am powerless to keep?

Well that is where grace comes in. But grace is far more than unlimited favor, it is also power, unlimited power to keep us from falling. That is why Paul tells us in Phillipians 4:13 “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Ellen White puts it this way: “As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes **omnipotent**. Whatever is to be done at His command, may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings.” --Christ's Object Lessons, p. 333. There is nothing stronger, more powerful than omnipotence.

Before grace can do its powerful work in us there is something that we must do. Our work is to acknowledge that we are powerless to keep God's Law even though we know it is holy just and good and we want to keep it. We must surrender everything to God and give Him permission to work in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. Then the works that we will do as a result of this are not our works but the works that God does in and through us. Since the good works that others will now be seeing me do are due to Gods power working in me, I can take no credit for them, since it is not me doing them but God working them out in me.

So, in conclusion, what Paul meant when he told us to “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” and then continues by saying, “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” Is that God is doing the work that we are judged by but we still have a work. Our work is simply to surrender to God's work in us. God can't/won't work in us unless we unconditionally surrender to Him. We must fear and tremble lest we are not unconditionally surrendered, because God will not do His work in us unless we are unconditionally surrendered to Him. Our salvation is completely dependent on our choice and willingness to surrender. Our work is the work of surrender and it is, for most, a very hard work. Human nature does not want to surrender to anyone. In this world to surrender is to loose everything, it is foolishness, but in God's world to surrender means you gain everything.

You can be “confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” Phillipians 1:6. If you give God permission to do whatever it takes to save you and to work His character in your life you can be confident that He will do it. You have given Him the responsibility for your salvation and He is more than happy do take that responsibility and work good and perfect works in and through you. Then you will be “perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Not because of what you are doing but because of what God is doing in and through you.

When you put God's kingdom and His righteousness first and foremost in your life Jesus has promised that He will take care of all your needs and give you all the things that others spend all their valuable time trying to acquire. See Mathew 6.