

Phil ch 2 Vs 13

God's work in you

So what is the answer to the riddle that has seemed to plague Christians for centuries? As we examine the scriptures there seems to be one ever-elusive issue, and on going point of debate that has caused Christians down through the ages to be left baffled and take opposing positions that rarely either side is willing to compromise in. Is it God's sovereignty or is it man's freewill, does the bible call us to Calvinism, or Armenianism? As we read through the scriptures we're confronted with scriptures such as Col 3:12-13 "*Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another.*" Titus 1:1 "*Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness.*" 1 Peter 1:1-2 "*Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.*" and Of course these famous vs, Rom 8:29-30 "*For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.*" In Eph 1 we read, "*just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.*" and Again, "*In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will.*"

As we read such scriptures we're confronted with the reality of the sovereignty of God, there's no denying that God has a part in every mans salvation, in fact He alone does the entire work, there is no part of salvation that I have somehow earned or merited on my own. Even Jesus Himself said, you didn't choose Me, I chose you. "So then Jeff, what you're saying is that the scriptures support the Calvinist's position, that there are those who have been chosen, certain people who have been elect unto salvation and there's nothing that anyone can do to change that, you're either in or your out? Jesus died to save the elect?" Well, no, that's not what I'm saying, because as you continue to read the scripture's you're confronted with such scriptures as; and one of the most common would be John 3:16-17, "*For God so loved (not the elect but) the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, (or the non-elect) but that the world (again, not just the elect) through Him might be saved." 2 Cor 5:19 tells us that, "*God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*" Not the elect, but the whole world, in John 3:14-15 Jesus said, "*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.*"*

Now last time I checked “whoever” meant “whoever” Jesus wasn’t playing word games, “well, I say whoever but those who understand know that I mean that it’s the elect who will believe” if that were the case He’d have said, “so that as the elect believe upon Me, I’ll save them.” 1 Tim 1:15 *“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.”* How many does the bible say have sinned and fall short of the glory of God? So then we all qualify to be saved, again 2 Peter 3:9 *“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”* 2 more, 1 Tim 2:3-4 *“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”* and Acts 17:30 *“Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.”*

Even Jesus said that the one who comes to Me, I will by no means cast out, implying the fact that you and I have a free will that God honors. You can come to Christ, or not, again Jesus said, behold I stand at the door of your heart and knock and any man that hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in. Again there’s a choice there to be made, human responsibility; you can open the door or not, now God has initiated, He’s at the door of your heart and knocking, but you have a responsibility, do I open my heart or not? and There are many more scriptures that point both directions, so which is it, how does it come together?

You know, I find it interesting that the bible never addresses God’s sovereignty and mans freewill simultaneously in such a light specifically. Why not? Because what does that argument have to do with the love and grace of Jesus Christ who died upon the cross for the remission of the sins of the world and if we’ll only just believe upon Him for that, we’ll live forever, in intimate union with God? Nothing, that argument has nothing to do with Jesus Christ in that light, and that’s what God is interested in, He doesn’t have time for our petty games because there’s a hurt and dying world going to hell, the focus of the bible is on the person of Jesus Christ “In the volume of the book it is written of Me.” From cover to cover it all points to Jesus, and God owes us no explanation as to how these little glitches in our finite understanding come together in the eternal scope of things. The scriptures nowhere seek to justify themselves in such a way, they never make an apology for God’s sovereignty, and never alleviate the responsibility of the free will of man.

Those who claim to have it all figured out only demonstrate their own ignorance and stand in defiance of God Himself who said, *“My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.”*

In other words there are going to be those issues concerning the attributes or reasoning's and various scriptural positions of God that we're simply going to have to trust in the love and righteousness of God to do the right thing. God never asked us to understand it all, as a matter of fact He said we wouldn't, you will not (with the finite understanding of man) ever comprehend the infinite complexities of God. and To seek to bring God's wisdom down to such a degree that man can understand the fullness of it, seems to me to be a dangerously prideful position to take. So God never asked us to get it, He asked us to believe it, and be obedient to it, with out faith the bible says it's impossible to please God, and yet if you understand it all, you have no need for faith, because you know it all! Now I'm not excusing our responsibility to seek God with our whole heart and mind and soul and seek an ever deepening understanding of His word and His love for us. But you won't get it all, at least on this side of eternity and God will spend eternity unveiling new depths of Himself to us, there's enough of God to last an eternity and still not get it all. Now, why did I go through all of this, because vs 12 and 13 of the 2nd ch of Phil demonstrate both as do other portions of scripture.

In vs 12 we see the responsibility of man, to work out (remember not to work for, we spent considerable time on that last week and you can get the tape) but to work out our own salvation. and There are several connotations with that, we're to be working out what God is working into our lives, and we're not to be nosing it other people's business work out your own salvation. Be obedient to God's word and plan's and desires for your life, and not only when you're around your church leaders, Paul said, "*not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence.*" Don't lead a double life, doing certain things when the leaders or pastor is around, and relaxing your standards when they're not. Because they aren't who you're to fear, you're to fear God who is always with you. and That conscious awareness of the fact that God is with you and near to you and in you, will breed holiness in your life Prov 13:6 says that, "*Righteousness keeps him whose way is blameless, But wickedness overthrows the sinner.*" In other words if you're an individual of integrity, then you have nothing to fear in regards to being busted for something because you didn't know so and so was around, or listening.

Because you don't play that game, you're consistent in your walk with Christ and what you wouldn't do in a group of Christians, you won't be found doing when you're not in that group because you understand that God is with you and you love Him and are living for Him, not as a man pleaser but as a God pleaser. and In regards to your freewill, your salvation that you're working out; Paul says do it with fear and trembling. Remember the context of the exhortation, it's in the light of the obedience of Christ and so God will be working out those Christ like attributes in your life as well, you're simply to be obedient to Him in those things He's working into you so that they'll be worked "out" in your life.

There's no such thing as an undercover Christian, what God is working into you will be being exposed or "working themselves out" for all to see. So as you're working out your own salvation, remember that He won't work into you something that would contradict the life of Christ, so this isn't an office of liberty by which you are able to justify sin in your life under the guise of working out "your own" salvation, "so keep your nose out of my life." Because the salvation that God is working into you (meaning those plans that He's working into your life, culminating ultimately into Christ likeness) will surface in godly attributes not fleshly sin filled qualities that lead you away from Him, how do I know that?

Vs13

Here we have the sovereignty of God on display, it's God who works in you both to will and to do, He gives you and works in you the capacity to do both. Ps 37:4 says, "*Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.*" Why, because He's the one who put those desires there in the 1st place. Because He wants to do an awesome work in your life, He delights to show mercy, and so many times it's on your heart to pray for someone, why, because God wants to show them mercy. You recall when the entire nation of Israel was in rebellion, they were worshipping the golden calf, and God's anger was aroused and He told Moses that He was going to consume them all and start over with him, and make a great nation out of Moses. (and You find all this in Ex 32) and we read there in vs11-14 "*Then Moses pleaded with the LORD his God, and said: "LORD, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, 'He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.' "*" So the LORD relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people."

In other words God backed off, and people say, "man, it was a good thing that Moses was there to intercede for them or else they would have all been toast!" and That may be true, we find that God granted Moses the desire of his heart, which was to spare the nation of Israel, but let me ask you a question. Why do you suppose that Moses had that desire in his heart, Who do you suppose put that desire there? "What are you suggesting Jeff?" I suggest to you that God was just looking for an opportunity to be merciful to a stiff-necked and rebellious people, but He couldn't compromise His holiness, and so in His mercy He had someone there to stand in the gap on the behalf of the people that He might be merciful to them. Hey, I feel an analogy coming on, God is just looking for opportunity to be merciful, Jer 9:24 says, "*But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD.*" Mic 7:18 "*Who is a God like You, Pardoning iniquity And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in mercy.*"

God wants to use your life to be an instrument of mercy to others as well, and of course the ultimate instrument of mercy is found in Jesus Christ and we just facilitate others to Him that they might experience that for themselves. Now that's a pretty radical example, but the principal follows ever facet of yours and my life. How many times have you thought, "well, I think I'll do this," and then something happens and you go, "woe, looking back and I can see how the Lord was guiding me all along." Why, because it's God who works in you both to will and to do, He gave you the will to do that, and then you did that, and He did a great work. I've shared with you this example before but one time me and my wife and some friends were eating out on a Friday night and when we were finished I asked my wife what she'd like to do, and she said she just wanted to go home, well, I didn't and so I said would you mind if I went with my friend down to the coffee house here? and She said, no go ahead, and when we got here, I was reaching for the door to the coffee house and as soon as I reached out the door flung open and this girl goes, "I've been looking all over for you, do you remember when you was talking to me about getting saved, how do I do that, I want to be saved." and So we stepped off the porch and I introduced her to Jesus Christ but you see looking back I realized, "hey, that was God who put the will in me to just come down to the coffee house." As I just followed through, He used my life.

So many times it's just like that, you're just going through life, but since you've surrendered your life to Jesus, so many times what seems to be practical decisions of your life, are in reality the supernatural guiding hand of God upon you. Because He's working in you to will and to do, it's not always going to be some massive big booming voice with a mystical follow up, God knows where we live, and He will do supernatural things in our lives on very practical levels. Prov 21:1 says, "*The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, Like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.*" We read in Isa 26:12 "*LORD, You will establish peace for us, For You have also done all our works in us.*"

and When God works in us, one of the end results of that will be peace, and that's what we've been driving at in Phil, Paul exhorting them to reconcile the division that's among them. 1 more Heb 13:20-21 "*Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*"

God works in us that He might work His plans out through us, we see it over and over in the scriptures, in the lives of such men as Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, the apostles and many more. Men whom God had a specific purpose for, each one of them distinctively unique and God working in each of them that His plans might come into fruition out through them. God worked in Moses for 40 years to bring Him to the place where He could lead Israel out of bondage, and as Moses tended the sheep, God was working in him, teaching him the patience and humility necessary to be a great leader who was careful to give God the glory.

God anointed David King of Israel years before it ever became a reality; He was working in Him so that those things might be worked out in His life when he was upon the throne of Israel. Trust in the Lord against impossible odds, brokenness and humility as he was chased and ran from Saul for his very life. and God will take His time working with us, why, because He's more interested in the *workman* than He is *work*. How so, because if the workman is what he needs to be, then the work will be what it needs to be as well, but if there's a problem with the workman, then the work won't go as intended. and As unique and distinctive as each one of these guys were, and the way that God worked *in* them that "salvation" might be worked *out through* them; the same will fall true for each and every one of us as well.

God has a plan for your life, and it's distinctive, and it's unique, even as no 2 of us is exactly alike, so no two plans of God for our lives is exactly alike, and God wants to work in you, to do and to will, and it's all, (notice in vs 13) for His good pleasure.

You and I were created for God's good pleasure, you say, "well, I don't think I like that." Sorry, get over it, because that's the fact, and until you find yourself in the will of God doing those things that He's working in you for His good pleasure, you'll find your own self miserable and full of emptiness and unsatisfaction in life. Why, because you're living for self rather than dying to self, Jesus said, if you want to lose your life, then just hang on to it, and look out for #1, but if you'll lose your life, die to self for His sake, then you'll find life, the true meaning of life that's full of joy and inner fulfillment. It's like when people say, "well if my life were straightened up I'd live for Christ", and yet if you'd live for Christ, your life would straighten up. "Well, if I could see I'd believe" if you'd believe, you'd see, "well, if I could pay my bills I'd tithe" if, you'd tithe, you could pay your bills. You see, God's economy is so different from ours. His ways are not our ways, if it were us we'd pick some big influential celebrity to represent the Lord. How many times have you found yourself in that conversation that goes like, "man, if so and so were to get saved wouldn't that be great, imagine what they could do for the kingdom."

You know that's just the problem, we're all looking to them and not to the Lord, they can't do anything for the kingdom, Jesus said with out Me you can do nothing, so what does God do, He picks nobodies. He goes out along the highways and byways and finds those who are weak and foolish in the worlds eyes, and He transforms their lives and uses them in the most awe inspiring, world rocking kind of ways, who had ever heard of Billy Graham apart from evangelism? Who had ever heard of Chuck Smith apart from the ministry? You see even the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of men, why so that no flesh will glory in His sight, He does the whole thing. That's the sovereignty of God, man you have to love it, now each of those men had a choice to respond to God's sovereign desire for their lives and no one will deny that. But it was and is God's sovereignty at work in them both to will or desire those things and to follow through to do them.

You think that if you could just soak up some joy in this life you'd be glad to do those things that give God pleasure, but you see you're thinking of you 1st. "If I had, then I'd give" but if you'd do those things that bring God pleasure, being obedient to His word and that which He is working into your life, you couldn't be porous or absorbent enough to soak up all the joy that He would saturate you with, it'd just be splashing and gushing out of you all over everyone else because you couldn't contain it all. Jesus said, *"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."* Out of His heart will gush torrents of living waters; we were created for His good pleasure.

2 Thess 1:11-12 *"Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power."* Why, *"that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ."* Listen to this one regarding God's good pleasure and your life, Luke 12:32 Jesus speaking, *"Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."*

You were created for God's good pleasure, and part of what gives Him pleasure is giving you the kingdom. God desires all men everywhere to repent, because it's His good pleasure to give to them the kingdom. So many people think man if I walked in that place the walls would fall down, God wants strike me dead, that's what would give Him pleasure because I'm such a bad character. Nonsense, that couldn't be further from the truth.

Listen, we're all sinners, Ezek 33:11 *"As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die."* God has no pleasure in squashing wicked people, and you need to be careful that you would wish hell upon no man, I don't care what they've done. and I concur that, that can at times be difficult, but God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, He died for the wicked of which we were all at one time apart of. God demonstrated His own love towards us in that while we were still sinners, that's when Christ died for us. God does not delight in the death of the wicked, "well, he sure got what he had coming" be careful, because but for the grace of God, that's what we all had coming. Vengeance is the Lords and He will repay that much is for sure but we need to hold ourselves in check, lest we somehow delight in that which grieves the Lord. But Ps 116:15 *"Precious in the sight of the LORD Is the death of His saints."* Why, because it's His good pleasure to give to you the kingdom. What else gives Him pleasure? We'll get into that next time as we close the gap more and more in Phil ch 2.

But maybe this morning you're here and you don't know Jesus Christ Listen, as an ambassador of Christ I can tell you that it would be God's good pleasure to give to you the kingdom today. You can walk out these doors a new creation in Christ, God doesn't wish judgment upon your life, He delights in imputing mercy, and if you'll receive Jesus Christ into your life today, God's mercy will flood your soul and you'll never be the same. and Maybe you've heard a preacher say these things or similar things before but for some reason this morning it's different. and Jesus is knocking on the door of your heart saying , Listen, I died for you, and I was raised so that you could stand justified before God. You can stand before God just as if you'd never sinned at all, forgiven, in Christ, if you'll receive Him today.