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Sermon Notes

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## **Working Out Your Salvation by the Power of God**

### **Philippians 2:12-13**

Introduction: The Astonishing Mysteries of Christianity

Last Week: Human intellect swallowed up by the doctrine of the Incarnation... that the eternal God Himself took on the true nature of a man, and died on a cross

This Week: Human intellect swallowed up by the doctrine of the combination of God's sovereignty and human responsibility in salvation

***Romans 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has understood the mind of the Lord...?***

These great mysteries do not cause us to doubt our faith, but to be all the more certain of its origin in the infinite mind of God

If every aspect of Christianity and of the Bible could be perfectly and easily understood by finite human intellect, would it not prove that Christianity and the Bible are of human origin?

I. The Deep Mystery of Salvation in Two Parts: Our Work and God's

***Philippians 2:12-13 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed-- not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence-- continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.***

A. Two Infinite Journeys of Philippians

1. Internal journey of sanctification
2. External journey of world-wide disciple-making
3. Here: the focus is on sanctification... of constant gradual growth into Christlikeness
4. Next (vss. 14-18): the focus will be on evangelism, on disciple-making

B. The Mystery of the Journey of Salvation

1. Key statement: salvation is a journey, a process, NOT INSTANTANEOUS!!!
2. Simplistic evangelical or Baptist view:

- “Are you saved?” “When were you saved?” “I was saved when I was ten!” “Once saved, always saved!”

Problem is not that this way of speaking is unbiblical... it is not!

Problem is that people think salvation is instantaneous... something you get in an instant, and in which human works and striving have no part...

So we say “You are NOT saved by works” or “Salvation is NOT BY WORKS”

Problem: How to understand this stunning verse

***Philippians 2:12... continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling***

3. Problem: neglects the journey of salvation... AND the component parts of salvation

1) Justification THEN 2) Sanctification THEN 3) Glorification

***Philippians 2:12... continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling***

C. Deep Mystery: God’s Sovereignty and Human Responsibility in Sanctification

1. Ancient debate in Church History

- a. Augustine vs. Pelagius in the fifth century
- b. Martin Luther vs. Erasmus in the sixteenth century
- c. Dutch Reformed vs. the Remonstrants in the seventeenth century
- e. George Whitfield vs. John Wesley in the eighteenth century
- g. Charles Spurgeon vs. 19<sup>th</sup> century British Arminians in the nineteenth century
- h. James White vs. Norm Geisler in our era in the twentieth century

2. No “reconciliation” needed

How do we reconcile God’s sovereignty and human responsibility?

When someone asked C.H. Spurgeon how he could reconcile the two truths in this text he replied, **“I never try to reconcile friends.”**

Divine, sovereign energy and diligent human energy in working out salvation are here presented as friends and allies

***Vs. 12-13 continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.***

D. Danger: Pushing to the Extremes

1. Some have so emphasized God's activity that they almost totally deny human effort in sanctification:

- a. **Quietists:** Madame Guyon and Bishop Fenelon, 17<sup>th</sup> century Catholic mystics

They get their name from the need to be Quiet, to lose self... to be totally passive in the Christian life; they sought to abandon the self in the sea of God... to lose all self will, all self-consciousness even, and be swept up into the mind and purposes of God... to be Quiet in the presence of God was everything; they taught the more you love self, the less love you have for God

Some Quietists even went so far as to say we must be totally passive even in the face of temptation... we should not fight at all, lest we begin to become self-focused again

- b. **“Victorious Life”** people hold that sanctification comes as a result of some “Second blessing” which God gives those who seek it, and that our only job is to seek that instantaneous perfection which will result in the “Higher life” or the “Victorious Life”

The “Higher Life” is then called the “Surrendered Life”... the total absence of the need for striving and struggling against sin promised; as a matter of fact, if you are striving and struggling, you have not yet attained the “Higher Life” which God can just give you in an instant

Anonymous author of How to Live the Victorious Life writes, “We are to stand, not struggle. The ‘good fight of faith’ cannot be a struggle. The secret of victory is the indwelling Christ. Victory is in trusting, not in trying. Victory over sin is a gift of God and not a growth. The Victorious Life is not secured *gradually*, nor by effort and striving on our part.” (pp. 20-24)

The key here is “Surrender” to Christ... “We have again and again declared that before anyone can enter into the Victorious Life two things are necessary: surrender and faith. First of all, we must be willing to give up all known sin and self-will and surrender ourselves entirely into God's hands. Then we must in faith look to God to sanctify us. So the entrance in may be summed up in two simple mottos: ‘Let go, and let God’”

All of this implies that a perfect life of holiness is guaranteed, a life without any struggle at all, once you learn to surrender everything to the Indwelling Christ.

This sounds so right until you read again the text we are working on today:

***Philippians 2:12-13 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed-- not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence-- continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.***

c. **Twelve-step programs** like AA espouse a motto: "Let go and let God"...

As children bring their broken toys  
with tears for us to mend,  
I brought my broken dreams to God,  
because he was my friend.  
But then, instead of leaving him  
in peace, to work alone,  
I hung around and tried to help,  
with ways that were my own.  
At last, I snatched them back and cried,  
"How can you be so slow?"  
"My child", he said  
"What could I do?  
you never did let go."

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The idea here is that we only mess things up if we try to work, labor, struggle... we need to let God take away our sin

- d. **Hyper-Calvinists** take the idea of the sovereignty of God and the eternal security of the believer so far as to say we don't have to do any striving in the Christian life... God will do it all!!
- e. finally, **lazy mainstream evangelicals**, resting on the doctrine of once-saved, always saved, go too far when they disobey this verse and refuse to work out their salvation with fear and trembling... they say "I'm already saved... I prayed the prayer and walked the aisle... besides, salvation is not by works anyway!!"

All of these over-emphasize the activity of God to the point of denying the need for constant human striving

On the other hand:

- 2. Some have so emphasized human activity that they almost totally deny God's sovereignty in sanctification
  - a. **anxious Arminians**: who teach you can lose your salvation, so you need to keep on working day after day to keep close to Christ... forgetting that God is at work in us and will never let us go
  - b. **Roman Catholic monks and ascetics** and everyone: we must keep on working or God won't accept us
  - c. **Liberal Christian moralists**: constant focus on human efforts and energies

- d. **hard-working evangelicals**: anxious about their souls, they forget God's sovereign power so mightily at work in us

There is a deep mystery addressed in these two verses: what role does human effort play in our salvation, and what role does God's sovereign power play? How do the two relate? What does it teach us about free will? What does it teach us about the security of the believer? How do these two verses motivate us to grow in holiness

## II. Questions of Context

### A. The Book of Philippians Generally

1. Paul in chains for Christ... suffering persecution
2. Philippian church heard of his trouble and sent Epaphroditus to him with some money for his support
3. Paul is writing a thank you letter for their love and concern
4. BUT even more, Paul is concerned about them: He wants them to understand his own suffering and their lives properly in the light of the gospel
5. He lays before them two infinite journeys: internal growth in holiness, external progress of the Kingdom of Heaven through evangelism
6. He turns to their own situation: they also are suffering persecution for the gospel... he urges them to stand firm as one man with absolute courage in the gospel
7. Paul also knows they are having conflicts and divisions... those conflicts and divisions threaten any possibility that the Philippians might bear eternal fruit for Christ
8. Paul commands them to be perfectly united in mind and thought, putting selfish ambitions aside and living to bless each other
9. Paul sets before them the example of Christ: his perfect example of humility in absolute obedience to His Father... became obedient even to the point of death on the cross

### B. Philippians 2:12-13

1. Link to Christ's example two-fold
  - a. "Therefore..."
  - b. "As you have always OBEYED..."
2. Paul urges them to grow in personal holiness, to end that they will stop arguing with each other

***Philippians 2:14-16 Do everything without complaining or arguing,***

3. The result of their constant growth in Christ will be a purity of life that will enable them to lead others to Christ:

***so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe 16 as you hold out the word of life***

### III. Our Lesser Work: Working Out Salvation

#### A. Why Our Work is the Lesser Work

Why “Lesser”??

We work AND God works

BUT our work is of lesser consequence... of lower significance

Apostle John puts a priority on God’s love before our own:

***1 John 4:19 We love because he first loved us.***

These verses do the same with God’s work over ours

In effect: **“We work because He first worked in us...”**

#### B. The Nature of Our Work

1. Consistent obedience to Christ

***vs. 12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed-- not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence-- continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling***

- a. obedience to Christ is essential for salvation
- b. essence of sin is rebellion against God... going your own way
- c. Christ saves us by calling us back into His Kingdom

***Mark 1:15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"***

To be saved means to come back into Christ’s Kingdom... to submit to Christ as your King and to obey His commands

**Matthew 11:28-30** *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*

It is just as we had noticed last time with the humility of Christ:

**Philippians 2:6-8** *Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!*

Christ did not think like some earthly King, lording it over his subjects... but he was the slave of everyone

BUT just because Christ was so humble and such a servant of all, does not mean He's not a King!! In order to be saved, you MUST take His yoke upon you and learn from Him... you must bow your knee to Him and humble yourself under His scepter:

**vs. 9-11** *Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Thus the gospel is something not just to be believed but also something to be OBEYED:

**Acts 17:30** *In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.*

**2 Thessalonians 1:8-9** *He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power*

d. therefore we must constantly seek to obey of Lord, Jesus Christ

**vs. 12** *Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed-- not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence-- continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling*

- i) if you have no desire to obey Christ's commands, you are not a Christian
- ii) if you think it a light thing to obey Christ, you do not understand the gospel
- iii) the Philippians showed their faith by their immediate and heartfelt obedience... not only to Christ, but to Christ's messenger Paul

e. what kind of obedience?

- i) immediate

**Philippians 1:5** *because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now*

The Philippians didn't wait to obey... they were submissive to Christ's authority right away

Some people think, "I'll accept Jesus as my Savior, and later I will follow Him as Lord"

Christ called people to immediate obedience:

***Matthew 4:18-22 As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 19 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." 20 At once they left their nets and followed him. 21 Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, 22 and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.***

***Matthew 8:21-23 Another disciple said to him, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." 22 But Jesus told him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead." 23 Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him.***

***Matthew 9:9 As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.***

The pattern is clear: When Jesus calls, He expects you to follow... immediately, unquestioningly, with full obedience... even if following Him is expensive or difficult or costs you everything, He expected immediate and full obedience... like in the case of the rich young ruler:

***Matthew 19:21 Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."***

ii) faith-filled

***Romans 1:5 Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.***

This is an obedience based on true faith.... based on knowing that Christ Jesus is King, He is Lord, He is God... worthy of full obedience

The connection between obedience and faith is so clear that James says without works of obedience, faith is dead:

***James 2:17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.***

The Philippians showed their obedience was faith-filled and Christ-focused because they obeyed even more when Paul was absent than when He was present

***vs. 12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed-- not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence-- continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling***



Illus. The measure of your faith is what you do when no one is watching but God alone!! One time, shortly after I became a Christian, I was inspecting fire extinguishers as a job at my college. I came to a small storage room and turned on the light and closed the door to inspect the fire extinguisher. I turned and saw on a wall a picture of a woman that was designed to cause lust... I immediately closed my eyes and turned away! And no one saw but Christ

iii) consistent

***“As you have ALWAYS obeyed... even now, continue...”***

Obedience is not perfect in this world... but it is consistent! It is the consistent drumbeat of the Holy Spirit’s work within you

The Holy Spirit says “This is way, walk in it!”

2. Hard work and determination

***vs. 12 ...continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling***

What does it mean to “WORK OUT YOUR SALVATION...”???

As we have said, salvation is made up of three parts... in two of them, our works have NO PLACE AT ALL

**Justification:** declaration by God the Judge that we are not guilty for our sins because Christ’s righteousness is on us by faith... we get a gift of righteousness by simple faith and we are declared RIGHTEOUS in Christ... in this our works have NO PLACE WHATSOEVER; we do not WORK OUT justification

***Philippians 3:9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ-- the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.***

**Sanctification:** gradual step by step growth in Christlikeness by a cooperation between the Holy Spirit and our own labors... God works in us, and we work as a result; that is here in 2:12-13

**Glorification:** instantaneous transformation by the power of God at death and at the resurrection by which we are made perfect in body and soul... immediately and forever... in this our works have NO PLACE AT ALL

***Philippians 3:21 Christ by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.***

Therefore, here Paul is speaking of sanctification... of working out this part of our salvation on a daily basis

- a. growth in godliness requires a great deal of effort
- b. our effort and energy ARE required
- c. it takes great effort to put sin to death... there is suffering in resisting temptation

- d. it takes great effort to grow in prayer, Bible reading, fasting, evangelism, sacrificial giving
  - e. just to have a daily quiet time requires that you get up early
3. Fear and trembling = fear of the Lord, trembling in weakness
- a. NOT the fear of slaves at Mt. Sinai

***Hebrews 12:21 The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear."***

- b. BUT the fear and trembling knowing for certain how much you must depend on Christ... how over your head you are, how impossible it would be to achieve

***1 Corinthians 2:3-5 I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, 5 so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.***

Not boldly self-confident, but totally reliant on the Holy Spirit

- c. fear of the Lord's holiness and discipline
- d. fear of sin and its terrible consequences
- e. trembling at the thought of displeasing Christ and wasting your life

#### IV. God's Greater Work: God Working In Us

***vs. 12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed-- not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence-- continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling***

**for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.**

##### A. The Primacy of God's Work in Us

Remember always: God's work comes first

1. Born again by the power of God
2. You were in total darkness in unbelief...God spoke: let there be light into your soul
3. You were dead in sins...Christ spoke: Lazarus come forth, and you were alive
4. You can do absolutely nothing without him

***John 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.***

5. What God began by His Spirit He will finish by His Spirit

***Philippians 1:6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.***

6. How God began is also how He will finish

***Galatians 3:3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?***

B. God's Awesome Energy In Us

***"It is God who WORKS in you..."***

1. God works in you... word "God" comes first in the clause, emphasizing "Don't forget whose incredible, immense power is at work in you"
2. "Works" = Greek, "energeo"... immense energy source
3. Great problem in the Christian life: weariness of the journey, sorrow in the struggle... lose strength of will, strength of mind, strength of body; tempted to give up and cease the pilgrimage once and for all
4. God will NEVER let that happen

***Isaiah 40:30-31 Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.***

***Psalm 23:1-3 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, 3 he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.***

God wisely energizes us daily for the journey, working perfectly with our own wills to rouse us to continue our long journey toward Christlike perfection

5. Great need in this journey: absolute confidence in God's power at work in us

***Ephesians 1:18-20 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, 20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms***

Paul deeply wants us to know how much power is at work inside us so that we won't grow weary and lose heart

### C. The Two-Fold Effect of God's Power In Us

***for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.***

1) To will 2) To act

1. Great emphasis of free-will theology is that God will NEVER violate our free will

Jairo Mejia “Another self-imposed limitation to the power of God is the human free will; God never interferes with the free will of men; he always respects the human will. So, there is no predetermination of human actions, as Augustine and many theologians after him said. Human beings are always free.”

George Zgourides “While God may call sinners to repentance, He never interferes with man's free will-his ability to choose between good and evil. God always respects man's decisions, even if the result is disobedience and sin.”

Prime example: Greg Boyd *The God of the Possible*: God cannot know the free choices of human will ahead of time

2. Human free will too often seen like a “Holy of Holies” into which God will never enter

3. This verse forever destroys that false view... God makes us willing all the time

***for it is God who works in you to will and to act***

The human will is an immensely complicated apparatus... the God who designed it to begin with understands it perfectly, and He knows what to do to make you willing to do His will

***Ezekiel 36:26-27 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.***

Many prayers in Psalms, the Psalmist asks God to work on his will, his lifestyle, his choices:

***Psalm 119:36 Incline my heart to Your testimonies and not to dishonest gain.***

***Psalm 119:133 Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me.***

So also other statements of Paul's:

***2 Thessalonians 3:5 May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance.***

God has power and will over the heart, and he turns it powerfully unto His ways... His will for us becomes little by little our will for us as well

4. God's first step in eternity past: God made the plan that we follow

***for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.***

- a. what is God's "good purpose"???
- b. overall, that you should be exactly like Jesus Christ in perfection

***Romans 8:28-29 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.***

God has an eternal plan, and the "BIG PICTURE" of that plan is that all of His chosen ones shall end up absolutely perfect morally, spiritually, physically, mentally, emotionally... as perfect as His Son

God also has a "SMALL PICTURE" day by day plan of operations... God as a General is a master of both strategic planning and tactical planning: the big picture goals and the daily objectives

He knows how to save a person like you

## V. The Relationship Between Our Work and God's Work In Us

***vs. 12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed-- not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence-- continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling***

**for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.**

### A. God's Plan and God's Energy Are the Ground of Our Planning and Energy

1. Note key word: FOR it is
2. We work BECAUSE He works first in us
3. God's work is the ground and energy of our work
4. This means we are working WITH GOD, doing in ourselves what He already is doing
5. IMPORTANT: This means the persevering effort we make toward sanctification will be blessed by God
  - a. so... set bold goals for spiritual growth: read through the Bible in a year; memorize a whole book of the Bible; pray three times longer than you ever have before; witness boldly and lead someone to Christ; give lots of money away for His Kingdom... set soaring goals, be incredibly bold and confident
  - b. set your face against a besetting sin AND DEFEAT IT by the power of God!!!
  - c. face your day's journey with overwhelming confidence, WHY?

**for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.**

d. you're not on a losing team

Illus. Immense confidence Army of Northern Virginia had in Robert E. Lee; so many victories, they were willing to endure ghastly physical privations because they had soaring confidence that he would bring them the only thing that mattered: victory in battle

How much greater should our confidence be in God Almighty, who is undefeated in bringing His people to heaven, through many dangers, toils and snares

He's NEVER LOST ONE YET!! So have soaring confidence in your battle against sin and in your pilgrimage to Christlike maturity in holiness

Illus. William Carey, the "Father of the Modern Missionary Movement," at a meeting of the ministers of the Northampton Baptist Association, delivered a fiery message based on Isaiah 54:2, concluding with the now famous phrase, "**Brothers, expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.**" The statement is now inscribed on the Westminster Abbey pulpit as a tribute to Carey.

Carey translated his optimism in the power of a sovereign God into great endeavors in the EXTERNAL JOURNEY of worldwide evangelization, serving the Lord with immense energy and fruitfulness in India. But Philippians 2:12-13 gives us the same energy in the INTERNAL JOURNEY of holiness:

**"Brothers, expect great things from God; attempt great things for God."**

Christians should have great energy in the Christian life of personal holiness: setting goals, meeting them, repenting if they fail, trying again, optimistic, striving, working hard day after day

B. Eternal Predestination Results in Hard Work for Us

1. Some think the fact that we are predestined to go to heaven means we can sit in an easy chair with the remote and a bag of chips and let God do all the work
2. This doctrine refutes that forever
3. Here are married hard work by us, even with fear and trembling ALONG WITH sovereign energy and grace by an undefeatable God
4. We must WORK HARD EVERY DAY to finish the journey of salvation

***Philippians 3:12-14 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.***

## 5. Some also daunted by God's "INVASIVE" sovereignty

People can be daunted by the idea of an absolutely sovereign God working in their own wills to accomplish His purposes in their lives... they are afraid that such a sovereign God will overwhelm their personality and leave them little more than unthinking robots... nothing could be further from the truth

Illus. Spurgeon talks about one occasion when he went sailing round the West Coast of Scotland. One night they anchored off one of the Hebridean islands. As they approached this island all they could see were its great high towering mountains. It looked as if it was going to be a source of disaster to the vessel. The captain seemed to be steering directly towards the most dangerous-looking cliffs. At the last moment, just as they came very close to the cliffs they saw that, in fact, there was a small opening that opened up into a lovely bay. They sailed into a quiet harbor and a good anchorage. Then the very mountains and cliffs that had seemed to threaten the little ship became her safety and her security. The wind could blow and the waves could roll but the little ship was as safe as could be because she was under the lee of the great mountain. The two truths we have been thinking of are like that. God's eternal purposes are like a mountain rising up that threatens us but as we come near and when we seek and find this God we discover one of the most precious truths - that God has loved with an everlasting love, and with a love that can never change and a love that will never let go.

Illus. Isaac Watts

Understood sovereign grace's power to change our hearts

“Turn, turn us mighty God,  
And mould our souls afresh;  
Break, sovereign grace, these hearts of stone,  
And give us hearts of flesh.”

But, he also knew none of us will go to heaven on “flowery beds of ease”

“Am I a Soldier of the Cross?” poetically describes how much we must labor to grow in Christ

Are there no foes for me to face?  
Must I not stem the flood?  
Is this vile world a friend to grace,  
To help me on to God?

Sure I must fight if I would reign;  
Increase my courage, Lord.  
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,  
Supported by Thy Word.

Thy saints in all this glorious war  
Shall conquer, though they die;

They see the triumph from afar,  
By faith's discerning eye

When that illustrious day shall rise,  
And all Thy armies shine  
In robes of victory through skies,  
The glory shall be Thine.

## VI. Application

### A. Understand God's Work

1. God's Eternal Purpose
2. God's Sovereign Power
3. God's Effective Work Inside You

### B. Work Out Your Salvation Every Day

#### 1. Two expectations

Expect to suffer

Expect to be 100% successful in the end

#### 2. Make plans and carry them out:

negatively: assault your sin daily by the power of the Spirit

positively: set the perfect character of Christ in front of you as the goal of your soul

set goals, and by the power of the Spirit carry them out

Remember that you should have soaring confidence that diligent effort on your part will result in progress in sanctification... you are at last working side by side with God and not against Him

#### 3. Develop habits of godliness

Bible intake

Personal prayer

Corporate fellowship and worship

Evangelism