

God Working

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Philippians 2:12-13 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

The workings of God on this planet are many. He tends to the operation of creation and He works among men in the unfolding purposes of His great plan. It is hard for us to say whether all the things God tends to would be said to be making Him busy. Being omnipotent as He is, we suspect that with Him all this operation and action is nothing more than His will set in motion and guided by the power of His decrees. I believe God is at rest right now. I cannot prove that because He said in the book of Genesis He rested from His work that He never worked again in a similar way. But, whether He can be said to be busy or not, I suspect that He is at rest in a great sense. I believe that His agents are busy, but whatever it is that God is doing right now, and every day, is no huge task for Him. However, we do know that He is engaged in at least one thing that carries the definition of work. It is spoke of in our text. He worketh in his people. And this is the subject of our message this morning. God Working. More specifically, God working in men.

I. This Truth Fits The Case of Sinners Being Converted

- It is the will of God at work when He sets a sinner on the road to repentance by sending the convicting presence of the Spirit
 - **2Co 7:10** For **godly sorrow worketh repentance** to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.
 - **Act 11:18** When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles **granted repentance** unto life.
- It is the act of God to grant repentance to that person whom he has brought face to face with his sins and the penalty of sin
 - **Act 11:18** When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.
- It is the will of God to have the gospel preached to his elect for the purpose of salvation
 - **1Cor. 1:21** For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it **pleased God** by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.
 - It is the doing of God that sets his people in the path of the gospel message that they might hear it for the purpose of salvation:
 - See **Acts 8:26-27**: Important points: 1) he directs a preacher to a cross roads; 2) he sets the stage for a spiritual interaction (eunuch reading from Isaiah) 3) he provides the elements for the task (a chariot to ride in so that there can be focus; water to baptize the new convert)
 - See **Acts 16:10-14**: Paul had been attempting to go places to preach, but the Spirit hindered him until he had the clear dream about the Macedonians asking for help; he goes with Luke and others. We see God's preparation: 1) there is a common religious

meeting place, 2) women apparently habitually met there, 3) Paul and helpers go on a certain day (would Lydia have been there on another day...possibly not), 4) the heart of Lydia has been prepared (she was a worshipper of God, although she knew nothing about the One Way, Jesus Christ).

- It is the will of God that such a person be given the gift of the new birth
 - **John 1:12-13** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
 - **John 17:2** As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.
- It is the doing of God when such a person experiences that new birth
- It is the will of God that such persons profess Christ as Savior
- It is the doing of God that gives utterance to such a person to confess Christ as Savior
 - Psalms 110:3 “Thy people *shall be willing* in the day of thy power...”
 - 1 Cor. 12:13 “...no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.”

II. God Working In The Believer Has Two Influences

- “...to will...of His good pleasure.” 1) Believers experience the purpose or will of God in **how He influences their will with His will**
 - Contrast the human dominated will with a will that is influenced by the interventions of the Holy Spirit: Illustration; Balaam and the donkey in Numbers 22:
 - The will of human nature is represented by Balaam going with the Moabites according to his own decision-making about things (to see this read carefully Num. 22:vv. 20-21 and note that God said “if the men come to call thee,” while v. 21 says Balaam rose up (without any call from the men) and went with them.
 - The awareness and responsiveness of the new nature in us is represented by the donkey (the donkey sees the angel standing in the way and resists going against the will of God; this makes the old nature angry and confrontational)
 - Balaam forcing the donkey to resume the journey under pressure represents our Adamic tendency to dictate to the new man and force him to go along with our wrong journey
 - The conflict between Balaam and the donkey represents the conflict between the old nature and the new man
 - The angel in the path represents the will of God regarding our life journey
 - The final confrontation by the angel and the submission of Balaam represents the power of God in subduing the old nature to His will and plan.
- 2) Believers experience the work and purpose of God in **how He grows their will into the image of His will**
 - “...to do...of His good pleasure.” 1) The Working of God “to do” of His good pleasure is seen in His influence on the actions of believers.
 - 2) The working of God “to do” of His good pleasure in a believer is one great way He reveals Himself to the world and to other believers
 - Peter says it this way: **1Peter 2:12** Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good

works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

- Jesus said it this way: **Mat 5:16** Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

III. God working in us to will and to do of His good pleasure puts a great responsibility upon us:

■ See **verse 12** of our text: : “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.**”

- The salvation that God has wrought in us belongs to us - we may call it our own - because it is God that works IN us to our salvation
- God has a plan for each of us to exercise His will over us and to do certain things through us.
- It is our serious responsibility to be His willing subjects so that His will may have its perfect effect within us and His purposes may have their perfect expression out of us (or as done by us).
- This is the working out of our own salvation as God works in us.