**Work out Your Salvation for God Is Working in You**

**The Word**

Read together Philippians 2:12-18

**The Big Idea**

The Christian life is about a partnership with God in which we work out the very things God is working in us. We put in our effort, discipline, and intentionality trusting that ultimately God is at work in our desires and actions to bring about the growth we long for.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. On Sunday we talked about the work of God in our lives. As you look back over the past 5 years, what is one specific way you’ve grown that you can confidently attribute to God’s work in your life?

2. Consider the tandem bike analogy. In what ways was that helpful for you? In what ways did that feel limited, incomplete, or unhelpful?

3. We spent some time reflecting on God’s transforming work in our lives by considering three famous passages: Ephesians 2:8-10, Romans 8:28-30, and Galatians 5:22-23. What in that was most impactful or helpful for you?

4. At the end of Sunday’s message we were encouraged to identify one area in our lives where we’d like to grow, and we were encouraged to apply our verse to that area: “work out your salvation [in that area of your life] with fear and trembling, for it is God who is working in you.” What area is that for you, and do you have any specific ways you’d like to approach that?

**Digging Deeper: Sermon Outline**

I. The Passage

A. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling

 1. “Work out” implies “continuous, sustained, strenuous effort” (Peter O’Brien)

2. The Christian journey is often compared to a battle or a race that requires effort, discipline, and intentionality

B. For it is God who is working in you

1. The Greek word for “working” here is where we get our word energize.

2. God is energizing in us two things

 a. To will = to want and desire what God wants and desires for us

b. To act = to have the ability and strength to follow through on those good desires

C. Scripture consistently portrays the Christian life as a dynamic relationship between our work and God’s work in us

 1. See how Paul describes his own life in 1 Corinthians 15:9-10

2. God is not sovereign in spite of our decisions and actions; somehow he is sovereign through our decisions and actions, yet they still remain real decisions and real actions.

3. The Tandem Bike analogy: Imagine you are on a bike, you are pedaling and working away to travel on your journey. Then you look back and notice you’re on a tandem bike, and God is sitting on the back seat. You both have pedals with one chain joining the pedals. When you pedal, God pedals, when you stop, God stops.

II. God’s work and our work throughout Scripture

A. God’s work

1. God is working on this spiritual journey (Ephesians 2:8-10)

 a. We are God’s workmanship (Greek = “poem”), his creative masterpiece

 b. We are created for good works which God has prepared in advance for us

c. So on this bike ride, each day we get to ride into the good deeds God has already laid out for us.

2. God’s Son, Jesus, is the destination of our journey (Romans 8:28-30)

a. Our destination/destiny is to be “conformed to the image of his Son” = to be made like Jesus

b. God will give us all the love, joy, peace, kindness, courage, courage of Jesus

c. He is working in “all things” (every twist and turn of the journey) to make us more and more like Jesus

3. God’s Spirit is the power by which we make it to our destination (Galatians 5:22-23)

a. He gives us new hearts and empowers us to begin living more and more like Jesus.

b. It’s his “fruit” not ours

B. Our work

1. God is sovereignly at work, but he has also sovereignly ordained that our own will and action be deeply involved in process of our own sanctification

2. God gives us the dignity and responsibility of actively participating in our own transformation

3. God could have transformed us instantaneously, but he wants us as active participants in the process.

4. So our response is not to take our feet off the pedals and fall asleep. Rather, our response is to pedal all the more with the confidence that our pedaling will be fruitful because it is Spirit-empowered pedaling

5. We are called to fight, struggle, strain for the very things God wants to give us and is currently doing in us

6. When we finally reach our final destination, God will say: “Well done, good and faithful servant” and we will say “God, it was all you all along,” and we’ll both be right.

III. Application

A. Identify one area you’d love to see growth and you’re confident God wants to bring about growth

B. How can you faithfully live out this verse in that area of your life: “work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is working in you.”

C. Be reminded of the great promises of what God is doing in your life (see Ezekiel 36:26-27, Isaiah 41:10, Isaiah 43:1-3, John 15:4-8, 2 Corinthians 12:9)