Working Out

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. Last couple of weeks, in verses 12 and 13, looking at what it means to work out your own salvation.

Not working for your salvation, but working out your salvation. We're going to look today, as we continue on verses 14 to 18, what that looks like and how we can do that together.
I do want to express my appreciation to all of the ladies from our church who are here this past Tuesday at Ladies Night of Theology. We had the largest gathering we've ever had for one of those. We've been doing that for seven years or so, all throughout the year for the last seven years. And the Lord continues to bless that. For those of you who prayed for us, I really appreciate it.
We had ladies from all over the state who were here, even a few that drove in from out of state to be here. The Lord continues to bless that, and we're so thankful and look forward to another time of being able to do that.
[1:31] So thank you for those who came. Thank you for many of you who let me know you're praying for us. We never take the gift of your prayer support lightly at all. How do you work out what God has worked in?

That really is the emphasis of where we are in Philippians 2, that the Lord works in us. The Lord saves us. The Lord regenerates us. The Lord grants us the gift of faith and the gift of salvation. And then we are called to work out, to live out, to apply what the Lord has done within us. And in verses 14 to 18, that we'll look at this morning, it builds upon that thought and gives us three specific ways that we can put into practice verses 12 and 13.
Three specific ways that we can live out, work out, and apply what the Lord has done for us. And the way this passage presents the truth, it not only tells us what we are to do, but clarifies why we are to do it.
I love the way this breaks down for us. It'll tell us, do this, so that this happens. It's going to tell us how to live, and it's going to give us the blessing that comes from obedience.
[2:59] Look at verses 14 to 18 with me in Philippians 2. Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.
Likewise, you also should be glad and rejoice with me. You might say that today we're going to the gym together.
We're going to the spiritual gym. We're going to work out together. Relax. You can do it from your chair. But we're going to work out what God has worked in. Those of you who are accustomed to going to the gym know that we are getting to the good time of the year because all the people who signed up in January and weren't serious are thinning out.
Not physically, but they're not coming as much, which is good because it leaves room for old people like us to do less and less of what we used to do.
[4:30] But it's interesting, every year in January, if you belong to a gym, you see the same thing all the time. If you always go to the gym, you show up and you think, what happened? Oh, it's January.

That's what happened. And then February hits and a few people hold on, but it's March. Today's March 1st. The gym will be thin this afternoon, I assure you.

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Fewer and fewer people keep up that commitment to work out at the first of the year. Well, there's some benefits if you do that. That might even be a benefit to eating a vegetable or no.
I don't want to test that theory, but I'm not so much worried physically with what you're working out, but I do want you to think with me today spiritually about what it means to work it out, to live out, to apply what the Lord has taught us.
Write down the word trusting. Verses 14 and 15, we are to be trusting. Let's look at how we see that. Verse 14, Do all things without grumbling or disputing.
[5:40] Anybody wish you'd just stayed home today? I suspect we could say nothing else. Maybe just read that verse again. Pray and go home. We'd have enough today to think about.

But what Paul is doing is he's just building upon the truth he has just taught us in verses 12 and 13. That we are to work out what God has worked in.
And one of the ways we do that is to avoid grumbling and disputing. As we work out our salvation, we are to go through life without being people who are grumblers or complainers.
Now, this is especially jarring when you remember that Paul writes this under house arrest. He's without his earthly freedom.
And yet, in spite of that, he will say, Do all things without grumbling or disputing. He's already taught us that it is the Lord who gives to us.
[6:50] And he gives to his people the gift of salvation. And he gives to his people even the gift of suffering. Go back to chapter 1, verse 29.

This is not the way that we tend to think of our hard times.
But it is the way the Bible tells us to think about all things. If you've been granted by God to believe, and even granted by God to suffer, then chapter 2, verse 14 makes sense that we would not grumble or dispute or complain.
But that we would seek to endure all things with faith and patience. But the question becomes, how do we do that?
How do you go through the struggles of life without grumbling or complaining or grumbling and disputing? How do you do that?
[8:07] Well, I think the only way that we can do that is to be trusting in the Lord. You have to trust in the Lord's plan and trust in the Lord's power.

Even trust in the Lord's timing. I don't know what stands out to you in verse 14, but for me, it's that one word in English, that one word of all.
Do all things without grumbling or disputing. That's hard. We can do some things without complaining.
On our best day, we might be able to do most things without complaining. But here, Scripture says do all things without complaining. And it's even more encompassing than it may at first seem.
The verb here, do, is what we'd call a present imperative. It means it's a continual, habitual, ongoing action.
[9:19] We would rightly understand this verse to read it this way. I continually, at all times, do all things without grumbling or disputing.

The only way for that to be something we achieve is if we are continually trusting the Lord. I don't know why this hardship has come in my life.
I don't know why this pain. I don't know why this loss. I can't understand it all. But I will trust you right in the midst of it. And in that way, we can do all things without grumbling or complaining.
This isn't just simply about willpower. This is about working out your salvation. This isn't just about saying, I will be strong enough today to not complain.
This is about seeing and watching and observing and enduring your hardship and your trials through the lens of the salvation God has granted to you.
[10:29] Because God has saved me. Because He has loved me. Because He is at work in my life. Because, verse 13, He is working according to His will and His purpose.

And because He is doing all things for His good pleasure. Because of that, I trust in Him. And because I trust in Him, I can do all things without grumbling or complaining.
It is our faith in the Lord. It is our knowledge of His will that allows us to trust in Him. It is our trust in Him that allows us to be able to endure even all things without grumbling or disputing.
What's the benefit of that? Well, you've written down the word trusting. Just beneath that, write down, so that. Here's why. So that, verse 15, that you may be blameless and innocent.

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That's the reason why we want to be obedient. So that we can be pleasing to the Lord. This is the purpose behind the command here to do all things without grumbling or disputing so that you may be blameless and innocent.
[11:48] That terminology means that we'd be free from fault. That we'd be free from defect. It doesn't mean that we're perfect. It doesn't mean that we're sinless. It means that we would live in such a way that no legitimate charge would be brought against us.

To be innocent, verse 15, is a word that means to be unmixed. To be pure. That our heart, our mind, our words, our responses, our reactions would be pure and pleasing to the Lord.
It says that so that we would be children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation.
To be without blemish was used of an animal for sacrifice that was deemed acceptable. We are to avoid grumbling and complaining so that we will be children of God that are blameless, that are pure, that are honestly living out what God has worked within.
We don't want to be like the world. The world is known for grumbling and disputing. We don't want to be known like the world. In fact, this same idea, Luke 5, records the Pharisees who were grumbling at Jesus for eating with tax collectors and sinners.
[13:24] He came to seek and save the lost. And the religious, though unconverted, leaders of His day grumbled, complained, disputed about what He was doing.

We don't want to be like that. We want to live in an honest way, verse 15, so that we will be blameless and innocent children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation.
If you go back to chapter 1, verse 27, it says, only let your manner of life be worthy of the Gospel. Here, He gives us some more practical application of how we do that.
How do you let your manner of life be worthy of the Gospel? You do that by living out verse 14, not grumbling and not disputing so that, verse 15, we would be blameless, innocent, children of God without blemish.
And it's not going to be easy to do this. after all, we are called to be pure and blameless, it says, in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation.
[14:47] It's not going to be easy to be faithful. It's not going to be easy to do all things without grumbling or disputing because we are called to do this in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation.

the word here, crooked, it means it's deviated from being straight. You'll hear our English word in the original text, scolios.
Scoliosis. When a back is bent or crooked, we are called to trust the Lord so that we would stand out as children of God even in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation.
To be twisted here, it's a word that means to be perverted. When you put it together, it's telling us that in a world that is bent, not in line with the truth and perverted, not pure, God's people are called to be blameless and innocent.
So don't disobey the Lord and blame it on peer pressure. Don't dishonor the Lord and blame it on society.
[16:15] The Scripture is clear how we are to live and we're to live this way right in the midst of a very crooked and twisted generation. Right in the midst of a bent and perverted world.

We know that. We understand that. And right in the midst of that, we are to trust Him so that we would stand out as lights.
That's what it says. Among whom you shine as lights in the world. true Christians don't blend in with the world.
We're to be distinct from the world. We are to live our life in such a way that we have a distinct life but not only a distinct life, a life that's put on display where people can see the difference in our life.
Now, let's keep this in its context. We are to live a different life than the world shining as lights and if someone were to say how good you are or how great you are or how are you able to do all that you do, the answer is not about how good we are.
[17:32] We would take them right back to verses 12 and 13 that it is God who has saved us. It is God who has changed us.

It is God who is at work in our lives. Which means when you put all that together, our obedience is to be a tool to show the spiritually lost what salvation does.

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we are to trust the Lord so that we show our faith in God. Trust in the Lord so that we show our faith in God.
There is a second thing we are called to do as we work out our salvation from verse 16 right down holding. We are to be trusting so that we show our faith in God and we are to be holding.
What do we hold? Verse 16 holding fast to the word of life. Holding fast to the word of life.
[18:47] Now this can be seen in two ways. It could mean that we hold the word of life meaning that we protect it that we guard it it can also mean that we hold it forth as a way of offering it.

To hold it fast could mean that we're protecting it could mean that we're holding it as if we are offering. Both ideas are completely true and completely biblical.
We are to be protective of the gospel and fight to preserve the purity of the gospel but as we do that we are also to hold it forward to offer it to explain it to those in this crooked and dark world that they would know the truth.
Holding fast to the word of life the word of life here a reference in general to scripture more specifically to the message of Jesus Christ to the gospel message.
And so again staying in context how do you work out your salvation? One by trusting the Lord so that you show your faith in God two by holding on to the gospel by preserving it in purity and by offering it to those in need.
[20:14] Why do we do that? What's the so that? Well it tells us in verse 16 holding fast to the word of life so that here's the reason in the days to come so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

We're to be trusting the Lord not being complainers not being grumblers trusting the Lord so that we show that we have faith in him we stand out in the world and we are to be holding the gospel protecting it and offering it so that our life is not lived in vain.
At the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. Paul uses two metaphors here to describe the Christian life to describe the working out of our salvation running and laboring and not run in vain I did not labor in vain he's running and he's working the Christian life the working out of our salvation is a life of running it's active it's laboring it's hard work but we do that so that we don't come to the end of our life and look back and say this has all been in vain the word here vain carries the idea of being empty or being without effect without impact we hold on to Christ so that our lives are not lived in vain so that our lives are not empty so that our lives are not lived without consequence we live in a day where people are really obsessed with long life what can we do to live a long life how can we extend life and I mean as much as we can do that under the providence and sovereignty of God then that's great each day is a gift we understand that we're thankful for the gift of life but it's not long life that makes something meaningful it's a faithful life that has impact it's a faithful life that has meaning you don't measure success in the spiritual world life or life how many years you get we all could give all kinds of examples from the
Bible from church history from our own relationships of people who were not given a long life but had a very meaningful life and their life was meaningful because they were holding on to the truth holding on to the gospel and because they did that their lives were not inmumbles they did not run in vain. They did not labor in vain.
[23:54] If I would just finish the Winter Olympics. When the Summer Olympics rolls around in a couple of years there will be sports I'm a little bit more familiar with. I was never much of a sprinter, but I can understand sprinting, but I can understand skating.

I can understand swimming more than I can understand how you do a ski jump. It's all beyond my wildest thought of how to be that good at it. But I've never run fast, but I've been in a race before, at least on feet.
I've never raced on skis or skates with good reason. I wouldn't have survived it, but I can remember in elementary school we used to have what was called the Little Olympics and you would sign up for three events and you would compete against everybody in your grade and you'd get first place, second place, third place, all those kind of things.
One of the rules was, though, everybody had to compete in at least one foot race. We had a 40-yard dash, a 50-yard dash, a 100-yard dash. So you could pick three events you wanted to be in, but one of them had to be a race.
Now this was bad news to me because while I had very little chance of winning anything, I had zero chance of winning in a race. It wasn't going to happen. And I would think about how could I run faster.

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[25:21] Not sure how you can make yourself run faster. I would think about getting a good start. I would think about, you know, running all the way through the finish line, not slowing down, all those kinds of things.

But it didn't matter how hard I worked or how hard I prepared for it. If the goal was to be first place, all of my work and my running was in vain.
I did not win. Although, in the fifth grade, hold the applause, I did get sixth place. I got a white ribbon.
Sixth place. I got off the bus stop, bus 40, thank you very much. I got off bus 40 from Kingsgate Elementary and immediately dropped my white ribbon in mud at the bus stop.
It was a great metaphor of my racing career. I wasn't going to win. Not if success was measured at being first, that I had to be better than everybody else.
[26:27] Here's the good news of the Christian life. Success in the Christian life isn't measured by how many people you beat. It's measured by who you follow.

It's measured by who you trust. Impact in the Christian life is measured not by how much better you can do than somebody else, but how you are following the Lord Jesus Christ and holding on to Him and holding on to the Gospel so that our lives are not lived in vain, that we would not run in vain. We would not labor in vain. We want our lives to count. Lives that have impact are lives that are completely covered up in the Gospel.
We're trusting so that we show our faith in God, holding so that our lives are not in vain. And then verse 17 and 18, write down the word offering.
Our lives are lived as an offering. Verse 17, even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering, upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.
[27:55] Now, there is so much truth in this simple statement here, but let this really penetrate your mind and your heart this morning.

He says, even if I am poured out, even if my life is poured out, given up as an offering, I'm glad and rejoiced, which takes us back to verse 14, do all things without grumbling or disputing.
How could Paul endure hardship and even death? How could he endure being persecuted for the gospel without complaining and grumbling?
It is because he understands his life is an offering unto God. And because his life is an offering unto God, he can avoid verse 14, grumbling and disputing, and live out verse 17, being glad and rejoicing.
which tells us that our theology, our doctrine, our knowledge of God, our convictions, that is the way we go from grumbling and disputing to being glad and rejoicing.
[29:09] It's not circumstance. It's your knowledge of God. That's how we do that. To avoid being grumblers and complainers, we don't need different circumstances.

Paul's circumstances were far from ideal. And yet, he says, I am glad and I rejoice with you all.
Now, I find verse 17 just deeply fascinating. even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering. Some take this as him speaking of his eventual death, his eventual martyrdom, that he knows he will die soon, and that at some point his faith will cost him his life.
In that interpretation, what he's saying is that even when he dies in his death, it is an offering of worship as unto the Lord.
And that's true. But you could also take this as not a reference necessarily to his death, but as his current experience as a prisoner in Rome, meaning that even in the pain and suffering he's going through today, he is offering his life as an act of worship unto the Lord.
[30:47] That is also true. Which tells us, when you put those two parts together, that it is his life and his death, not one or the other, his life and his death, that are to be lived and accomplished as an offering unto the Lord.

so that whether you live or whether you die, you live your life as an offering unto the Lord.
We want to die in faith, but logically it only makes sense if you're going to die in faith that you would live in faith.
you don't know when your last breath is coming. How could you die in faith and in worship unless you were living in faith and in worship?
And so Paul says, I am offering up my life whether I face death this day or that day through this circumstance or that circumstance, I will die unto the Lord and the only way to make sure I die unto the Lord is to live as unto the Lord and in that way whether I live or whether I die I am the Lord's.

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[32:25] Why do we live that way? So that we offer our lives unto the Lord so that we can live in joy.

So that we can live in joy. If Paul can find reason to rejoice even in his circumstances, you can find reason to rejoice in yours as well.
It's been well said the reason so many believers know so little of Paul's joy is because we know so little of his sacrifice.
It's a fascinating reality that the road to joy is the road of offering up your life and surrender to the Lord.
There's not a person in this sanctuary who would choose to trade your life today for what Paul experienced in his.
[33:50] in the midst of what he was going through he says because I am trusting and because I am holding on and because I am offering up my life I am glad and I rejoice in verse 18 you ought to rejoice with me.

Now don't miss the obvious connection here in this paragraph verse 14 do all things without grumbling and disputing verse 18 be glad and rejoice with me which tells us very clearly that if you want to rejoice and be glad you've got to put away grumbling and disputing you cannot grumble and complain and be glad and rejoice can't do it if your desire is to live a life of joy you've got to put away grumbling and disputing and you say well I would do that if my circumstances were different this is not about your circumstances this is about your faith in God you can grumble and dispute if you want but if you live your life that way you're going to get to the end of your life and say
I labored and I ran in vain I complained my way through my life I disputed my way through all the opportunities God gave me to shine as a light in this dark world if we would recognize that every trial every persecution every struggle is an opportunity for us to shine and live out our faith in a dark world it might help us to understand why he says avoid grumbling and disputing and embrace joy and gladness this is one of the great evidences that God has worked in you the gift of salvation that what comes out of you in days of struggle would be joy and gladness not grumbling or disputing give me an unbeliever make him a nice guy make him generous make him a good citizen but he's an unbeliever and let him feel pain be treated unfairly and what will come out of his mouth grumbling and complaining and we would say we understand why he does that look what he's having to go through but contrast that to a believer who has experienced grace and salvation let them endure suffering and pain and persecution then what should come out of them is joy and gladness and then you say how is that possible and the answer is only the gospel of
Jesus Christ and it was through the pain that that person had the opportunity to make much of Jesus so how do we work out what God has worked in be trusting so that we show our faith in God be holding so that our lives are not in vain and live your life as an offering so that we can live in joy this is the life of impact you don't need to be first in the sense of running by people you just need to be faithful in the sense of keeping your eyes on the
Lord and when people see your life let them know that the only explanation of how you live and why you live is because of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ that's how we work out what God has worked in Lord we thank you for your word you've given to us what an encouragement it is what a correction it is to us I pray Lord that you would help us to understand and to live out what you have called us to do in Christ's name Amen God what they what he will all they willna fathers they know fathers they know fathers they know they they know they know they know they know they they know they know they know they know they know fathers they know they know they know fathers they know fathers they know fathers they know fathers there how what fathers observe

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