

The Watford Word

www.watfordchurchofchrist.org

What's on

Sunday 15 February: Church service organised by our Hong Kong brethren.

Thursday 19 February 08:00 PM:
Third Thursday prayer meeting. <https://zoom.us/j/98834309524?pwd=wONcU85ShjGHpjWkjA24icjW3j1gLU1>

Meeting ID: 988 3430 9524. Passcode: 332426

"May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice."
(Psalm 141:2)

Sunday 22 February: Church service. Malcolm speaking on *Philippians 2.19-30*.

Sunday 01 March: Church service. Stefan speaking.

Sunday 08 March: Church service. Malcolm speaking on *Philippians 2.3.11*

Sunday 15 March: Church service.

Sunday 22 March: Church service. *Philippians 3.12-4.1*. Malcolm speaking. Mothering Sunday.

Events further ahead

Saturday, 14th March: UK children's ministry training day: London and South

Friday 03rd to 06th April: European International Campus Ministry Conference, Paris, France

Friday 22nd to Sunday 24th May: UK & Ireland mature singles retreat – "Trust In The Lord"

Friday 24th to 27th July: ICCM Preteen Camp

Saturday 25th to Friday 31st July: ICCM Teen Camp

Friday 11th - 13 September: UK & Ireland Young Professionals Retreat in Chesham.

Sept 30th - Oct 04th: Celtic Spirituality Retreat.

Friday 30th October to Sunday 01st November: Autumn Student Retreat for the UK & Ireland.

Thursday 12-15th November: UK, Ireland and Nordics leadership retreat.



Working out our salvation

Have you ever heard a lesson on this phrase: "work out your salvation with fear and trembling" Philippians 2:12. If so, how did it make you feel? It gives me the heebie-jeebies! What does it *really* mean? How much of this is about God, and how much is about us?

That's one of the key questions we want to resolve in our lesson today as we explore Philippians 2.12-18. In addition to the lesson itself, I offer below some extra thoughts on this wonderful if troublesome passage.

Introduction

In Phil. 2.1-11, Paul tells the story that shapes everything else he will say, here and elsewhere in his writings. It is the story of Jesus in three acts.

First, the incarnation. God leaves heaven and comes to earth as a human being.

Second, the cross. Jesus humbles himself, becoming obedient to death.

Third, the resurrection and exaltation. God raises Jesus and exalts him to God's right hand.

Everything that follows verses 1-11 begins with one important word: *therefore*.

What Does "Work Out" Salvation Mean?

"Therefore, my dear friends... continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling." Philippians 2:12

The "you" here is plural. Paul is not speaking to individuals in isolation. He is speaking to a community.

So when Paul says "work out your salvation," the question is not, *How do I save myself?*

The question is, *How do we, as a community, live out the story of Jesus together?*

To be clear, the phrase “work out your salvation” is not, “make sure you get saved”, but “work through all the implications of your salvation now that you are in Christ”.

Why “with fear and trembling”? Because we should conduct our Christian lives in community with reverence and awe of God. Read Philippians 2:6-11 again. If God has done this for us in Christ, it is imperative we respond with appropriate respect and humility.

Confidence or insecurity?

Will the story of Christ’s self-giving love be visible in the life of the Philippian church? When Paul instructs the Philippians to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, is he worried about them? No. Paul is confident in them:

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

On what grounds does Paul have this conviction? He is confident because:

“...it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.” (Philippians 2:13)

God is at work in us. He will complete his work as long as we look to him for strength and accept his instructions with humility. Therefore, the “fear and trembling” are not connected to insecurity, but instead, to worshipful reverence.

What about us? How will the story of Jesus be worked out in our community, here in Watford?

Living the Cruciform Way

It means that we work Philippians 2:2-4 into our community culture. It means we live the cruciform way of Jesus shown in Philippians 2:6-11. What does that look like?

- Having the mind of Christ.
- Choosing humility over self-interest.
- Living together in love, unity, and service.

When we live out the story of Jesus together, we live as:

“...children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky...” (Philippians 2:15)

And as we do, we discover that we are not working alone. God is already at work among us, bringing his good purposes to life.

Reflection

1. How does understanding “work out your salvation” as a community responsibility change the way you see your role in the church?
2. In what practical ways can our faith community in Watford reflect the cruciform pattern of Jesus—humility, self-giving love, and unity—in our relationships and decisions?
3. Where do you most need to shift from insecurity or self-effort to worshipful reverence, trusting that God is already at work in us “to will and to act according to his good purpose”?

Your brother, Malcolm

HOPE Afghanistan



Watford Contribution

Church bank account:
Three Counties churches of Christ HSBC



Sort Code: 401915
Account Number: 04759613

Watford Media

