

Living Daily by Grace

by Bob Hoekstra

Living daily by the grace of God requires recognizing our great need for Him and trusting in His ability to meet that need through humility and faith.

Duration: 59:20

Scripture: Romans 5:2

Topics: "Gods Grace", "Christian Living"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of living daily by the grace of God, focusing on humility and faith as key relational realities that enable believers to bear fruit, engage in good works, and obey God. The message highlights the need to work out salvation with fear and trembling, acknowledging God's working in us for His good pleasure. Various Bible verses are explored to illustrate how God's grace empowers believers to live obedient, fruitful, and impactful lives.

Transcript

All right, as we prepare to enter into our third study in growing in the grace of God, let's pray together, shall we? Lord, we thank you. There's just countless wonders to give thanks to you concerning, and we thank you for this great salvation. Thank you for another day to abide in Christ and abide in the Word.

We thank you for the blessing of being together now. We again acknowledge your presence among us, the head of the church, the chief shepherd of the sheep. We pray, Lord, by your Holy Spirit now, you would enlighten the eyes of our heart.

Lord, we cannot grasp the precious gifts of heaven apart from your revealing and imparting work. So, Lord, speak to us through your Word. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Well, our third study in the Growing in the Grace of God series is entitled, Living Daily by the Grace of God. This is where we concluded our last study, sort of answering the question, wanting to answer the question, how do you live day by day by the grace of God? Kind of the heading triggered by the brother who asked the question that day, how do you do grace? Well, grace isn't something you do, though what to do, how do you do this is a natural question of the human heart and mind. Grace isn't something you do, it's something you receive and participate in and get impacted by.

And we noted that the scriptures indicate two great spiritual relational realities that God wants to develop in our lives so that we might live by means of the grace of God day by day. They are humility and faith. And we say relational realities because humility and faith are realities in the kingdom of heaven, but they become real in our lives through a growing relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

We'll come back to this issue in our fifth study, I believe, concerning getting to know God and how that is so strategic in humility developing and faith growing. It's a relational thing. The Lord reveals himself to us through his word, his character, his promises, his ways, and he reveals our heart and our needs.

And in that context, we respond to the Lord in agreement and humility is developing and faith is growing. And we looked at some verses on this, the relational reality of humility. James 4.6, God is opposed to the proud, but he gives grace to the humble.

You can just visually see the difference in those two. The opposition of the hand of God is on the path of pride, but the open, giving, imparting hand of God is toward those who are willing to walk in humility. You can't progress when God opposes.

God's opposed to the proud, the self-sufficient, the yes-I-can-handle-it, yes-I-can kind of attitude that challenges life and thinks that we are sufficient to develop a life before God. No, humility is vital. And humility is just a recognition of our great need.

It's admitting to the Lord how desperately we need him to undertake on our behalf. Humility, that's how you live by grace. And humility comes from getting to know the Lord.

But faith is how you live by grace too. God gives grace to the humble. Romans 5.2 also says that through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand.

Access by faith into this grace in which we stand. Faith in the Lord accesses the grace of the Lord. Every time we face an issue of life with trust in our hearts toward the Lord that he is able, he is sufficient, already perhaps having expressed in humility our great need, and you see how these go together.

Lord, I'm desperately needy. That's humility. Lord, I believe you're totally sufficient to attend to this need.

That's faith. And by the way, prayer is the most basic demonstration of humility and faith. Why do we pray? Because our hearts have been humbled by our great need.

So we cry out to God. Why do we pray? Because we know God hears and answers prayer. Faith.

Humility leads us to prayer. Faith sustains us in prayer. Prayerful life is fundamental, basic to a relationship with the Lord and to living daily by the grace of God.

Faith is essential. Trusting in the Lord, depending upon the Lord, his provision, his supply day by day in our lives. Okay, that's sort of the introductory context of our study, living daily by the grace of God, facing each day, going through each day by means of the available and imparted grace of God into our lives.

And this is to impact every area of our lives. We just selected three huge arenas of Christian living to look at in this study, but this sort of thinking is to impact every area of our lives. We've selected three.

One, bearing fruit. That's a huge issue for Christians. Second, good works.

We're called to such. That's gigantic in the Christian life. And then third, obedience.

That's of such import in pleasing the Lord, honoring him, and seeing his church built upon this earth. Bearing fruit, good works, and obedience all depend on the appropriating of the grace of God in our daily walk, in humble dependence or humility and faith. First, bearing fruit.

The grace of God is available to us and is able to develop in us fruitful lives. Colossians 1.6, one of many reminders on this, Colossians 1.6, speaking of the gospel, which has come to you as it has also in all the world and is bringing forth fruit. Ongoing spiritual productivity is pictured and is bringing forth fruit as it is also among you.

Since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth, the grace of God in reality, the grace of God in actuality. When these folks at Colossae embraced the grace of God really in truth, they heard it, they saw it, they bowed down thanking God for his grace to forgive their sins, cleanse their heart and soul, come and reside in their lives, and then go to work through their lives. Since that day, the gospel, which is the good news of God about the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the gospel came to them and that gospel of the grace of God had been bringing forth fruit and was still bringing forth fruit.

It's put in the present progressive tense and is bringing forth fruit. It's the grace of God that produces fruit in people's lives. God's word, his gospel, which is about his grace, brings forth fruit in the lives of those who receive and believe because it lets us know the cause of the great effect of fruit.

What is it? It's the grace of God at work in a life. When people understand that and rely upon it, fruit is just a natural consequence, a supernatural natural consequence, just normal Christian living. Romans chapter 7 verse 4 on this matter of fruit bearing and the grace of God.

Romans 7, fruit bearing and the grace of God, verse 4. Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that is Christ putting his body upon the tree, dying on the cross, that you may be married to another, to him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. We're dead to the law through the death of Christ on our behalf. We're no longer under the law.

Well, it's not that we're lawless. No, it's just we don't start, build or develop our relationship with the Lord on basis of reading the law and trying our best to live up to it. We love the law.

We honor the law. The law gives us the holy character of God, reminds man of his sinful condition. It reveals sin.

It tutors people to Christ. We love the law. The law is holy, just and good if one uses it lawfully, but we don't build our relationship with the Lord on it.

Our relationship with the Lord is built upon grace, grace that lets us come near to the Lord, so near that we are joined to the Lord. The term used here is wedded to him, and that's why the husband-wife relationship, the union of husband and wife is a picture of Christ and his bride, but Christ and his grace, not law. Bearing fruit by being joined to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, the Lord of all grace, that's how fruit comes in our lives.

And by the way, this is a reminder that we'll pick up many times through these studies. You cannot separate grace from the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. I think it's 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 that says, now you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The grace of the Lord Jesus. The grace of God is tied into, anchored in a person. It's not just a concept for, yes, 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace is tied to a person, and to grow in these things we want to seek to know this one, who is the God of all grace. Of course, being joined to Christ for fruitfulness, and fruitfulness coming from that grace relationship with the Lord Jesus, is exemplified perhaps the most distinctively in the New Testament in John chapter 15. John chapter 15, verses 4 and 5. Jesus said, abide in me and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me and I in him bears much fruit, for without me you can do nothing. What a picture this is.

This is the grace of God at work. The term grace is not used here, but it's a great description of grace, which is God at work on our behalf, in us and through our lives. And of course, you can see humility and faith in these two grand verses on fruit bearing.

Some of the humility there, here's a humbling statement, without me you can do nothing. See, the disciples were hanging around with Jesus, hearing his word. We hang around with the Lord in his word.

We hear things like this, and if we receive it, if we bow down to it, we're embracing humility. The branch cannot bear fruit of itself, and that's applied to us. Without me you can do nothing.

What a humbling revelation. And those of us who know the Lord and love the Lord, we want to do great things for the glory of the Lord, the fulfilling of the will of the Lord. But part of it is knowing where we start, that apart from him we can do nothing.

We might have commendable and even biblical desires and goals, but apart from the Lord, we can do nothing. I mean, what does this say? This says we need the Lord desperately every day in every way. This is one of the grand revelations of the kingdom of heaven, our desperate need for the Lord.

And we never outgrow that need, because we never become the source of these things. We're always the recipients of these glorious blessings of grace. So humility is strongly declared in these fruit-bearing verses.

But also faith is there. That is, truth to believe. Abide in me and I in you.

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me and I in him bears much fruit. These declarations of the true way to fruit-bearing, the Lord at work in our lives, that's truth to believe.

We're called to faith there. In fact, we're given truth to believe, and faith comes by hearing the word. You hear the word and you hear, wow, abiding in the Lord, that is, depending upon the Lord, looking to the Lord for everything, like a branch looks to a vine.

In that mode of relationship and daily walk, we can bear much fruit. That's truth to believe. Humility and faith, wonderful relational realities for living daily by the grace of God.

Abiding in Christ, abiding in Christ, depending upon the Lord Jesus, communing with him, walking with him, leaning on him with our hearts, desires, and all of that, brings forth much fruit. Another way to say that, brings forth in lives great measures of Christ-likeness in word and deed and attitude. That's fruit.

Great measures of Christ-likeness growing in us, in the things we say, the things we do, and the attitudes we hold. See, this takes the Lord at work in and through our lives, and so it should be. Bearing fruit.

The Lord has sent us to bear fruit. He wants us to bear much fruit and fruit that remains. It hinges on the Lord and our relationship with the Lord that opens up our hearts to the work of the Lord in and through our lives.

You know, these are great things to start a day out with, privately, personally. And these truths you can find throughout the Word of God. They're not isolated in a few places.

Listen, if they were isolated in a few places, we would just go there often because they're so huge and essential and all-encompassing. But the Lord's even kinder than that. This just permeates the Word of God, that the kingdom of heaven hinges on God.

Well, where do I fit in? Hopefully a God-seeker. Hopefully one learning to love the Lord, trust the Lord, humbly walk with the Lord. I mean, the kingdom of heaven hinges on the God of heaven.

And heavenly life down here on earth is all tied into God at work for us, in us, among us, and through us. That's fruit-bearing. But also, that's how good works develop in our lives.

Good works, John chapter 6. Living by grace does not produce a lazy, inactive, do-nothing life. You know, if the picture of the hammock and the beach and the surf and sipping cool lemonade and somebody fanning you and chasing away the flies, if that comes to mind as you think of grace, well, think again. Maybe better a battlefield with the dust flying.

And in the midst of all that, peace and rest in the heart that is leaning on the Lord Jesus Christ and strength for the battle. Grace. Living by grace doesn't produce a lazy, inactive, do-nothing life.

It produces good works. Those who live by grace, they labor by grace. John 6, 28 and 29.

Then they said to him, to Jesus, what shall we do? And that is, again, the constant human question, you know, what shall we do that we may work the works of God? Just, you know, we want to be engaged in the mighty works of God for the glory of God, the impact of lives. Just tell us what to do. And often when we're thinking to do, we're looking for a list of steps, you know, give me three steps to do, give me seven steps, or today it would be give me 12 steps.

Then they said to him, what shall we do that we may work the works of God? Jesus answered and said to them, this is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he sent. The greatest work of God in our lives, the most essential direction to move in our thinking with our mind and our relationship with the Lord, to engage in the mighty works of God is believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. You might say, well, wait a minute, that's how I got saved.

Okay, how are you going to proceed today? Are you going to attempt to make spiritual progress today in a way different from how you entered the kingdom of heaven? This good news of the grace of God in Jesus Christ is not just truth for entering into the family of God, it's also truth for maturing, growing, and serving in the family of God. Again, that great passage in Colossians 2.6, as you receive Christ Jesus, the Lord, so walk in him, as so. The way you started out, that is exactly the way to continue.

You know, someone said to us, how do you live daily by the grace of God? Just live today with the same attitude and response to God you had the moment you were getting saved. That's how. Well, I didn't do much of anything.

I just humbly repented of all my sins and desperate need and cried out in faith to God to save my soul. Stay there. But you'll find you're filling in other words later.

Instead of humbly repent and tell my great need and cry out to God and trust him to work, it's not to get saved again. It's to get fruitful and to engage in good works and to live a life of obedience. And you can just keep plugging in the things that God has called us to in the kingdom of heaven.

Acts 4.33. Acts 4.33. Oh, this is a great picture of good works developing in the early church and how it relates to the grace of God. And with great power, the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. Very insightful testimony here of the early church.

The witness of the early church was about the risen Christ. Oh, the message was just so persistently about the risen Christ. And our message should still be anchored there.

We serve a risen Savior. He's victorious over sin and death and the grave. And the message of the risen Christ was going out with great power.

And it's explained at the end of verse 33 where the power came from. And great grace was upon them all. This is a very helpful verse in understanding the extensive nature of the grace of God.

So often, Christians think of the grace of God as the graciousness of God. He's just accepting. He's just patient.

He's long-suffering. All of that. And that is true, and it is a wonderful part of the grace of God.

But here's the thing. Don't limit your thinking to that picture because the scriptures describe God's grace far beyond that. God's grace is not just the fact that He has a gracious heart, whosoever will may come.

Praise God for that kind of grace. We don't ever want to ignore or displace that kind of grace. But that kind of speaks of a gracious attitude that God has, and then the grace provision of the sacrifice of Christ and all to open the door for us to come near to the Lord.

But look at the language here. And great grace was upon them all. See, that language fits another issue than the open arms of God receiving sinners through the great sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is something that is being poured out upon His people. In other words, it's a resource. It's an enablement.

It's not just come one, come all, and God is patient and forgiving. He's that and all. But when we come to Him and receive that grace from His gracious heart, now we're ready to begin to serve the Lord.

How are we going to serve Him? By what resource? By what wherewithal? I mean, the things we're called to enter into in the Word of God, they are of the highest level of demand and responsibility and significance and importance and all of that. Are we just going to, quote, give it our best shot? What more could we do? Well, we can do way more than that. How? By first agreeing with the Lord.

Apart from Him, we can do nothing and then turn around and ask Him to go to work in and through our lives. That's way beyond the best we could do for Him. And here's a picture of that.

How are they giving this powerful witness of the resurrected Christ by means of the great grace that was upon them all? You might say, well, sounds to me like the terminology of the Holy Spirit coming upon people. It's exactly the same kind of terminology. And we know that terminology, the Spirit coming upon people, is for empowerment, enablement under life and service and growth in ministry.

Well, it's the same thing with the grace of God. In fact, we'll have a complete study later in our series called The Holy Spirit and the Grace of God. So, the good work of getting out the testimony of the risen Christ was being powerfully engaged in because great grace was upon them, so great power was in their testimony.

Acts 14, verse 26. Well, this is another tremendous testimony of the grace of God at work in the early church. Acts 14, 26.

From there, they sailed to Antioch. From there, you go back up a verse, Atalia. And before that, Perga.

And before that, Pamphylia. You know, this is part of the missionary journey of the apostle Paul and his team. From there, they sailed to Antioch.

They, Paul and his gospel preaching, discipling, church planting ministry. They sailed to Antioch. That was their home church.

That's where they started out in Acts 13 at the leadership prayer meeting where they were seeking the ministry of the Lord. The Lord said to them, separate Paul and Barnabas for the work I've called them to. It's the start of kind of the official, specific, locatable beginning of the worldwide missionary movement purposely in local churches by the leading of the Lord.

And it's still going on right down to this day. From there, they sailed to Antioch. They're coming back home to the home church for a season where they had been commended to the grace of God.

When the church at Antioch sent Paul and his team out, they didn't have the privilege in those days or the blessing opportunity even to put together a huge foreign missions manual of preparation correlated through all kinds of scriptures. They were the first ones going out. They were, as it were, seeing the manual written by the hand of God as they went.

And what did the church do? I mean, what a daunting task. Go from this eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea where Antioch is a little above, north and west above Jerusalem and Israel. Go into across the sea and up into the known lands and preach the gospel, make disciples, and plant churches.

Well, from there, they sailed to Antioch where they had been commended to the grace of God. When they sent that team forth, they commended them to, that is, handed them over under the care of the mighty grace of God at work in that team. And notice the end of the verse where they'd been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed.

Oh, what a good work. Missionary work. Overseas missionary work.

Cross-cultural missionary work here. And when it's done by the grace of God, in God's way, with God's enabling supply and resource, the work gets accomplished. What God intended for Paul and the team to

do on that particular journey, it was accomplished.

Why? Because God was in it. His grace was at work in their lives. Then verse 27, now when they had come together and gathered the church together, all right, now a missionary report at the home-sending church.

When they had come and gathered the church together, they reported. Here was their missionary report. They reported all that God had done with them and that he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

Those who live by the grace of God, they get engaged in good works. And the good works they're engaged in, as long as they're looking to the Lord in his grace, those good works get accomplished. There might be opposition, there might be delays, there might be doubts and questions along the way, there might be many battles, but those who go forth by the grace of God see the work accomplished that God intended.

And when they start talking to others about it, they don't stand and speak of their own clever ingenuity. You know, Paul didn't stand and say, well, I've got quite a story to tell you. We started out in Antioch, and this happened, and that, and this impossibility, other impossibility.

But, you know, we just had the perseverance, and we kind of brainstormed, and always came up and found a way out. Hold it, time out. I hear a story of man there.

Those who live by grace, this is how they report. And they reported all that God had done with them, and that he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. Those who grow and live and serve by the grace of God have this great story to tell.

Let me tell you what God did. Because behind the grace of God is the presence and activity and work of God. And, of course, this is how the kingdom of heaven gets built upon earth and gets developed in our hearts and in our lives.

Ephesians chapter 2, more on good works and the grace of God. Ephesians chapter 2, verse 10, for we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. What a great verse this is for so many reasons.

We are his workmanship. You know, sometimes we get so caught up with working for God, we forget who is the craftsman in the job, and it's the Lord. And we are his workmanship.

He is working on us. He is scrubbing and cleaning and sculpting and then writing a song of righteousness and godliness in our hearts and minds and all of that. We are his workmanship, his poema.

Created in Christ Jesus. Created. We are new creatures.

Created by calling us into oneness with the Lord Jesus Christ. And here's one of the reasons we're called to the Lord. It's for good works.

Yes, absolutely, verse 9, salvation is not of works, lest anyone should boast. There's going to be a lot of boasting in heaven, but none of it is going to be us boasting about ourselves. All of it is going to be us boasting about the Lord.

Salvation is not of works, but it is for or unto good works. Oh, how good of the Lord to just put those side by side in the scriptures, you know. How many? I mean, that's great confusion out in the world.

Salvation is of works. You've got to earn your way to heaven. Come on, be sensible.

Nothing else makes sense. Yeah, do the natural mind, maybe. God's ways aren't our ways.

His thoughts aren't our thoughts. As high as the heavens are above the earth, his ways are above our ways. Salvation is not of works.

It's by grace through faith. But it is unto good works. It is for the purpose.

One of the great purposes of our salvation is that we might engage in good works. And there's no conflict at all between full engagement in the good works for the kingdom of heaven and living by the grace of God. In fact, there's a total connection.

One is the means by which you enter into the other. Good works. God's prepared them for us already.

We don't have to prepare them. We just walk in them. And the just shall live by faith.

And we walk by faith and not by sight. And we walk in the spirit. All of these indicators of looking to the Lord and counting on his provision, supply, and activity in and through our lives.

There's another great one on grace and good works. 2 Corinthians 9.8. And God is able. Boy, that's one of the most phenomenal declarations in Scripture.

And you find it various places in the Word of God. God is able. How often we get trapped with our mentality all on us and, you know, our ability, either boasting in it or fearful that there's not enough of it, you know.

And both are a trap. Neither are the will of God, neither are edifying, neither are fruitful and effective. Here is the place to anchor our thinking.

And God is able. Able to do what? Make all grace abound towards you. Okay, there's another clue.

There's another terminology where the grace of God is not just gracious acceptance by God into his family or patience with us once we're his children. Praise God for that kind of grace. But here's an enabling grace, not just a receiving, accepting, bearing with grace.

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you. Abound toward you. In other words, something that God pours out that is to impact our lives.

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you that you always, having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. Part of the context here is about God's financial provision to enter into that which he has for us. But obviously, the language is bigger than that.

All grace, all kinds of grace, all measures of grace abound toward us. That we may have an abundance for every good work. Not just financial resources, but wisdom and strength and encouragement and insight and on and on and on it goes.

Witnessing, helping the poor, discipling, counseling those in great need. Abounding grace from God is available for abundant engagement in good works on our behalf. Here's another place in the word where sanctifying grace, enabling grace, transforming, building up grace is available for good works.

First Corinthians 15. First Corinthians 15. But by the grace of God, I am what I am.

Most people quote that, you know. By the grace of God, I am what I am. And sometimes they're talking about something a little different from this context.

Because this verse is about good works. But by the grace of God, I am what I am. And his grace toward me was not in vain.

But I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. This verse is a testimony given by Paul of the grace of God. But he's not giving testimony to the grace that saved his soul.

This is not a justification verse of testimony concerning grace. This is a sanctification transformation verse. How do we know that? Well, look at the very content of the point he's getting at.

I labored more abundantly than they all. This is a testimony of how deeply he engaged in good works. But he tells us three different times how he was enabled to labor this abundantly in the kingdom of heaven.

There was no harder servant laboring child of God in the kingdom in the early church than the apostle Paul. And he's giving testimony to that. You might think, well, he's not supposed to be bragging on himself, is he? He is not bragging on himself.

Who's he bragging on? The Lord, the grace of God. But by the grace of God, I am what I am. What are you, Paul? Well, it seems that the hardest working laborer in the kingdom at this present moment.

But it's by the grace of God. That's how this happened. To God be the glory.

And he adds, and his grace toward me was not in vain. There it is again, not just receiving, accepting grace, but a sent forth resource from heaven to touch our lives. The grace of God toward me was not in vain.

It was not futile. It was not fruitless. It was not ineffective.

And then he adds, I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me. The grace of God is with us. It's poured out in our hearts from the Lord Jesus who abides in us to enable us to godly service.

And again, you can see humility and faith here, can't you? The humility part just leaps out. His testimonial statement, yet not I. Yeah, I labored harder than it seems anyone did, but I'm telling you, I was not the cause. I was not the cause.

It was by the grace of God I did that. God's grace toward me was effective. The grace of God which was with me is the explanation.

What a great connecting here between the grace of God and good works developing in our lives. Let's look at one more under good works, and that is Colossians 1.29. Colossians 1.29. To this end, I also

labor, striving according to his working, God's working, which works in me mightily. To this end, and the end is described in verses 27 and 28.

The end, the goal, to preach Christ in you the hope of glory with warnings and instruction. Warnings about what is wrong, instruction about what is right. To this end, I also labor that we may present every man perfect, whole, complete in Christ Jesus.

Okay, what a great good work. What a great goal. What a labor.

Look how he entered into it, striving. Now, we don't often think of serving God or striving as a commendable word. Often when we're talking about striving, we're usually warning one another, don't strive according to the flesh, you know.

The last thing we want to be engaged in as those who really are committed to the Lord and want to please him is striving according to the flesh. The word striving there is a word related to our English word agonizing, agonizomai. Agonizing according to his working, which works in me mightily.

We don't want to agonize according to the flesh, but there are times we're going to be agonizing by God's work in and through our lives. You know, he is the builder. We are his instruments.

If you picture a carpenter grabbing a hammer and a saw and really using them, you know, pounding those nails faster than you can see them, sawing that wood and getting it prepared faster than you can imagine. That hammer and that saw in the hands, they're going through agonizing engagement. You know, bam, bam, bam, bam.

Cutting and cutting. When God is using you in such a way that you're more than fully extending yourself, it's just overtaking you what God is doing. And if it's with opposition coming, you can just see how the word agonizing would really fit in.

Or if it's with people who are very slow to receive and believe, you know, this agonizing or striving word. We find ourselves often there in the kingdom of heaven, but let it be this kind of striving. Striving according to his working.

Striving, agonizing because he is so fully engaged in our lives, using us so mightily, so constantly having us extended beyond ourselves. And, you know, it's like walking on water in the storm. Only if he's called you there and only if your eyes are on Jesus and not on the waves, you know, there's no other way.

That kind of a term. But, see, this is the grace of God. Why would I say that? Because it's his working, working in us mightily.

That's what grace is about for service. God at work for undeserving man, but needy humanity redeemed, but now needing God to work in and through them and use them. Power of God at work.

That's what the grace of God for good works is all about. Let's add one more area. Obedience.

And let's look in Philippians chapter 2. Obedience. Obedience also is a matter of grace and not law. Oh, sure, our obedient life, we want it to be growing so that more and more it looks like what the law demands.

But again, Romans 6, 14, those who are redeemed now, we're not under law, we're under grace. Obedience isn't just finding out what God wants through the law and then giving it again our best shot. We

have a greater hope than that.

Thank the Lord for that. How many times have we demonstrated that finding the what of God's will and not joining it to the how his resources are going to come to enable us, we end up falling flat on our face. A lot of the stumbles by Christians, a lot of the failure and disappointment.

We've got the what in mind from the word, but we've forgotten to look to God for the how. Obedience is also a matter of grace and not law. Obedience is related to humility and faith in Jesus also, Philippians 2, 12.

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so obedience is the theme here, these verses, not as in my presence only, that'd be kind of men-pleasers, but now much more in my absence, even more important to think of obedience. I'm not there to help you or to be a motivation. And here's how they're to walk in the direction of obedience.

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. And we're given the reason why we must do it that way in verse 13. For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for his good pleasure.

People who are willing to please God and people who do that which actually pleases God, these are obedient Christians. So, right through these two verses, huge insight on grace and obedience. The call is to work out our own salvation.

Now, again, people get confused on that. They misquote it. They misapply it.

They almost make it sound like something like, one, oh, you work out your own salvation, deal with God. I've had people actually during evangelism say, well, I'm working out my own salvation. It's like, that was interesting to hear the gospel, but I've got another way to go.

That's absolutely not what it means, is it? It's impossible. That would be another gospel which is anathema. And sometimes work out your own salvation, people say, well, I'm doing the best I can to get saved.

And what they think it means is I'm working for my salvation. No, it's not at all what it's saying. It's work out your own salvation.

Take that personal gift of salvation that resides in your heart in the Lord Jesus Christ and work it outward. Let the treasures of grace and truth and forgiveness and justification that you hold dear in your heart, that God has planted in the heart of every believer, that needs to be worked outward in an obedient life of growth and service. In other words, live outwardly that which God has planted inwardly, this great gift of salvation.

But we're called to do it in a very unusual way, with fear and trembling. You never hear this verse in the speech of a, quote, Christian motivational speaker. You want to know how to go to work for God? You want to know how to work out your salvation? Stay positive, believe in yourselves, you know, and here comes the message of humanism, you know.

Can you imagine a motivational speaker saying, okay, we're called to work out our salvation here, and we must do it with, what, fear and trembling? What does that have to do with it? Well, that has plenty to do with it. That's God's way. Not cocky, not self-confident.

God has called us to work out our salvation, to live outwardly this saving grace He has planted in our hearts, but it's in an unusual way, with fear and trembling, with fear and trembling. Of course, fear and trembling, here in Philippians chapter 2, verse 12, fear and trembling have to do with humility and faith. Humility and faith.

Fear, that's the faith part. Fear of God is not terror and apprehension. He's our Abba Father.

Fear is a reverential trust, a reverential trust, a holy, awestruck dependence upon the Lord with fear. That's faith. We have to work out this salvation with fear, but also with trembling, with trembling.

What does trembling bring to mind? An awareness of inadequacy. That's humility. Yes, oh, the saving grace of God, filling our hearts.

We're to work that out, we're to live that outwardly, but the means is by the grace of God, so you're going to have to have humility and faith involved. And then we're told why to do it with fear and trembling. Because, verse 13, for, because, it is God who works in you both to will and to do for his good pleasure.

You know, just to leap out in self-confidence and presumption as we're wanting to live outward what God has planted inward is so foolish. It lacks a vision of what's involved. What's involved? God at work in us.

He's not just standing off watching, saying, do something, and then measuring it. He's right there in our lives. He's right there with us.

He resides in our hearts, and it is God on these issues of obedience who works in us both to will and to do for his good pleasure. And by the way, it's very clear in this verse, willing and doing are related, but they're two separate things. And many a time believers assume that just be willing, that's all that we need, you know, just be willing.

Well, that is great. In fact, that's a work of God already in our hearts. God works in you both to will.

He's worked in there giving us motivation and reason and insight of how he wants to work and what he wants done. But God wants to work in us both to will and to do. Yeah, he wants to stir the desires for the right thing in us, but he wants then to sustain us right on through the activity of living out his will.

Haven't you signed up over the list to go do some good work with the saints? You know, you're willing, and then the day came to do it, and you found out that doing was a different issue from willing. Willing and doing are two different things. God wants to work in us so that both will take place.

God at work in us, that's obedience coming forth. Oh, it takes God, the heart of God, working in the heart of man, stirring his desire, and then strengthening him with perseverance right on until the issues are done. Humility, faith, related to obedience.

Hebrews 13. Hebrews 13. Hebrews 13.20. Oh, this is great.

Now may the God of peace, who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do his will. Working in you what is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

What great verses on obedience. See the obedience part there at the end? Working in you what is well-pleasing in his sight. First part of verse 21.

Complete in every good work to do his will. Doing the will of God, pleasing the Lord God Almighty. These are verses about obedience, but look who's involved.

Now may the God of peace, verse 20, jump to verse 21, make you complete in every good work to do his will. Working in you. An obedient life demands the ongoing constant engagement of the Lord God Almighty.

Obedience is not something we craft up and present to God. It's something that we want God to earnestly do through our heart and our life. Second Thessalonians 2.16 and 17.

Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work. You know, in Christ we have a good hope by grace, everlasting consolation, and he wants to establish us in every good word and work. That is obedience spoken and acted out, lived out in action.

What is our hope? It's good hope by grace. Grace is our hope, our expectation, our resource, our encouragement for a life of obedience. So whether it's bearing fruit, good works, or obeying God, God wants us to live daily by the grace of God.

Let's pray together, shall we? Lord, thank you for your abounding grace, available for abundant good works. Lord, teach us how to draw upon your grace resources as we humbly live and serve by faith. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

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