

Daily Devotional, October 20, 2021 Working Out Our Salvation in Prime Time

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation. Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky. Philippians 2:12-15 (NIV)

I know that many of us are excited that football season has been in full swing again. Yes, it's strange to see mostly full stadiums again, and tailgating once again taking place in parking lots. But in 2021, we have to enjoy every bit of normalcy wherever we can find it! A new season brings fresh excitement and optimism for what could be. The pressure of the real games quickly reveals the teams and players who can perform when the stakes are high. Some will show that all of the pre-season workouts have paid off; others will wither when the going gets tough. The real games reveal that the players on the field must show up and play. I think it's that way for us as followers of Christ. There are times in our lives when we realize that practice is over, and we have to live out our faith when the pressure is real.

The Apostle Paul wrote about such a time to encourage his friends in Philippi to live out their faith under difficult circumstances. He was no longer there to support them and coach them every step of the way. They were having to “work out their salvation” without him. They needed to respond to God's grace by learning to live out their calling in the turbulent Roman world. Paul knew that they were living in fear, but he was saying that it was time for them to grow up. It was time for them to discover what it means to follow Christ in a world of hardship and confusion, a world where they would be knocked down and have to find a way to get back up.

That is our challenge, as well, today: to work out our salvation in anxious times, trusting that God is working in and through us, confident that in the power of the Spirit we can rise to the occasion and become the people we are called to be—and, as Paul says, to do it without grumbling or arguing.

Prayer: Lord, these times are filled with fear and trembling. We often feel inadequate for the calling that You have given us. Lord, let us see the events of the present. With an eternal perspective, help us to see the ways that You are working in our lives to bring about Your purposes. Give us courage and give us grace to live as Your children in this generation. In Christ's holy name, Amen.