

"His Mind, Will, Purpose & Work"

Ephesians 1:1-7

A television broadcast sermon delivered

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By

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If you would like to follow along with me today, I will be speaking to you from Philippians chapter two. Philippians chapter two, and one verse will be our text. It will be verse 13, which says, "For it is God, which worketh in you, "both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Aren't you so thankful for that? "It is God which worketh in you, "both to will and do of his good pleasure." What good news that is. Jonah is the one who said, "Salvation is of the Lord." Salvation is totally of the Lord. I would like for us to really see that. That's what we're going to declare today. In every way, shape, and form, salvation is totally of the Lord. It is God's work alone. It is God's work alone that he works in his people, and it's all according to the good pleasure of his will. And just to be clear on this, to say that it is God's work, what that means is, it's not ours. To say that salvation is of the Lord, what that means is, Salvation is not of us. Salvation is not of us. Now, I have 10 things that I would like to declare concerning God's salvation, and I know that's quite a few, so I'm gonna try to move quickly and get all 10 of 'em in this timeframe that we have for the program. I'm gonna state a fact, prove it in the Word, and then we'll move on. When it comes to salvation, until we know what God has said about it in his Word, until we really know what God has said about it, we have a lot of questions concerning it. All of us do. Every question that a man or a woman could ever have concerning salvation will be answered in the Word, every question that anyone could have. If a person comes in to a worship service needing questions answered, all that person has to do is sit and listen to the Word preached, and every question will be answered. In time, every question will be answered. The question that I hope the Word of God will answer for us today is, usually the first question that people have concerning salvation. Normally, this is the first question people have. They want to know, "What is my role in it?" That's what people want to know. "What is my role in it? "How do I make this happen? "How do I get the ball

rolling? "How can I be a part of it? "Know that I'm a part of it? "How does this work? "How does this work?" I wanna answer that by reading a scripture and then declaring a truth, and reading a scripture and declaring a truth, okay? The first one is in Philippians chapter one. If you would like to turn to these with me, I'll tell you what I'm quoting. If you wanna write 'em down, you can go back and look at 'em later. But Philippians 1:6 says, "Being confident of this very thing, "that he, which hath begun a good work in you "will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Here's the first statement. We do not begin the work of salvation. God does. That's a revelation to anyone who hears this for the first time and has this proven to them by the Word of God for the first time. We do not begin the work of salvation. God does. When a person first comes to this subject of salvation, he or she will search to try to figure out, "How do I get this process started?" You know, they will say, "I wanna be saved. "I wanna be saved, "so how do I get this process started?" Everyone naturally thinks that the ball is in their court, and here's the reason why. It's because false preachers have been standing in pulpits telling men and women all of their lives, "Now, the ball's in your court. "All right, what are you gonna do? "Are you gonna make your decision to do something, "or are you gonna sit there "and let your opportunity pass by? "What are you gonna do? "This is up to you." That's what men and women have been falsely told all their lives. So they hear that, and this is the natural response. "Okay, then what do I have to do? "What do I need to do? "How do I get this started?" We don't start the work of salvation. God does. Verse six says, "being confident of this very thing, "that he which hath begun a good work in you "will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. "He which hath begun." We do not start the work of salvation. God does, okay? Here's the second thing, the second statement. We do not perform the work of salvation. God does. Verse six, right here in Philippians one says, "Being confident of this very thing, "that he which hath begun a good work in you "will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." We do not perform the work of salvation. God does. Our text just said it is God which worketh in you, worketh, performing. We do not begin the work. We do not perform the work. All right, here's the third thing. Over in John 19:30, this is the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary, and it says, "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, "he said, "'It is finished,' "and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost. "'It is finished.'" We do not finish the work of salvation. He did, Christ did, God did. People think, they wonder about this, they're confused about this and they think, "Now, did he take the first step, "and I need to take the second step, "or do I have to take the first step "before he will take the second step?" The answer is neither, neither one. He took all the steps. He took all the steps and we take none. A man named Charles Spurgeon, a preacher from the 1800s, Charles Spurgeon made this statement. He said, "If I was standing "at the very threshold of heaven," right there at the gate, right there at the door, "if I was standing at the very threshold of heaven," and he said, "the last step was up to me," he said, "I'd never make it in. "I'd never make it in." And it's because we are all

spiritually dead in trespasses and sins by our nature, naturally, we are spiritually dead in trespasses and sins. That's the condition man is in, men and women. Ask a dead man to take a step and see what happens. Ask a dead man to just take one step and see what happens. A dead man doesn't even know he's dead, and that's the problem for most men and women. They do not realize that spiritually before God, they are dead in trespasses and sins, and they remain in that condition until God speaks life, until God begins and performs and finishes the work of creating life in a sinner. And once that life comes, the sinner realizes, "I was dead and he gave me life. "He made me alive." So we do not begin the work of salvation. He does. We do not perform the work of salvation. He does. We do not finish the work of salvation. He does. He already has. Hebrews 1:3 says, "He by himself purged our sins, "and then he sat down on his throne." Number four, in John 15, John 15:16, this is the Lord Jesus Christ speaking, and he said, "You have not chosen me, "but I have chosen you. "You have not chosen me, "but I have chosen you, "and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit, "and that your fruit should remain, "that whatsoever you shall ask of the Father in my name, "he may give it you." When it comes to salvation, we don't do the choosing. God does. God does. People say all the time, they bring up this verse of scripture all the time, I'm sure you've heard it. People say, well, what about that verse that says, "Choose you this day whom you will serve"? Have you ever had heard that verse? "Choose you this day whom you will serve." Most people don't understand the context. That was a rebuke. That was a rebuke. Joshua told the people, he said, "You are not worshiping the true and living God. "You're worshiping false gods, "you're worshiping idols." And he said, "None of 'em can save you, none of 'em." So he said, "It doesn't matter which one you worship, "none of 'em are gonna do any good for you. "You just go pick one. "Choose you this day whom you will serve." That's what that verse is saying. When it comes to the salvation of the true and living God, he does all the choosing. He makes all the decisions. Ephesians 1:4 says, "According as he hath chosen us in Christ "before the foundation of the world," he did it before the foundation of the world, "God the Father chose all of his people in Christ "before the foundation of the world." There's no decision to be made on our part, none whatsoever. I want us to really understand this. This is God being God and man being not God, man being man and man being a sinner in need of God, the mercy and grace of God. This is God being God. He does all the deciding. He does all the choosing. The decision was all his concerning salvation. All right, now let me read number five and number six to you. Okay, this is both of 'em together. We don't seek him. He seeks us. And we don't find him. He finds us. Over in Isaiah 65, Isaiah 65:1, The Lord God said, "I am sought of them that asked not for me. "I am found of them that sought me not." The command in the scripture is seek the Lord while he may be found. That's the command of the scripture. Seek the Lord. Seek the Lord. But here's the problem. The sinful flesh of man will not do it. Will not do it. This is why our God had to do all of this for us. This is

why he had to do all of it for us. The Lord said, "You will not come to me "that you might have life." That's what he said. You will, he said, "No man can come "unless the father draws," and he said, "You will not come," can't, won't, will not do it. A man in his sinfulness will seek religion. People think they're seeking the Lord by seeking religion. They try to go find the right religion for them. Men and women will seek doctrine. They'll be curious about doctrine. They'll hear about these things and they'll go seeking doctrine. Men and women will seek self-gratification, feeling better about themselves. Down in the dumps, "What do we need to do?" "Well, let's go to church "so we can feel better about ourselves." Men and women will seek lies. They will. They'll hear 'em, they'll believe 'em, but by our very own nature, we will not seek Christ. Man will not seek Christ, not in truth, truth that gives him all the glory in these things, truth as he's declared himself to be in his Word. God is the one who has to do all the seeking, and God is the one who has to do all the finding. Verse one, he said, "I am sought of them that asked not for me. "I am found of them that sought me not. "I said, 'Behold me.' "Behold me unto a nation "that was not called by my name.'" That's how it went. The Lord God said, "I said, 'Behold me.'" David said in Psalm 27, "When you said, 'Seek ye my face,' "that's when my heart cried, "'Thy face Lord will I seek.'" "That's when I responded, after you commanded me to do it, "after you started that work, "and you performed that work in me." He is the one who came to seek and to save that which was lost. He's the one. He is the one who left the 99 and sought his sheep until he found it. He's the one who brought that sheep home, rejoicing, telling everyone, "Rejoice with me, "I have found my sheep, which was lost." So we don't begin the work of salvation. He does. We don't perform the work of salvation. He does. We do not finish the work of salvation. He does. He already has. We do not do the choosing. He does. We do not do the seeking. He does. We do not do the finding. He does. Number seven, here's number seven, over in Ephesians chapter two, Ephesians 2:8 says, "For by grace are you saved, through faith, "and that not of yourselves, "it is the gift of God." We do not produce our own faith to believe on Christ. He puts his own faith in us and causes us to believe on him. This is the command of scripture. Here's the command of the Word of God. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, "thou shall be saved." But here's the thing about it. Even that belief, even that faith, is his work in us, causing us to will and do of his good pleasure. Hebrews 12:2 says that, "The Lord Jesus Christ is the author "and finisher of our faith." Faith is not of ourselves. It's the gift of God, it's the work of God, it's the object of God, and he gets all the credit in it, all the credit for causing a sinner to believe. Number eight, Titus 3:5 says, "Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, "but according to his mercy, "he saved us by the washing of regeneration "and renewing of the Holy Ghost, "which he shed on us abundantly "through Jesus Christ our Savior, "that being justified by his grace, "we should be made heirs "according to the hope of eternal life. "Not by works of righteousness, which we have done."

We do not earn any perfection before God of our own. We do not earn any perfection of our own. We do not earn any goodness, any goodness. If men and women are going to go be with God, they need to be good. Everyone knows that. We do not earn, we do not have any goodness of our own, because of our own doing. We don't even have any record of any good, because of our own doing. It is not by works of righteousness, which we have done. We did not do the works of righteousness. He earned every bit of that for us. He earned that righteousness for us. Our perfection before God, Christ earned that for us. He earned that for us. What makes God look at us and say, "You're worthy to enter in, "come on in"? Christ earned that for us. Man thinks he has to go around earning the goodness so God will accept him. Man can't do that. We are sinners by nature. All of our righteousnesses are filthy rags. Man at his best state is altogether vanity. Christ had to earn that for his people, and then he gave that to his people. That's why he walked this earth for 33 and a half years. He earned a perfect life of goodness and righteousness, and then he gave that to his people by taking from them their life of sinfulness and rebellion and wretchedness. That's why he died on the cross. It's because he traded lives with his people, and he got what his people deserved, and they ended up getting what he deserved. Substitution it's called. That's the heart of the gospel. So Christ did all of that for us. We did not earn God's favor, and we cannot keep ourselves in God's favor, and that's number nine. That's our ninth statement. Christ is the one who keeps us there. We cannot keep ourselves in God's favor. Christ has to keep us there. Over in 1 Peter chapter one, it says in verse three, "Blessed be the God and Father "of our Lord Jesus Christ, "which according to his abundant mercy "hath begotten us again unto a lively hope," that means a living hope, "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, "to an inheritance incorruptible." How glorious is that news that there is an inheritance for God's people that is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. It'll never fade away, never run out. "It is reserved in heaven for you "who are kept by the power of God, "through faith unto, unto salvation, "ready to be revealed in the last time. "Kept by the power of God." People wonder how they're gonna be kept in salvation. People are always worried that they're gonna lose their salvation. They always talk about losing your salvation. "You better not do that. "You're gonna lose your salvation." That's why men and women go to confessions all the time, and that's why, you know, men and women do this and do that. It's 'cause they don't wanna lose their salvation. How are we gonna be kept? It's not gonna be by us keeping ourselves. That's a fact. Christ has to do that. The Lord Jesus Christ has to do that, and he will, he will. He will keep his people by the power of God. He promised that he would, therefore he will. We are kept by the power of God, which is Christ himself. Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. So we don't begin the work of salvation. He does. We don't perform the work of salvation. He does. We do not finish the work of salvation. He did, he does. However you wanna say it, however you wanna, all of this was finished before the

foundation of the world. He did in his own blood on Calvary's tree, finished, okay? We do not do the choosing in salvation. He does. We do not do the seeking. He does. We do not do the finding. He does. We do not produce the faith. He does. We do not earn the righteousness, the goodness, the perfection. He does. We're not even the ones who keep ourselves in his salvation. He is the one who keeps us there. And the last one, number 10, all right. This could really be the first one. The last one is in 1 John chapter four. It says in verse 10, "Herein is love, "not that we loved God, "but that he loved us, "and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." It is not that we loved God. It is not. Our salvation is not because of the fact that we loved God. It's because he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation. That means the bloody victim. That means the covering atonement for our sins, what covered all of our sins. Verse 19 says, "We love him because he first loved us." That's the reason why. We love him, and we do. Do we love him? Oh, we do. But it's only because he first loved us. He commended his love to us while we were sinners, while we were ungodly. That's when he commended his love to us first, and as a result of that, we love him. Can we see, honestly, that salvation is totally of the Lord? Start to finish, salvation is totally of the Lord. "If any man glory, let him glory in the Lord, "for it is God, which worketh in us, "both to will and do of his good pleasure." To that we say thank God. Thank God, amen.