

- I. My Notes ... WWC message 6/20
- II. Series: Koinonia – The Joy of Living in Unity with Christ
 - Title: Kingdom Formation part 2
 - Text: Philippians 2:12-13; Luke 6:20-26
 - Quote: “Grace is not opposed to effort; it is opposed to earning.” Dallas Willard (Theologian, Author)
- III. Introduction
 - We are picking up where we left off last week. Last week we stepped into the words of Jesus in Luke 6, where He gave us a vision of the Kingdom that turns our assumptions upside down. We saw that what the world calls blessed, Jesus often calls empty — and what the world calls weak, Jesus calls blessed. He showed us that the Kingdom begins where self-sufficiency ends, and that dependence, hunger, humility, and surrender are not signs of failure but signs of formation. We learned that the blessings and woes that Jesus spoke of aren’t about circumstances; they’re about who (and what) we trust, where our values lie, and how we see reality. Jesus wasn’t giving us a list of conditions to achieve — He was giving us a new way of seeing life through Heaven’s eyes. And yet, if we’re honest, nothing in us naturally lives this way. We don’t drift into Kingdom values. We don’t stumble into Kingdom vision. Something deeper must be formed in us. And that’s where we turn today. If Luke 6 revealed the vision of the Kingdom, Philippians 2 reveals the process. Jesus shows us what the Kingdom looks like; Paul shows us how the Kingdom is formed within us. Jesus shows us the life God calls blessed. But Paul shows us how that life becomes possible.
 - Remember what Paul said earlier in this letter to believers in Philippi ... *“And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.” (Philippians 1:6 NLT).* Our daily walk is shaping in us a life that is formed by a Kingdom perspective.
 - We began this journey by looking at the invitation of Jesus to see the world through Heaven’s eyes. In Luke 6, He overturned our assumptions about what the blessed life looks like. He showed us that the Kingdom doesn’t begin with strength, success, or applause — it begins with dependence, hunger, humility, and surrender. He revealed that the places we try to avoid are often the very places where God does His deepest work. And we walked away with this truth: the Kingdom is not just a place we go — it is a life we grow into. But Jesus didn’t just reveal a new way of seeing; He revealed a new way of being. He said in **Matthew 6:33**, *“Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness...”* — not as an afterthought, not as an accessory, but as the center of life. And in **John 3:3** He told Nicodemus, *“Unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.”* In other words, the Kingdom is not something we

add to our lives — it is something God births within us. It requires a new heart, a new vision, a new way of living that can only be produced through a relationship (an indwelling) with the Holy Spirit

- And that brings us to the tension every disciple feels:
If the Kingdom Jesus describes is so beautiful...
If the values He gives us are so compelling...
If the life He calls blessed is so different from the world...
Then how do we actually live this way?
We don't become Kingdom people by trying harder — we become Kingdom people by surrendering deeper.
Because nothing in us naturally calls hunger blessed.
Nothing in us naturally embraces humility.
Nothing in us naturally chooses surrender.
Nothing in us naturally seeks the Kingdom first.
Which means this Kingdom life must be formed in us — shaped in us — worked into us by God Himself.
- This is where the Apostle Paul meets us. If Luke 6 gave us the vision of the Kingdom, Philippians 2 gives us the formation of the Kingdom. Jesus shows us what the Kingdom looks like; Paul shows us how the Kingdom becomes possible. And Paul says something stunning:
“Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose.” (verse 12).
- Jesus says, *“Seek the Kingdom” (Matt. 6:33)* and *“Be born again to see the Kingdom” (John 3:3)* ... Paul says, *“God Himself is forming the Kingdom within you” (Phil. 2:12)*
- Today we step into that mystery — the partnership of grace and obedience, surrender and participation, God's work, and our response. Today we explore how the Kingdom is not just revealed to us... but formed within us.

IV. Text

- **Philippians 2:12-13 EXB**

12 My ·dear friends [beloved], you have always obeyed God when I was with you. It is even more important that you obey now while I am away from you. ·Keep on working to complete [Continue working out] your salvation with ·fear [awe; reverence] and trembling, 13 because God is working in you ·to help you want to do and be able to do [L both to will/desire and to work] what pleases him.

- This is a powerful and often misunderstood invitation. It points us to unity with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ... It points us to Koinonia.

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V. Participating in God's Formation

- Paul begins this section with a phrase that has confused, intimidated, and sometimes even frightened believers for centuries:

“Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” (vs. 12).

- Paul is not telling us that we must work for our salvation.
He is telling us that we participate in what God has already completed for us.
The Greek word Paul uses — **katergazesthe** (Greek) — means:
to bring something to its intended end,
to carry something to completion,
to fully develop what has already been given.
- I grew up around farmers. Watching the planting of seeds and their growth. There is life that is already inside the seed — but it must be worked out ... nurtured, developed, matured, and brought to completion.
Paul is saying: *“God has planted salvation in you. Now allow it to grow. Develop it. See it through to completion.”*
- This is not salvation by effort — it is salvation expressed through effort.
It is not earning — it is unfolding.
It is not striving — it is cooperating.
And this is where Kingdom formation begins: God gives the life, but we cultivate the soil.
Paul is calling us to an active, intentional, responsive faith — a faith that doesn’t sit still, a faith that doesn’t coast, a faith that doesn’t assume spiritual maturity will happen automatically.
- Because nothing in the Christian life grows by accident.
You don’t drift into holiness - You don’t stumble into obedience - You don’t slide into surrender - You don’t coast into Christlikeness.
- Paul is saying, *“Lean in. Participate. Respond. Engage. Don’t let what God has planted in you remain undeveloped.”*
- And then he adds the phrase “with fear and trembling.”
Not fear of punishment ... Not fear of losing salvation.
- But a holy reverence — a deep awareness that the God of the universe is at work in you, shaping you, forming you, transforming you.
It’s the awe of knowing:
“My life is being shaped by the hands of God Himself.”
- This is not a fear that drives you away — it’s a reverence that draws you in.
- It’s the same posture Jesus described when He said, “Seek first the Kingdom of God...” It’s the same posture He described when He said, “Unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom...” It’s the posture of someone who knows that the Kingdom is not casual — it is central.
It is not optional — it is essential.
It is not added to life — it becomes the very life we live.
- Paul begins the formation process with this truth: God has already placed His life in you. Now work it out ... Develop it ... See it through to completion.
Let the Kingdom grow in you until it becomes the way you think, the way you see, the way you live.

- This is the first movement of Kingdom formation: Our participation in what God is doing.

VI. Let's Live

- So, Paul tells us to work out our salvation — to develop, cultivate, and bring to completion what God has already planted within us. But if we stop there, we miss the heart of the gospel. Because the Christian life is not a self-improvement project. It is not us trying harder to live up to Kingdom values. It is not us striving to become what Jesus describes in Luke 6. If all we had was “work out your salvation,” we would collapse under the weight of it.
- But Paul doesn't stop there. He immediately anchors our effort in God's activity. He roots our participation in God's power. He grounds our obedience in God's presence.
- And now he gives us the other side of the mystery — the part that makes Kingdom formation possible.

VII. God's Power

- Paul now gives us one of the most hope-filled, liberating truths in all of Scripture: *“For it is God who is working in you both to will and to work according to his good purpose.” (vs. 13 CSB).*
- We have already talked about our participation,
Now, we are about to look at God's role ... about His empowerment.
- We have already talked about our role, about working it out.
Now, we are going to talk about what God's role is.
- And the word Paul uses for “works” — **energeō** — is where we get the word energy.
- It means:
 - God energizes you.
 - God empowers you.
 - God animates you.
 - God activates His life within you.
- This is not God helping you. This is God working in you. This is not God cheering you on. This is God forming you from the inside out. This is not God giving you instructions. This is God giving you the desire and the power to obey Him.
- Paul says God works in you “to will and to act.”
- God works in you “to will” — He reshapes your desires.
- This is the miracle of Kingdom formation.
God doesn't just tell you what to do — He changes what you want to do.
He forms new desires ... He awakens new longings ... He stirs new affections ...
He softens old resistances ... He breaks old attachments ... He redirects old ambitions.
- This is why Jesus said in **John 3:3**, “You must be born again to see the Kingdom.”

- Because without a new heart, you cannot desire a new Kingdom.
- This is why Jesus said in **Matthew 6:33**, “*Seek first the Kingdom...*”
- Because God is forming a heart that actually wants the Kingdom first.
- This is the first principle of Kingdom Living:
 - God changes what you crave.
 - God works in you “to act” — it’s another way of saying that He enables (gives you the power) obedience. God doesn’t just transform your life and your desires (wants) — He provides the power and direction to live them out.
- He strengthens your will. He empowers your choices. He enables your obedience. He fuels your perseverance. He activates your faithfulness.
- This is the second principle of Kingdom living:
 - God empowers what He commands.
- He never asks you to live a Kingdom life without giving you Kingdom power.
- What God is doing, “according to His good purpose” — is He is forming Christ in you.
- This is the third principle of Kingdom living:
 - God’s purpose is not to improve you — it is to transform you.
 - He is forming Christ in you ... He is shaping Kingdom character in you ...
 - He is aligning your life with Heaven’s values.
- He is making you into the kind of person who naturally lives the life Jesus described in Luke 6. This is why the blessings and woes of Luke 6 are not burdens — they are invitations. Invitations into a life God Himself is forming within you.

VIII. Closing

- We are coming to a landing place in this passage, and really, to the heart of Kingdom formation. Jesus has shown us what the Kingdom looks like. Paul has shown us how the Kingdom is formed within us. And now the writer of Hebrews gives us the posture we carry as this formation unfolds.
- He says in **Hebrews 12:28**:
 - “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful. By it, we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and awe” (CSB)*
- This is the anchor of our formation — we are receiving a Kingdom that cannot be shaken.
- Not a Kingdom we build. Not a Kingdom we maintain. Not a Kingdom we earn. This is a Kingdom we receive.
- And because the Kingdom cannot be shaken, you cannot be shaken. Not because you are strong, but because you are in Christ. Not because you hold the Kingdom together, but because the King holds you together.
- This is the security of the believer:
 - You are not working for salvation — you are working from salvation.

You are not striving to earn God's favor — you are living out of the favor you already have in Christ.

You are not trying to hold on to God — God is holding on to you.

- And this is why Paul can say, "Work out your salvation," without fear of legalism or insecurity. Because the salvation you are working out is the salvation God has already worked in.
- The Kingdom you are growing into is the Kingdom God has already given you.
- The transformation you are experiencing is the transformation God Himself is energizing within you.
- You are secure because you are in Christ ... steady because the Kingdom is unshakable ... growing because God is working in you. You are being formed by the principles of God's Kingdom.
- Because of this we are able to respond the way Hebrews says — with gratitude, reverence, and awe.

We need not have a fear of punishment, but awe at God's presence. There isn't any trembling from insecurity but trembling from wonder. And it isn't about striving to prove our value and worth but surrendering to receive the sufficiency of His mercy and grace.

- Because the God who calls you to work out your salvation is the same God who works in you to will and to act, and the same God who has given you a Kingdom that cannot be shaken.
- And that means this:
Your life is held. Your future is secure. Your formation is certain. Your King is faithful.
- This is the confidence we carry as Kingdom people — not confidence in ourselves, but confidence in the One who is forming His Kingdom within us.
- Let's Pray
- Grace First, Grace Always