

Press Toward The Mark

Philippians 3

Introduction:

- Here is a good outline for Philippians:
 - Christ our life, our mind, our goal, our strength
 - Key verse is 3:14
 - Philippi is where Lydia was saved, and the Philippian jailor and his family- and the church has been established!
 - Even though he's writing while imprisoned in ch. 3 He begins with a reminder to have joy
 - V. 2 Strong warning against false teachers
 - Beware of dog! Illustr- soul winning with Pam
 - Malicious intentions
 - V. 3- A play on words meaning that true Christians have no confidence in the flesh
- I. Paul's Accounting of the Past- v. 4-9
- a. Talking from experience- If anyone could have had confidence in the flesh it was Paul!- "I more"
 - b. Paul's qualifications:
 - i. Circumcised- speaks of godly heritage! He didn't climb out of the crib...!
 - ii. Stock of Israel- 100% Jewish, not mixed like many of the Judaizers
 - iii. Tribe of Benjamin- further proof of heritage- first King, named after Saul
 - iv. Hebrew of Hebrews- This contrasted him with the Jews who embraced Greek culture as it spread through the Mediterranean. In that time, many Jews became ashamed of their Jewishness and tried to live and act as much like Greeks as they could, sometimes even to the point of having their circumcision cosmetically restored or hidden so they could enjoy

the Roman public baths without being noticed as Jews. In contrast, Paul was raised by his parents as a Hebrew of the Hebrews.

- v. Concerning the Law, a Pharisee- elite sect, strictest interpreters of the Law
 - vi. Concerning zeal, persecuting the church- Paul was not merely an intellectual opponent of perceived heresies against Judaism; he was also an active fighter against them - even in his blindness to God
 - vii. Touching the righteousness- achieved the standard of that day
 - viii. In summary, if anyone could lay claim to pleasing God by law-keeping and the works of the flesh, it was Paul.
- c. Paul's ledger changed! He realized how to balance his checkbook!- v.7-9
- i. Spiritual economy his credit was no good!
 - ii. V. 8 – compared to Christ- “dung”- lowest value
 - iii. V.9 –Paul had given up claim to all of his own righteousness! Titus 3:5- We are bankrupt sinners! We have nothing, He has everything and offers it to us! Paul realized that he had insufficient funds when it came to righteousness!
- d. When the captain leaves the harbour he has a cargo on board of which he takes great care, but when a tremendous wind is blowing and the ship labours, being too heavily laden, and there is great fear that she will not outride the storm, see how eagerly the sailors lighten the ship. They bring up from the hold with all diligence the very things which before they prized, and they seem rejoiced to heave them into the sea. Never men more eager to get than these are to throw away. There go the casks of flour, the bars of iron, the manufactured goods: overboard go valuable bales of merchandise; nothing seems to be worth keeping. How is this? Are not these things good? Yes, but nor good to a sinking ship. Anything must go to save life, anything to outride the storm. And so the apostle says that in order to win Christ and to be found in Him he flung the

whole cargo of his beloved confidences over, and was as glad to get rid of them as if they were only dung.

II. Paul's Purpose for the Present- v. 10-19

- a. V. 13- Two countings- conversion, and now in the Christian life
- b. Most would say: Health and money entered as clear gains, comfort, ease, tranquility, prosperity, carried to the side of profit.
- c. Sickness, disappointment, absence of pleasure and entertainment, sorrow, entered as loss.
- d. Paul understood something about trade deals: i.e. President Trump, Esau
- e. V. 10- Paul says: Knowing Christ
 - i. It wasn't so much that those things were worthless in themselves, but compared to the greatness of the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, they really were nothing.
 - ii. Paul here put a personal relationship with Jesus Christ at the very center of the Christian's life. He joyfully accepted the loss of all other things for the greatness of this personal relationship.
 - iii. Not just a mere acquaintance, or historical knowledge- trusting and depending!
 - iv. Experiencing Christ in your daily life!
 1. His power- life giving, overcomes sin and temptations!
 2. His suffering- the call to endure and suffer for His sake, humility, and service
- f. Following Christ- V. 11-14- Paul had not yet "arrived" and neither have we!
- g. The Lord got ahold of us!- When Christ laid hold of us, it was to bring us to heaven; and to apprehend that for which he apprehended us is talking about sanctification- becoming like Christlike
- h. Jesus explained sanctification in 2 words- "Follow Me"
- i. Our life must match our position! See Phil 1:21

- j. Our security is not based finally on our grip on Christ, but his grip on us. The crucial thing to see is that the firmness of Christ's grip on us produces our pursuit of him.
 - k. Press towards the mark!- Paul exhibits an effort and energy that comes from the Holy Spirit, which his far greater than any legal effort! "Under the Law this man was willing to go to Damascus...under the grace-faith system he is willing to go to the ends of the earth to preach the gospel!"
 - l. He serves God with passion and fervor! Maximum effort, every spiritual muscle!
 - m. Illustr- predator after its prey
 - n. Forget the past- both the bad and the good!- 13. The past has passed. Start right where you are today!
 - o. You can't drive looking only at the rearview mirror
 - p. The idea is to keep on pressing, keep on pushing and pursuing!
 - q. V. 14- the goal is Christ! Illustr- Olympic Games in that day- running towards a finish line, archery (hitting the bullseye)
 - r. What does this pursuit look like?
 - i. Take steps to know him as well as He can be known!
 - ii. Recognize and repent of our wandering hearts
 - iii. Pray and ask God to incline our hearts to the supreme treasure that is Christ
 - iv. Treat other treasures as less valuable than Christ. That is, we make decisions about lifestyle and the use of time and money and energy in a way that speaks of Christ's superior value.
 - s. This is not a casual pursuit (microwave, easy button culture). It is an unending pursuit
 - t. Follow the good examples- v. 17
 - u. Avoid the bad examples- v. 18-19
 - v. We are all examples for someone!
- III. Paul's Hope for the Future- v. 20-21

- a. Heavenly citizenship
 - i. Philippi was a Roman colony- though hundreds of miles from Rome they obeyed Roman dress, government, speech, conduct-allegiance
 - ii. Though far from home, our ultimate allegiance is to Christ, and our eternal home. We have a dual citizenship!
 - iii. We are ambassadors for Christ
- b. Heavenly hope- v. 21-
 - i. We shall be like Him- I John 3:2
 - ii. Rapture

Conclusion: Let us live with our heavenly home, and eternity in view. Pressing towards the mark as Paul did, living for Christ! Our prize will be awaiting us at the finish line, being in His presence, and hearing “Well done thou good and faithful servant!”

- What is our highest goal? Do we want only to make money, which can never buy lasting happiness? Or do we want to become more like Jesus, which results in ultimate satisfaction? –V C Grounds

His Spirit fill my hungering soul,
His power all my life control;
My deepest prayer, my highest goal,
That I may be like Jesus.-- Chisholm