

Phil 11 - Citizenship - Phil 3:15-21

Today we finish one of my favorite Ch's in the Bible

2 weeks ago we did "KNOW HIM" – my life's Vs msg

Last week we did "PRESS ON" ...

which was a strong encouragement – to keep running the race

TODAY – We finish the CH w/ 2 key truths;

1) How critical our WALK is

2) & how REAL our Heavenly CITIZENSHIP is

Our Citizenship determines our Privileges & Responsibilities

Our WALK reveals our true Citizenship

I'd like to think we know something about the

Privileges & the Responsibilities of being

Citizens of this Great Nation

But today - may we know even more so –

the Eternal Privileges & Responsibilities

of being eternal Citizens of Heaven

Let's Pray

We open today – w/ how critical our WALK is

Phil 3:15 → →

Phil 3:15

15 Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind;
[meaning the mind to press on] **and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.**

As many as are mature – have this mind – **to keep pressing on**

We must **never think** we've arrived – **we must continue** to press on
striving to lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has laid hold of me

Forgetting those things in the past
& **reaching forward** to those things God has ahead for you

PRESSING ON - to the glorious end of the race;
Where you will receive the Heavenly prize

THAT was last wks msg - - & **as we open** this morning,
Paul says if you believe you are Spiritually Mature **then** . . .

HAVE THIS MIND – Walk This Way - Be pressing on –
Reaching forward – w/ your **eyes firmly fixed** on Knowing Christ

This is **how our WALK is supposed to look** –
Pressing On – Reaching Forward –
Laying Hold of What Christ has for us

& then Paul says in **2nd half - V.15**
“if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you”

In the **NT church** (*just like today*) – there was a real problem
w/ people thinking they had **“ARRIVED”**

THESE are the people Paul's addressing

& he says - If someone doesn't think they need to Press On –
to strive to know Christ & His purpose better & better

Paul says “*don't worry, God will reveal even this to you*”

Spiritual Pride is a deadly enemy

& often - when **a person begins** to think they've “Arrived” w/ God –
God will allow a . . . **circumstance** . . . to fall right on top of them

to **remind us** – we haven't Arrived – we **haven't** been perfected . . .

& we **must remain** “desperately dependant” on God every day
Because we're **ALWAYS** one step away from stumbling

So Paul begins – by encouraging us to keep this EDGE
in our WALK – to keep up the “Pressing On” of last week

Moving on – to **V.16**

Phil 3:16

16 Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.

Press On – don't stop – keep reaching forward
& the more you Mature - the more you must keep this Mind-Set

But nevertheless – as if to say “at the very least” ;
To the degree that you've grown in Christ
Keep Pressing On **that same path**

Don't stop – don't turn aside - & God Forbid – don't go backwards

To the degree that you've arrived in your spiritual maturity;
keep **directing** your life in that same path
keep **going** in that same direction

Now – **at the end of V.16** – there’s a little play on words . . .

The word “**rule**” – “*walk by the same rule*” -
Actually means – *In a Row – In Order*

& then the added – “*let us be of the same mind*”
Strengthens this play on words

C.S. Lewis makes the illustration of a Fleet of Ships sailing in order
Ea ship must be in *order*, in *line*, & heading in the same *direction*
There must be One *Common Destination*
All directions must come only from the *Flagship*

& **THAT** is a *perfect picture* of what Paul’s saying here;
walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.

That’s **how critical** each of our **individual** walk’s is

In **V.17** – **Paul** does something we *must never take lightly* –
But – *as we mature* – we **must accept** this *responsibility* . . .

Paul says “*watch me - & follow me as your pattern . . .*”

Phil 3:17

17 Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.

LIT Paul is saying here - “*Imitate me*” – “*Walk as I walk*”

He says - *Join those* who are *imitating* me -
“**and note those who so walk**”

“*note*” means **LIT** - “*fix your attention*” -

“*walk*” means **LIT** - “*direct your life*” –

“Fix your attention on those who direct their lives by imitating me”
“Look for those who direct their lives by imitating me - & join them”

Find these people – Fix your attention on them - & Imitate them
& then He says **“as you have us for a pattern”**

Paul is saying – become a disciple !!

You can’t do this on your own – you can’t say
“me & God - we got our own thing going on”

You’ve got to **find** someone who’s pressing on to Know Christ -
You’ve got to **fix your attention** on them -
You’ve got to **join them** in the **PATTERN** the NT lays out

NOT imitating that person – But imitating the Apostle Paul

Studying the scriptures & saying OK;
How does the Bible **deal with this situation** –
Let’s **follow God’s example** in the Apostle Paul

Looking to the **life of Christ** - & then looking **in the Epistles**
to see how **Paul lived out** the life of Christ

& then **using that** as a **Pattern** for our **lives**

Guys – THAT is a PLAN – to live your life
Pressing On toward the goal – for the prize -
of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus

SO – **find somebody** who’s **done that** - & **Join them**
THAT’S Discipleship - & that’s how V.17 calls us to WALK

Now – as Paul so often does;

1st he motivates with the **Positive** example
THEN - he motivates w/ the **Negative** example . . . **V’s18-19**

Phil 3:18-19

***18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:
19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame - who set their mind on earthly things.***

Obviously Paul is saying whoever **these** people are
STAY AWAY FROM THEM – **DON'T** follow their pattern !

But **the question** is – **Who** are these who **Paul's warning us** about ?

he says he's **warned** the Phillipian church **often** about them
& now he's **warning them again** even **weeping**

& he says – **thru his tears** – these people are **actually**
THE ENEMIES of the cross of Christ

& let me just be real straight with you
It's **pretty clear** - **these people** Paul is writing about
ARE INSIDE THE CHURCH

There are those **inside the church**
who are **not actually living** for **Jesus Christ**

The **good news** is –
the **new life in Christ** is for those **inside** the church

So someone **inside the church** - but **not living** for Christ
can be born-again – **can be** transformed by the Holy Spirit

& can receive New Life in Christ – at any moment – **P.T.L.**

But **Paul's talking** here about **following examples**
& he says **THESE PEOPLE ARE NOT** the example to follow

Scholars believe that Paul is **either** talking about the **Judaizers**
(who were **legalists** in the church)

Or **possibly** - & probably more likely – he’s referring to the
“EPICUREAN ANTINOMIANS”

I know – it sounds like a *high school class* on **Evolution** . . .

*“after we were slime, we became monkeys
& then we became epicurean antinomians”*

No (that’s not it) – but it is an *incredible term* to understand

The **Epicurean** – was the **EXACT OPPOSITE** of the **Judaizer**

The **Epicurean’s** were those *who brought* the Greek culture
of **total self indulgence** into the church

They promoted **ALL Self-Indulgence** under the name of **Grace**
They were the one’s Paul was referring to in **Rom 6:1**

Rom 6:1

1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

These **epicureans** were real big on
“Living In Sin” . . . under the *name of Grace*

The word **EPICUREAN** – **Lit** means *“Self-Indulgent”*
The word **ANTINOMIAN** – **Lit** means *“Lawlessness”*
SO - **Self-Indulgent - Lawlessness**

NOW - **consider** this *incredible truth* for a moment

The **TWO** biggest enemies of the *NT Church* were
LEGALISM - & **LAWLESSNESS**

Extreme **legalism** is *DEATH* to the church

Extreme **lawlessness** is *DEATH* to the church

**When walking between these two extremes –
the safest place to be – is the middle ground !!**

BUT - in **V.19** – Paul is **WARNING** us **NOT** to follow
those in the church who are focused on “**SELF ISSUES**”
(***epicurian antinomians***)

Let me just read **V.19** out of the **NLT**

Phil 3:19 – NLT

19 They are headed for destruction. Their god is their appetite, they brag about shameful things, and they think only about this life here on earth.

& we must **NOT** be *following* them in our **WALK** -
we must **NOT** be *following* them as our **Pattern**

In other words – **PICK** your *Discipler* **WELL**

WHY ??

WHY is our **WALK** *Soooo Critical* -

WHY is it so important that *we carry ourselves* as Christians ??

Because WE REPRESENT – Our *Home Town* – *Home Nation*

Because we are the *Representatives of Heaven* – *on Earth*

So – Paul’s given us a Picture of a **True Disciple** (Vs.**15-17**)

Then a Picture of a **False Disciple** (V.**18-19**)

& now He tells us WHY (V.**20**)

Phil 3:20

20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

This word "citizenship" is the noun form
of the same word translated conduct in Phil 1:27

Phil 1:27

27 Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, . . .

It has to do with living according to the
Priviledges - & Responsibilities – of your true citizenship

& that's what Paul's been saying;

- 1) Have this mind set – to PRESS ON
- 2) To whatever extent you've attained – keep going
- 3) Pattern your lives according to those truly following Christ

& now he gets to the WHY - Because;

Our true citizenship – *with all it's priviledges & responsibilities*
is a citizenship that is – NOT OF THIS WORLD !

In Jn 18:36 Jesus said

Jn 18:36

36 . . . "My kingdom is not of this world . . ."

& here Paul's saying – *if you are part* of Jesus' kingdom –
then you should be living according to your citizenship in heaven

& what does that mean . . . ?

Exactly what Paul has been saying since the beginning of Ch 3;

Worship God in the Spirit (v.3)

Throw out all your own righteousness (v.8)

Be found in the righteousness of Christ alone (v.9)

Make your supreme desire to "Know Him" in every way (v.10)

Press On to lay hold of what Christ has for you (v.12)

Pattern your life after true Followers of Christ (v.17)

Don't imitate those who are living for themselves (v.18)

AND IN SUMMARY – live as citizens of heaven . . . (v.20)

THAT is a super-condensed review of **Phil Ch 3**
& then *Paul sums it all up* in **V.20**

Phil 3:20

20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

The WHY – is in the *1st half* of this Vs -
because “***our citizenship is in heaven***”

& in the 2nd half of this verse (& v.21) we have the **HOW**;

“**HOW TO**” keep on living as *Citizens of Heaven*

“**HOW TO**” keep on *Pressing On - Running the Race*

It opens up in the **2nd half of V.20**

. . . from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

The words **eagerly wait** – are actually a compound GK word
that really can't be put into just **2 english words**

Marvin Vincent's GK Word study says; (*about “eagerly wait”*)

It indicates earnest, patient waiting and expectation . . . with the withdrawal of attention from inferior objects.

Earnest, Patient Expectation –

with the withdrawal of attention from inferior objects

THAT'S the secret right there -

with the withdrawal of attention from inferior objects

Kenneth Wuest describes this GK word this way;

The composite word speaks of an attitude of intense yearning and eager waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus . . . the attention being withdrawn from all else and concentrated upon the Lord Jesus.

HERE IS the HOW TO :

How To live as a *Citizen of Heaven*

How To *Press On* to what Christ has for you

How To imitate those who are *Living for Christ*

Fix your *eyes, thoughts, heart* so intently
on **Jesus Christ** & His *return*

That your **attention** is withdrawn **from ALL INFERIOR objects**

That doesn't mean you just *give up* & *stop living* this life

It means your *focus* - & your *priorities*
are now **heavenly** instead of **earthly**

***Turn your eyes upon Jesus – look full in His wonderful face -
Then the things of earth, will grow strangely dim . . . in the light
of His glory & grace***

Our **Heavenly citizenship** comes with *eternal rewards & blessings*
that our little **earth-bound minds** can't even grasp

It's a Citizenship that's **worth** *Living For*

It's a Citizenship that's **worth** *"Dying to Self" For*

& we **get a glimpse** of one of the *incredible, eternal rewards* -
as we close this section

Let's read **Vs.20-21** together

Phil 3:20-21

***20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly
wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,
21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to
His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able
even to subdue all things to Himself.***

The word for “transform” here refers to;

The “outer appearance” or “figure” of a thing

This temporary shell we call our body

This temporary shell is going to be transformed

into a body which conforms to HIS GLORIOUS BODY

THAT – is incredible - & should be a great motivator to;

Keep Walking with Jesus

Keep Pressing On

Keep Reaching Forward

MAN – as a Citizen of Heaven - **YOU** are going to have
an eternal Body **that is like Christ’s**

& **what level of power** will He use toward us for our eternal life?

Let’s read **Vs.21** from the **NLT**

Phil 3:21 - NLT

21 He will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same power with which he will bring everything under his control.

The same power by which all things on earth & in heaven
will be brought under the control of Jesus Christ

THAT same Power will to transform our weak mortal bodies
into glorious bodies that will be **like our Lord’s** glorified body

That is so incredible – there is nothing that can compare to it

Everything **this world has to offer** is like a mirage

from an eternal perspective it’s **not even real** – it’s **not tangible** –
& it **may very well** be gone (vaporized) even tomorrow

By Comparison - everything that Jesus Christ offers us is
Eternal, Glorious, & beyond what we could **ever imagine**

Does that seem like a *hard choice* to you . . .??

I REALLY HOPE NOT

Being a **citizen of Heaven** is *eternally, unbelievably, incredibly* better - than being a **citizen of this earth**

So - let's LIVE as citizens of heaven

Being Found in the **Righteousness** of Christ

Desiring to Know Him in **every circumstance**

Pressing on to lay hold of **His purpose** for us

Running the race to receive the **Heavenly Prize**

In the end – Living as **Citizens of Heaven** . . .

Today – this week - **Live** as a *citizen of heaven* –
it is so *incredibly, eternally* worth it

& in the process – **KNOW HIM** . . .

Know the Power of His *resurrection*

Know the Fellowship of His *Suffering*

Be Conformed even to His *Death* . . . So that you may

Attain to the *resurrection* of the Dead

Let's Pray