

THE QUEST TO KNOW GOD

This morning we are going to take inspiration from the 3rd Chapter of Philippians
Of all the epistles that Paul wrote,
The book of Philippians is his most personal and passionate book

In it, he speaks about his own personal goals and his lifelong **quest** to know Jesus more and to follow Him faithfully

The Christian Life is not just a philosophy. It should be and is: A Quest

Dictionary Definition of a Quest

“The process of seeking or pursuing something or someone” An expedition undertaken by a knight in order to perform or accomplish a royal mission.

In Philippians 3:17 Paul says: FOLLOW MY EXAMPLE

Join together and follow my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who lives as we do.

Can you imagine what the church could be if every church leader could say **Follow my Example** without reservation or hypocrisy:

Can you imagine what the world would be if every Parent could say this to their kids and truly be a model of godly character

How about: Every teacher, Every politician, Every employer, Every coach
Every older brother or sister

But no! For the most part, we are being led by those who shamefully say: “Do as I say, not as I do!”

This should be a cause for reflection and conviction for us all and it should cause us to say: By God's grace I want to be a better Christian, I want to be a better parent, I want to be a better example

This morning I want to TAKE A LOOK AT PAUL'S EXAMPLE

Now I have to warn you

Following the example of the Apostle Paul

Is no small challenge

It may even seem impossible from where you and I presently sit

The cross bar is way up there, and we are way down here

Fortunately we are not going to rely on our own strength go get there

One other thing I want to say before we look at Paul's example is this:

Paul admits that he is still a work in progress. And so are we all

In Philippians 3:11-12 he says:

12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

13 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it.

We are not there yet:

But life is a Quest to get there

And if don't view life as a quest to get there, we will never get there

We'll be subject to what our old teachers used to call: **The eternal childhood of the believer!**

Now, this morning I am going to use the Amplified version

The Amplified version is not a paraphrase. It is an accurate translation from the Hebrew and Greek, and it is filled with adjectives that add depth and deeper description to the Word

So we begin in Philippians 3:8

Point # 1 FOLLOW MY EXAMPLE BY:

1. Making Jesus the most valuable and important person in your life
More valuable and important than you, Or anyone you admire, Or anyone you love

Philippians 3:8

"Yes, furthermore I count **everything** as loss compared to the possession of the priceless privilege, the overwhelming preciousness, the surpassing worth, and the supreme advantage, of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, and of progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, of perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more fully and completely.

NOW THAT'S A QUEST, THAT'S THE QUEST

It is a precious gift from God to have seen enough of Jesus to know that He is the ultimate prize, and the most important thing of all.

Every worship time is a reminder of WHO is most important in my life. Pay attention to what we sing on Sunday Morning and say to yourself: I mean it Lord!

You are my strength when I am weak
You are the treasure that I seek
You are my all in all
Seeking You as a precious jewel
Lord to give up I'd be a fool
You are my all in all

POINT # 2: FOLLOW MY EXAMPLE BY

2. GIVING UP **EVERY THING** TO WIN CHRIST

Philippians 3:8b

"For His sake I have lost **every thing**, and consider it all to be mere rubbish (refuse, dregs) in order that I may win (gain) Christ, the Anointed One,

Consider these words, "For His sake I have lost every thing"

Nothing is mine – It's all His

I am holding on to **no thing** and **no thing** is going to hold me

I have **no thing** of value other than Him

I'm giving up **every thing** to gain Christ

No Thing will catch my attention and divert me from my quest

Remember the definition of an idol from the message two weeks ago:

1 John 5:21

Dear Children, keep away from Anything that might take God's place in your hearts NLT

- Anything or Anyone that might take God's place in your hearts
- Anyone or Anything that might replace God as the number 1 priority in your life
- Anyone or Anything that might be more important to you than God
- Anyone or Anything that you might value more than God

Point 3: FOLLOW MY EXAMPLE BY:

3. GIVING UP YOUR QUEST FOR PERSONAL GLORY

Philippians 3:9

And that I may [actually] be found and known as in Him, not having any (self-achieved) righteousness that can be called my own, based on my obedience to the Law's demands (ritualistic uprightness and supposed right standing with God thus acquired) but possessing that genuine righteousness which comes through faith in Christ, which comes from God by saving faith.

OUR FLESH HAS A HUNGER FOR RECOGNITION:

All of our lives we live in the hope that we will have a glory that we could call our own: Look at me! Look at me mommy, Look at me Daddy, Look at my achievements, Look at what I have done!

Am I not great? Am I not prettier, smarter, more talented?
Am I not faster, better, stronger?

Am I not worthy of Praise? Oh! Thank you for your honor (I deserve it)

Paul's attitude:

WHEN PEOPLE SEE WHAT I'VE BECOME, LET THEM GIVE PRAISE TO JESUS

When people see what I have accomplished
Let them understand that all the glory belongs to Jesus

Let them say: before he met JESUS he was a bitter, angry, harsh, legalistic little man. Look at him now -- Isn't Jesus something?

It's good to ponder the before and after in our lives

As for me, if you had met me before I met Jesus

You might have said

He's a little homely but he's a good guy
He's Generous
He's Always willing to serve: to help anyone, anywhere, anytime
He is Kind and courteous

But inside:

I was a reprobate, A liar, A thief, A sneak, A coward and a loner, Ridiculously self sufficient and stubborn, Thirsting for love and recognition: looking in all the wrong places, A drug addict
Can I now take credit for who I am in **Christ????**

Point 4: FOLLOW MY EXAMPLE IN:

4. HAVING ONE DETERMINED PURPOSE IN LIFE

Philippians 3:10-11

- 10 For my determined purpose is that I may know Him that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His person more strongly and more clearly. And that I may, in that same way, come to know the power outflowing from His resurrection, which it exerts over believers, and that I may so share His sufferings as to be continually transformed in Spirit into His likeness, even to His death.
- 11 That if possible, I may attain to the spiritual and moral resurrection that lifts me out from among the dead, even while in the body.

Paul had reduced his goal in life to a single objective.

That I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His person more strongly and more clearly

We talk about a lot about goals, but if we can fix our determination on this one thing, everything else will fall into place.

Every meaningful objective will be met.

Matthew 6: 33 "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you."

POINT #5 FOLLOW MY EXAMPLE BY

5. PRESSING ON NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS

Philippians 3:12-14

- 12 Not that I have now attained this ideal or am already made perfect, **but I press on** to lay hold of and make my own, that for which Christ Jesus the Messiah, has laid hold of me and made me His own.
- 13 I do not consider, brethren, that I have captured and made it my own [yet], but one thing I do, it is my one aspiration: Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead
- 14 **I press on** toward the goal to win the supreme and heavenly prize to which God in Christ Jesus is calling us upward.

Through the years I have seen so many people Quit!
Quit the Lord, Quit the Church, Quit their marriages

I can honestly say
Valerie and I, have pressed on
Through many dangers toils and snares
We have not quit
I have thought about quitting
I have even tried to quit
But we are still here

KEYS TO PRESSING ON

1. KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE PRIZE

2. FIX YOUR EYES ON JESUS
3. DON'T LOOK BACK (Don't quit even if you fail)
4. REFUSE TO BE DISTRACTED OR DIVERTED

POINT # 6 FOLLOW MY EXAMPLE BY:

6. Making sure you have convictions

- 15 So let those of us who are spiritually mature and full-grown have this mind and hold these convictions and if in any respect you have a different attitude of mind, God will make this clear to you also.

Someone once said: We hold our opinions, but our Convictions hold us

People are not willing to die for their opinions
But they are willing to die for their convictions

Paul is saying: Make sure that these things are deep convictions in your life. Not just opinions.

And if they are not convictions: God will make this clear to you

How might He make it clear to you?

However He has to:

He will be faithful to keep at you
Keep telling you
In annoying your conscience
Keep interrupting your selfish agenda
By thwarting your plans
By revealing His Word
By speaking to you

POINT #7 FOLLOW MY EXAMPLE BY:

7. BEING TRUE TO WHAT YOU ALREADY KNOW

- 16 Only let us hold true to what we have already attained and walk and order our lives by that.
17 Brethren, follow my example and observe those who live after the pattern we have set you.

This is a huge problem:

I know what to do but I don't do it
And even more problematic: and I think little of it.
We know it, but don't live it, and that's not a crisis?

Admitting it is the first step
Lord, I know this stuff, but I don't live it

Most often the problem is simply this:

I am trying to live in my own strength
Apart from God's Grace
God gives more grace to the humble

POINT #8 FOLLOW MY EXAMPLE BY:

8. EMBRACING THE CROSS OF CHRIST

Philippians 3:18-19

- 18 For there are many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, who walk (live) as enemies of the Cross of Christ,
19 Whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things

Matthew 16:24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me

Embracing the cross may roll off the lips real easy
But this is, without a doubt, one of the most important and difficult challenges in life

Everything in this world
And everything within us
Will seduce us to indulge our flesh

But Jesus said: Who ever want to follow me must learn to say "No" to themselves

The cross is a place where our flesh is put to death
And for us who follow Jesus this must be a lifestyle

Who is an enemy of the cross of Christ?

- Someone more concerned this world's pleasure than the pleasure of heaven
- Someone more concerned with their own glory than bringing Glory to God
- More interested in earthly things than heavenly things

By this definition we all have been enemies of the cross of Christ

Temptation comes to us all, every day

Whether it is standing in front of the refrigerator door
Casting your eyes on your neighbor's spouse
Or coveting your neighbor's car
Or not returning the money
Or entertaining a fantasy
Or simply contemplating a short cut
Or releasing your anger
Or skipping your devotions
Or refusing to do what the Lord is prompting you to do
Or, Or, Or

Just saying "No" is a daily battle
So let's not be enemies of the cross
Let's be enemies of our self indulgence
Let's look it in the eye and choose Jesus

We have something to think about

We have opportunity to reconsider
To Repent
To Return ----- To be restored

I want us to close today
By signing an old Hymn that speaks to the things we have said today:

As we sing it – Mean it

All to Jesus I surrender
All to Him I freely give
I will ever love and trust Him
In His presence daily live

All to Jesus I surrender
Humbly at His feet I bow
Worldly pleasures all forsaken
Take me, Jesus, take me now

I surrender all
I surrender all
All to Thee my blessed Savior
I surrender all

All to Jesus I surrender
Make me Savior wholly thine
May Thy Holy Spirit fill me
May I know Thy power divine

I surrender all
I surrender all
All to Thee my blessed Savior
I surrender all