

3/14/99

Philippians 3:12-21

Paul the apostle having laid out that the only thing that God honors is the righteousness of Christ, he now moves on to declare that Christ is the goal of the believer.

To often people say that Christ is their goal but all their energies are invested in many other things, resulting in a superficial life.

3:12-16 **Paul's reveals that he lived to always go forwards.**

3:12 Paul's perspective while in this body.

- 1) Paul realized he had not attained "lambano" all nor was he perfect, he was still in process.
 - a) The word means to get hold of by practical appropriation as a completed action. The verb is in the aorist indicating from the time of his conversion till the present.
 - a) This was to combat any misinterpretation or perversion of the doctrine of sanctification that taught perfection at a point in this life, rather than ongoing transformation that will

ultimately at death or rapture accomplish glorification!

- b) The Corinthians thought they had and Paul mocks them. 1Cor. 4:8-13
- 2) Paul pressed on "dioko" means pursue or chase in the perfect tense, continuous action.
 - a) The word is used of a hunter chasing and hunting down his prey. Phil. 3:6
 - b) The phrase lay hold "katalambano" is used in papyri of colonists appropriating land.
 - * Paul was a man of passion for God and the things of God!
- 3) Paul is describing the Damascus road experience when Christ apprehended Paul not Paul Christ, therefore Paul was always pursuing!
 - a) Too often Christians are discouraged, complacent or apathetic
 - b) Paul is not suggesting that they compare themselves by themselves or among themselves, being unwise but rather according to measure and rule of God had called them to. 2Cor. 10:12-13
 - c) I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. 2Tim. 4:7

3:13 Paul's pursuit to apprehend.

- 1) Paul did not think he accomplished all that was to be accomplished in his life.
 - * “I” is emphatic!
 - a) The address is to the brethren.
 - b) Perhaps some of them were exalting Paul more than they should have?
 - c) Perhaps some were espousing and teaching that a believer could arrive at a state of perfection.
 - * Perhaps even exalting themselves above Paul in view of the fact that he had not yet arrived to spiritual perfection as they? Even as those today who think themselves more spiritual by the fact that they their health and wealth!
- 2) Paul did one thing constantly as a process.
 - a) He was forgetting those things which were behind.
 - b) He then was reaching forward to the things which were ahead.
 - * The phrase “reaching forward” is a metaphor of an athlete in a race with his head and hands stretched out to lay hold of the finish line!
 - b) He did not look down or undervalued the past accomplishment in Christ but he did not live in the past, thinking of the good old days becoming complacent and satisfied.

- c) He did not allow past things, good or bad to encumber or impede him from moving on and reaching forward to those things which were ahead, being open and anticipating God’s direction and guidance.
 - * This never implies that we forget things of the past but that we trust God to live above them by the grace of God!
 - 1)) We are to put our hand to plough, don't look back.
 - 2)) Only one receives the prize in a race. 1Cor. 9:24
 - 3)) Laying aside every weight and Sin... Heb. 12:1-2
 - 4) You did run well who did hinder you. Gal. 5:7
 - * One thing have I desired of the Lord... Ps. 27:1

3.14 Paul’s passion in life.

- 1) Paul pressed towards the goal.
 - a) The word goal “skopos” comes from to gaze at as in the chariot races, in order to not deviate from one’s course, for it could be fatal. 1x
 - b) The word is used in the classics of a mark for shooting at.
 - * It implies that a goal is set and that it is knowable as well as attainable.

- 2) Paul identifies the goal, for the prize of the upward call of God.
- a) The specific things and works God calls us to are not the goal and prize, they are merely the vehicle to work in us spiritual growth, development and maturity.
 - b) God is not so interested in the works as much as He is in the works that will work in us to press on in our maturity to make us more like Christ.
 - * Literally to run along the marked out course as in a race, and it is a custom course that will not only accomplish the works but bring you to the end of yourself and mold and shape you and I into the image of Christ.
 - b) The ultimate perfection regarding our spiritual maturity in this life is the physical resurrection, ending up in glorification, just like Christ.
 - c) The Lord will reward us if we have walked in these works and done them out of agape love! 1Cor. 4:5; 9:24-27; Eph. 2:10
 - * The prize is Christ as well as the call, the runner looks not at the spectators but the prize. "Well done good and faithful Servant!"

- d) The upward call of God on his life as the apostle to the Gentiles, that is in one sense the prize, his heavenly calling, "in Christ Jesus". Heb. 3:1
 - * Just like if he heard his name called out by the judge to receive the reward.

3:15-16 Paul's exhortation to every believer.

- 1) Those who are mature "teleioi" are to have this mind, one that understands and is pursuing the things of God, pressing forwards to the mark.
- 2) Those who thought other than what Paul had declared, God was able and would reveal it personally to them if they sought Him.
 - a) Not all were for Paul.
 - b) Not all thought as Paul.

3:16 The command to all believers.

- 1) Paul says let's walk according to the degree we have obtained in maturity.
 - * Act your age!
- 2) Paul says let's walk by the same rule, a military word, to go on in order according to the general command, the principle of moving forwards.
- 3) Paul says let's walk in the same mind, acknowledging, understanding and applying it.

* The life and mind of Christ, one of a servant! Phil. 2:5-8

3:17-19 Paul's reveals the contrast of believer and unbeliever.

3:17 The mutual walk of all believers.

- 1) Paul tells his brothers in Christ to “follow together” in his example, appearing once in the New Testament.
- 2) The word example “typos” a visible impression made by the stroke of some instrument to be a pattern or model. Jn. 20:25
 - a) Paul wanted them to be imitators of him, only because he was an imitator of Christ. 1Cor. 11:1
 - b) The reason Paul could ask this was that he was being an imitator of Christ. 1Cor. 11:1; Eph. 5:1; 1Thess. 1:6; 2 Thess. 3:7-9
- 3) Paul also tells them to note “skopeite” again in the sense to watch and follow, those who walked as he. 2:4
 - a) The important thing to note here is that others had the same potential as Paul, he was not some super saint.
 - b) The practical value is that they were taught by word and example.

- 4) Paul tells them that they have no excuse due to the fact that Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus were an example to them.
 - a) Accountability is due to potential.
 - b) Responsibility is due to privilege.

3:18 The warning against those who walk contrary.

- 1) The apostle declares that many walk as the enemies of the cross of Christ.
 - a) Some say they were those who were attempting to add afflictions to Paul. Phil. 1:16
 - b) Others say they were pagans. Phil. 1:28
 - c) Still others say the Judaizers. Phil. 3:2
 - d) Yet others say these are those who had walked at one time but had gone back.
 - 1)) The interesting thing is that Paul did not say he was weeping for any of those mentioned till now.
 - 2)) Why? Could it be because they had at one time heard and come to the knowledge of the truth and now turned from it?

* I think this is a very strong possibility as well as antinomian libertines who were never born again!
- e) Yet Paul is declaring this with tears!

- 2) The apostle declares that he has told them in the pasts often.
- 3) The apostle tells them again, even weeping about these individuals.

3:19 The end of such people.

- 1) Their end is destruction.
 - a) The focus is not inhalation, all will live on in eternity, either apart from God or with God. Rev. 20:4-6, 11-15
 - b) The focus is eternal destruction “apoleia” opposite to salvation, perdition in view of the White Throne Judgment. Phil. 1:28; 1Cor. 1:18
Matt. 13 tares and wheat, 2Pet. 2: Jude; Rev. 20
* Ever learning but never coming to the knowledge of the truth, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof. 2Tim. 3:5-7
- 2) Their god is their belly, sensual. Rom. 1
 - a) They live for their own wills and sensual indulgences out of its intended design.
 - b) They live after the flesh and the works of the flesh. Gal. 5:16-21
- 3) Their glory is in their shame, shameful.
 - a) They have no sense of right or wrong.
 - b) They have lost the ability to blush.
- 4) They set their minds on earthly things, secular.

- a) They are one with the order of the fallen world system.
- b) They are whole heartedly given over to the pursuit of the material and physical interests.
* These will be present for the hour of temptation that will come upon all the earth dwellers. Rev. 3:10

3:20-21 Paul reveals the believers citizenship and expectation.

3: 20 The believers focus is not earth but heaven.

- 1) The believer is subject to live by the standards of heaven and it’s Ruler.
 - a) The word citizenship “politeuma” refers to the seat of government in the country where citizens are, we get our word politics, referring to the state a person belongs and their rights and responsibilities. Phil. 1:27
 - b) They were Roman citizens living in a Roman colony and therefore had to conduct themselves accordingly.
 - c) They were heavenly citizens living in the church of God and need to conduct themselves accordingly, as pilgrims and sojourners.

- 2) Heaven is the place from where the believer is eagerly waiting for His Savior.
- a) Eagerly waiting as the evidence of one's expectation, denoting the withdrawal of attention from inferior objects habitually and focusing on the more important. Phil. 1:20; Rom. 8:19; 1Thess. 1:10; Heb. 9:28
 - b) Savior "soter" was used for the emperors and kings.
* The blessed hope. Tit. 2:13
 - c) The word "is" appeared earlier as "being" and is an antecedent condition. 2:6
 - d) The believer is seated in the heavenlies the as a heavenly citizen. Eph. 1:1:3
 - e) Evidence of being raised with Christ and living in the resurrected power her and now. Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:1-2
* Desired a better country. Heb. 11:16

3:21 The final expectation of the believer.

- 1) Christ will transform "metaschematizo", metamorphosis our physical bodies which are weak and lowly in comparison to what they are going to be.
- 2) Christ will conform them into the likeness of His glorious body. 2Cor. 5:1-8; Jn. 3:1-3; 1Thess. 4:13-18

- * This is the reason why to die is gain. Phil. 1:21
- 3) Christ will subdue our bodies according to His ability, the super-natural. Jn. 5:21, 25-29
 - a) The word "subdue" means to put in order. 1Cor. 15:25-27
 - 1)) Paul told Arippa, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" Acts 26:8
 - b)) Paul's confidence was stated from the beginning. Phil. 1:6
 - b)) Christ who is our life... Col. 3:4
 - 2)) One molecule of hemoglobin--the protein in blood that carries oxygen to every part of the body--contains 3032 atoms of carbon, 4812 atoms of hydrogen, 780 atoms of atoms of nitrogen, 4 atoms of iron, 880 atoms of oxygen, and 12 atoms of sulfur. All 9520 atoms have to be hooked to each other in a certain order and in exactly the right way--just to make one molecule essential to physical life.
 - a)) In every three person a three billion cells die and are replaced every minute.
 - b)) The human brain contains some thirty billion cells; the skin has about a million cells per square inch; and in the veins some twenty

trillion cells go about their business.

- c) All cells reproduce by dividing, each receiving a complete copy or blueprint, the code of life.
- d) The nucleus of each cell is dominated by chromosomes which carry the chemistry of every characteristic of the living creature.
- e) Each chromosome is made up of genes and each gene is a distinct strand of DNA and contains the code of making one particular kind of protein, the basic building block of life. (John Phillips, Phil. Com.:152-2)