

Book of Philippians

Part 5

Philippians 3:15-21

Philippians 3 NIV

15 All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. **16** Only let us live up to what we have already attained.

- If we remember from last week; Paul's challenge with the Church in Philippi was not a moral dilemma but more of a theological challenge. Certain Judaizing Christians were introducing the OT custom of circumcision, as something needed to be fully right with God, to these new Gentile believers.

Vs. 15a

All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things.

The mature view Paul had, he wrote about:

Vs. 7-11

7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. **8** What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ **9** and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. **10** I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, **11** and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

Vs. 15b

And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you.

- The Apostle Paul realizes that not every believer has matured to this place that he is at. He also trusts that God will make clear to them what he has made clear to Paul.

Vs. 16

Only let us live up to what we have already attained.

NKJV - “Nevertheless, to *the degree* that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.”

- Legalism will always leads to Self-righteousness and Pride, this will ultimately lead to division among believers.
- This is a call to unity, and unity around the truth they know and against the potential division brought in by legalism. Paul’s desire for the church is that they stay the course and remain united.

Vs. 17-19

17 Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. **18** For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. **19** Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things.

- Paul was an incredible mentor in the Bible and it is like him to say “Join together in following my example...” This is very similar to what he also said in 1 Corinthians 11:1 “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.”

- We shouldn't think that Paul was arrogant for saying this, he never pretended to be sinless or perfect.
- The fact that Paul was willing to be an example and not just a lecturer, tells us a lot about his heart.

1st - Paul, coming from a devout Jewish background it's likely he had examples of Judaism, but even Christ called the most devout religious Jews hypocrites. This means they talked one way and lived another.

2nd - We know that after Paul encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus he spent three years in Saudi Arabia where he was mentored by the Lord and did not consult with any human being not even the Apostles. After three years Paul then went up to Jerusalem and met with Peter and then James the brother of Jesus. **Galatians 1:15-18**

3rd - Perhaps Paul believed in learning by example because Barnabas was an incredible example to Paul in his early ministry.

- For this reason Paul says in **1 Corinthians 11:1** "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ."
- Christianity was never meant to be a theory. Christianity is a revelation of Jesus that leads to a transformed heart/transformed life and then the practice of following him.
 - In other words we don't theorize repentance, we practice it.
 - We don't theorize surrender to God, we practice it.
 - We don't theorize obedience, we practice it.
 - We don't theorize giving, we give.
 - We don't theorize loving others, we do it.

- Christianity means - **This is what Jesus did now let's do it...**
- The definition of Christian is: "like Christ". Just as Christ modeled his life to his disciples and those disciples modeled Christ to the ones they disciplined. Lord help us to model Christ to those around us.
- Every person is an example of something... We've heard professional athletes and celebrities say, "don't look at me as a role model" - but that's not the way it works. Everyone is example to someone...
- My prayer is that we would follow Christ and model what that looks like to our children and grand children and our next door neighbor.

Examples are powerful.

They show us:

- It can be done...
- This is what it looks like...
- You can do it...

Every person on this planet is looking at examples: our friends, our coworkers, our family members, our spouses and perhaps most importantly our children...

- The question is what example are they seeing? Cardi B, Taylor Swift, Kanye West, Drake, J. Cole or Mom and Dad living for Jesus daily?
 1. Daily surrender to Jesus, in a world full of darkness.
 2. Forgiveness when it doesn't make sense.
 3. Kindness instead of cruelty.
 4. Joy even in the midst of a storm.

Proverbs 22:6 NKJV

Train up a child in the way he should go,
And when he is old he will not depart from it.

- It doesn't say "raise up a child", it says "train up a child"
- Friends the movies we watch, the music we listen to, the language we use, the choices we make, the priority we set, is all part of the example and training we give them.
- May we have a heart like Paul the Apostle to love Jesus with our whole hearts: it can be done, this is what it looks like, you can do it...

When it comes to being a good Example for Jesus:

- It's not about being impressive, it's about being real.
- It's not about performance, it's about authenticity.
- As a Parent, it was always important to me that my kids know I'm the same person at church and at home.
- Jesus never condemned a humble sinner. Jesus condemned the hypocrite because they were actors and pretenders.

Luke 18:9-14 NIV

9 To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: **10** "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

11 The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. **12** I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'

13 “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’

14 “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

Now in Vs. 18,19 - Paul tells us what a bad example looks like...

Vs. 18,19

18 For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. **19** Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things.

Many live as enemies of the Cross of Christ. These are those who fall into the opposite ditch of the legalist. These are those who fall into the ditch of licentiousness meaning a license for sin.

The legalistic Christian makes everything a sin and the licentious Christian sees nothing as sin. They use their liberty in Christ as a license to indulge the flesh. Honestly this is what we see mostly today in the Church.

This kind of Christian does not despise the Cross Christ died on, they despise the Cross Christ called them to carry. The Cross is a reminder to die to self and our carnal desires. The licentious Christian is a carnal Christian who has created a license for sin with every excuse needed to keep them from taking up their cross and dying to selfish desires.

“Paul had to contend with people like this in 1 Corinthians 6 and Romans 6, who thought that salvation comes without repentance and conversion, and who thought that as long as your soul was saved, it didn’t matter what you did with your body.” (Guzik)

Their god is their stomach. This describes a certain kind of idolatry. Not that they were focused on what they ate, but “stomach” here has a broader reference to sensual indulgence in general. They live for the pleasures of the body, mind, and soul.

Their glory is in their shame. This shows the kingdom they are of... Those who glory in what should be considered shameful have forsaken the Fear of the Lord. This goes back to **Philippians 2:12** *“continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling”*.

Their mind is set on earthly things. This describes the focus of their life. It was not to please and worship God, but to get along in this world. Their attitude was the same as the rich fool in

Luke 12:16-21

16 And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. 17 He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’”

18 “Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. 19 And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.”’”

20 “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you.’”

Vs. 20-21

20 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, **21** who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

This is the reminder we all need:

- Our Citizenship is in Heaven... This statement would have meant something to the Philippians, who greatly valued their Roman citizenship. Just as the Philippians could consider themselves citizens of Rome and were under Roman laws and customs (even though they were in fact far from Rome) so Christians should consider themselves citizens of heaven.

Just as the Roman authority was great at the time of this letter Paul uses this as a kind of illustration to the great power of Christ and His Kingdom that is coming...

NKJV reads like this:

Vs. 20-21 NKJV

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.

- It's important to remember - Christ is coming! This is central to the message the Apostle Paul preached.

Christ' Kingdom is coming and when he comes a couple of things are going to happen.

1. He will: “transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body,”
2. He will: “subdue all things to Himself”

Closing: