

Philippians 3:15-21

Review

- Paul gives his philosophy for Christian Living - the fact that our lives are to be all about Jesus
 - **Philippians 1:21 ESV - (21) For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.**
- God's Eternal Economy is inverse to this world's
 - **Philippians 3:8-9 ESV - (8) Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as *rubbish*, in order 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 comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith--**
 - There are debits and credits (Gains and Losses) in any economy
- **Philippians 3:10-11 ESV - (10) know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, (11) that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.**
 - He hopes to obtain the OUT RESURRECTION from the dead
 - Our resurrection is NOT conditional
 - He's striving for an EVEN BETTER resurrection on the last day
 - **Hebrews 11:35 NIV - Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection.**
 - There are different degrees of joy associated with the resurrection based conditionally upon the degree of our faith in this life.
- Last week, I compared this conditional reward by comparing it to "the Crown of Life," which is another conditional reward for SOME believers:
 - **James 1:12 ESV - (12) Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.**
 - I pointed out that NOT ALL believers remain steadfast under trial, stand the test, or even love him
 - But these are qualifications given for receiving this crown
- We see the crown of life again in Revelation, written to the church in Smyrna
 - **Revelation 2:10 ESV - (10) Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.**
 - Here, we see people being challenged to be faithful unto death
 - Consistent with the criteria given in James 1:12
 - The Bible says here that they would be qualified for the crown of life
- I mentioned that it is possible to be a believer and not love God
 - **Matthew 22:36-40 ESV - (36) "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" (37) And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with**

all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. (38) This is the great and first commandment. (39) And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (40) On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

- We break both of these everyday
- It is tempting to choose our own definition for love, and say that we love God, but we are held to His standard:
 - **1 John 4:19-20 ESV - (19) We love because he first loved us. (20) If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.**
- If loving God is required for salvation, then so is removing all hatred from your heart.
 - A person who is dead in their sin, is helpless to contribute to his salvation.
 - There is nothing good in him
 - He lacks the CAPACITY to love on God's terms
- The commandment to love God and love our Neighbor was given to believers
 - Why would he give the command to people who couldn't break it?
- Paul went on to give us a great picture of how this conditional reward motivates him:

Philippians 3:12-14 ESV - (12) Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. (13) Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, (14) I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

- He's not claiming to have already earned this OUT RESURRECTION, nor is he perfect
- But "this is one thing I do", he says:
 - FORGETTING what lies behind - distracts him from Jesus
 - STRAINING forward to what lies ahead - not going with the flow
 - I press on toward the GOAL for the PRIZE of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus
 - He is keeping his eyes UPWARD, beyond the end of this life

Study

Philippians 3:15 ESV - (15) Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.

- Paul is saying: "If you are mature in your faith, you will understand and agree with what I just said in the previous verses... If you disagree with any of it, God will show you that you are wrong"
 - Paul has a confidence in what he just said
 - He knows that it is inspired - that it is God-breathed - and is universally applicable for all believers
- How can Paul say that?
 - Isn't there room for other ideas?

- Earlier in his letter, Paul said this to the Philippians:
 - **Philippians 1:27 ESV - (27) Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel,**
- Only one Holy Spirit?
 - **Ephesians 2:18 ESV - (18) For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.**
- God is consistent
 - The elders get together and pray about direction for the church, and we do nothing unless all of us are on the same page.
 - The Holy Spirit does not have multiple personalities
 - When we are doing that and seeking His will, the Holy Spirit will give us all the same direction.

Philippians 3:15 ESV - (15) Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.

- This verse talks about “God revealing truths” to believers
 - **1 Corinthians 2:11-16 ESV - (11) For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.**
 - Think about yourself - I can't read your mind, but you can
 - That is your spirit
 - Remember that we are made in God's image
 - Similarly - we can't read God's mind
 - Only the Spirit of God knows thoughts of God
 - **(12) Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.**
 - God has put His Holy Spirit into believers
 - So that we can understand the things of God
 - **(13) And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. (14) The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. (15) The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. (16) "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.**
 - God reveals spiritual TRUTHS through His Holy Spirit that lives in us
 - Vs. 16 says that we have the “mind of Christ”
- Anytime God opens your eyes to give you some new spiritual understanding - that is a work of the Holy Spirit
 - Paul was saying that mature believers will come to also understand these truths if they are seeking Him.
 - **Galatians 5:16-17 ESV - (16) But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. (17) For the desires of the flesh are against**

the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

- As believers, we have two entities within us:
 - The Spirit of God
 - We also have our old sin nature (the flesh)
- At any point in time, we are living by the Spirit of God, or by our old flesh

Philippians 3:15 ESV - (15) Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.

- Here's what the Bible says about spiritual maturity:
- **Hebrews 5:11-14 ESV - (11) About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. (12) For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, (13) for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. (14) But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.**
 - Spiritual maturity is characterized by discernment (understanding)
 - That comes through constant practice to distinguish good from evil
 - Spiritual maturity is a life-long process and there are no shortcuts
 - Like painting a fence
 - Our spiritual maturity is tested daily in our walk
 - Do we walk in the spirit according to what He has taught us about what is good?
 - Or do we walk according to our old sinful flesh, **IGNORING** the Spirit of God in us?
- The message in the first half of Philippians 3 is not spiritual milk
 - It is solid food that **MATURE** believers will recognize as truth

Philippians 3:16 ESV - (16) Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

- Context:
 - **Philippians 3:11-12 ESV - (11) that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. (12) Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.**
- Remember that Paul is talking about conditional spiritual rewards
- The message in vs. 16 is that we live in such a way that we not lose rewards that we've already earned
 - **2 Corinthians 5:10 ESV - (10) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.**
 - This is the Bema Judgement Seat of Christ - Just for believers
 - When we give an account
 - Walking in the Spirit will ensure that the rewards are gained and retained
 - Walking in the flesh will put rewards at risk

Philippians 3:17 ESV - (17) Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.

- Compare to this verse:
 - **Hebrews 12:1-2 NIV - (1) Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, (2) fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**
 - Philippians says to keep your eyes on Godly men & women
 - Hebrews says to keep your eyes on Jesus
 - So which is it?
 - Word in Hebrews for “Fix your eyes” on Jesus
 - Aphoraō - off-or-AH-ho = “turn your eyes away from other things and fix them on something” (Jesus)
 - Word in Philippians for “Keep your eyes” on Godly men
 - Skopeō - scop-AY-oh = “look at / or observe”
 - Jesus is the GOAL that we are to fix our eyes on
 - We keep our eyes on Jesus to know WHAT we are to do
 - We can observe other faithful believers as examples of HOW we do it
 - Has God ever shown you how to walk closer with Him by observing someone else?
 - We have to be careful to not put anyone on a pedestal
 - Listen to Paul describing his own sin nature during a particular season:
 - **Romans 7:18-19 ESV - (18) For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. (19) For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.**
 - There are people who God will bring into your life who will serve as an example for you as they point you to Jesus
 - Imitate them, but know they aren't perfect

Philippians 3:18-19 ESV - (18) For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. (19) Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.

- These people are in contrast to the ones we should imitate
 - Sometimes God brings people into your life to serve as a warning
- Who are these people?
 - Believers who placed their trust in Christ for their salvation
 - They took their eyes off of Jesus in their walk
 - They are WALKING as enemies of the cross of Christ because they tell people they are believers, but live contrary to what Christ taught
 - Their end is destruction
 - **1 Corinthians 3:13-15 ESV - (13) each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. (14) If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. (15) If anyone's**

work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

- Our works will be tested in the flames too
- This picture of surviving the fire but losing everything is the destruction that is talked about in vs. 19
- Their god is their belly (appetite)
 - Their desires are not for the things above, but instead for the things on earth
- They glory in their shame
 - These folks take pride in the very things that they should be ashamed of
- Paul summarizes them as having their minds set on earthly things
 - They aren't thinking about eternity

Philippians 3:20-21 ESV - (20) But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, (21) who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

- This is not our home!
 - We deal with sin, pain, hatred, injustice, fear, and disease
 - We are just passing through, and living by faith means fixing our eyes on Him and living for the day when we will see him face to face.
- Our citizenship is in heaven.
- One day, he will obtain a resurrection from the dead and our bodies will be transformed to be like his by the power of his resurrection.
 - Those with their minds set on earthly things will experience shame at his coming
 - **1 John 2:28 ESV - (28) And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.**