

# Philippians 3:12-21

- Paul's Joy Epistle - Written from prison late in his life
  - a. Great reminder that our joy doesn't depend on our circumstances
- Paul has a deep connection and love for the people of Philippi
  - a. They have been faithful partners in Paul's ministry
- Philosophy for Christian Living
  - a. God uses our burdens and afflictions for his glory
    - **Philippians 1:12 ESV - (12) I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel,**
  - b. Paul's focus is on Christ
    - **Philippians 1:21 ESV - (21) For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.**
  - c. He encourages them to consider how they live
    - **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,**
- He showed us a Pattern for Christian Living
  - a. How we see Others
    - **Philippians 2:3 ESV - (3) Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.**
  - b. Christ demonstrated the ultimate humility
    - **Philippians 2:8 ESV - (8) And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.**
  - c. God is the one who does the work in us
    - **Philippians 2:13 ESV for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for**
- Reevaluated the live he used to live
  - a. **Philippians 3:4-6 ESV - (4) though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: (5) circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; (6) as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.**
    - Paul just gave us his resume as a super Jew
- God's Economy is different:
  - a. There are debits and credits or gains and losses in any economy
  - b. God's eternal economy is inverse to the world's:
    - Just after laying out his Jewish credentials, he says this:
    - **(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**
      - Look at what Paul is giving up (it is on the Loss side of the ledger):
        - All things - Everything
        - What the world values - is of no value in heaven
  - c. In vs. 9, Paul is continuing to unpack that which is a credit (or gain) in the eternal economy

- (8b), 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--
  - It is what he is willing to consider EVERYTHING a loss for:
    - Gaining Christ
    - Be Found in Him
    - Not having a righteousness that comes from his own works
    - Having an ETERNAL righteousness through faith in Christ
      - The righteousness that Paul tried to produce on his own did nothing to affect his standing before God.
      - Christ's righteousness, which was applied to Paul by faith, satisfied the debt that was owed because of his sin.
      - This is POSITIONAL righteousness before God
- d. (10) that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,
  - Paul's POSITIONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS was secure
  - Paul's goal is to be like JESUS --> PRACTICAL RIGHTEOUSNESS
- (11) that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.
  - a. When we study the Bible, we always explain scripture with scripture.
    - Here's what it DOESN'T mean
      - He's not talking about the resurrection for believers as something that is conditional.
    - We know this because of other scripture
      - **John 6:39-40 ESV - (39) And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. (40) For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."**
      - All believers will be unconditionally resurrected on the last day.
  - b. Where else is that word used in scripture?
    - Original Greek is inspired - English translation is not
    - Word for "resurrection" is: exanastasis (ex-ah-nah-stas-sis)
      - Root word is anastasis (ah-nah-stas-sis)
        - Common word used for "resurrection"
      - This word is different. It has EX added to the front, which means Out
        - Literally "out resurrection"
        - This is the only place where this word is used in the Bible
  - (11) that by any means possible I may attain the (out) resurrection from the dead.
    - a. Paul is seeking this "out resurrection" from the dead on the last day
    - b. We've seen how scripture is clear that this is not talking about being saved
    - c. Let's turn to Hebrews 11 - the Faith chapter
      - **Hebrews 11:1 ESV - (1) Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.**
      - **Hebrews 11:32-35 NIV - (32) And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, (33) who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, (34) quenched the fury**

**of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. (35) 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.**

- This passage details just a sampling of what God accomplished through men and women of faith
- Verse 35 says: There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released SO THAT they might gain an EVEN BETTER resurrection.
  - Suggests that there are different degrees of joy associated with the resurrection based conditionally upon the degree of our faith in this life.

d. Hebrews 11:35 helps us with Philippians 3:10:

■ **“(10) that I may 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 (out) resurrection from the dead.”**

- He's talking about striving to attain an even better resurrection experience that is conditional upon his faith in this life.
- Both passages talk about suffering as a factor in receiving this different type of resurrection experience.
- It is a type of conditional reward, similar to the “crown of life” in James 1:12
  - **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 just spent the last however many minutes trying to unpack the meaning of one word for a couple of reasons:

1. It is critically important that believers know how to study God's Word

- **Romans 12:2 ESV - (2) Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.**
- We are called to be engaged with our minds and to TEST and DISCERN
- If we aren't actively engaging our minds in God's Word, then our idle disengaged minds are susceptible to false teaching.

2. The second reason for spending so much time on that is because the following verses are based on the meaning of that one word.

**(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.**

- Paul says that he isn't claiming to have already obtained THIS or that he's already perfect
  - THIS = the spiritual reward of an even better resurrection
  - He hasn't obtained that yet,
- We can't out give God

**(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.**

- At this point in his ministry, Paul had done a lot, but he's not resting on his laurels.
- Regardless of how God chooses to merit rewards in heaven, Paul gives us his philosophy for walking with Jesus:

- (13b) 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.
  - Paul had an enemy who would have loved to keep him focused on what was behind him.
  - Jesus was speaking about Satan in John 8:
    - **John 8:44 ESV - (44) You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.**
    - Satan usually starts with a nugget of truth and twists it
      - He twisted scripture when tempting Jesus
      - He loves to use nuggets of truth from our past to derail our future
- Notice his word choice about the future
  - STRAINING forward to what lies ahead
    - He's not putting his hope in good days that are to come
    - He knows that there is effort and energy that is going to be exerted to get through what lies ahead
      - In this life, he's expecting more of what was behind him to be ahead of him
        - **1 Peter 4:12 ESV - (12) Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.**
    - If you and I are not STRAINING forward to what lies ahead, it's because we're going with the flow
      - Our enemy would love for us to be content with that
        - In fact, we sometimes confuse God's Will with the path of least resistance
        - Waiting for God to make my path easy is not the same as seeking His will.
        - We know God's Will through his Word.
          - **Psalm 119:105 ESV - (105) Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.**
  - STRAINING occurs in the presence of resistance
    - Going with the flow doesn't produce resistance
    - **John 15:19 ESV - (19) If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.**
- In the same way that Paul's focus isn't in what is behind him, he's not focused on the future, either.
  - His eyes are fixed beyond this life.
  - (13b) 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 moving forward, but his eyes are not fixed on what lies ahead of him in life
    - The GOAL is the person of Jesus Christ
    - The PRIZE is in the upward call of God in Christ Jesus