

Kenmore Baptist Church Message Outline 24 May 2015 (Jo Leutton)

Life with Christ – Part 5 Hope and Joy – Philippians 3

A Reminder - Philippians 3:1

Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.

- Paul commands the Philippians to rejoice!

The Past - Philippians 3:2-11

Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh— 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: 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; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

- Verses 2-3: Paul is playing on words and ideas here, making fun of the Judaisers.
- Paul demonstrates how much confidence he could put in the worldly things he has done
 - o He was circumcised in the correct way, according to the Mosaic Law
 - o He was a true Israelite – he wasn't a proselyte brought in as an adult
 - o He was of the tribe of Benjamin – one of the faithful tribes
 - o A 'Hebrew out of Hebrews' – the best of the best
 - o As to the Law, a Pharisee – one who held to the 613 laws strictly
 - o As to zeal, a persecutor of the church – he was willing to stand up for what he believed in
 - o As to righteousness under the law, becoming blameless – he totally obeyed the letter of the law, he was on his way to being 'it'

- If we take our time to put our confidence in the things of this world, we are missing the point.

The Present - Philippians 3:8-11

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 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— that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

- We see here the inversion of Jesus, of the Kingdom
 - In order to gain life, we have to lose it, let it all go, get low so we can be lifted up
 - We put our faith in Jesus that He will do the lifting up
 - When we try on our own, ultimately it's worth nothing, we cannot be our own means of righteousness
- Paul wants us to know that it is all about Jesus

What We Now Do - Philippians 3:12-16

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. 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, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

- We see the response of the thankful heart
- Our experience of the love and life of Jesus causes us to respond

The Future – Hope - Philippians 3:17-21

Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, 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.

- We have a model and a principle
 - o What your eye hooks to multiplies
 - o Paul encourages us to imitate those who imitate Christ – keep your eyes on them!

- We should be reminded that our citizenship is in heaven

- What the world doesn't give you, it can't take away

Discussion Questions

1. How do you respond to Paul's command to rejoice? What does that look like for you?

2. Being a Christian can be difficult in a world where everyone has an opinion on how to live, how you should behave, and what you are allowed to talk about. Paul made it clear that the old ways (in this case of Judaism) weren't the way to find true relationship with God. With many people suggesting multiple pathways to multiple gods, what is the anchor of your relationship with the one true God?

3. Paul lists his earthly credentials – a quite impressive list – as being worth nothing when it comes to knowing Jesus. What does this look like in your life? Are you like Paul, able to count it as loss compared to Jesus? Or are you in the process of learning these lessons? Spend some time sharing with someone else what this journey has looked like for you so far.

4. Paul talks about how he presses on toward the goal, that he puts aside what is in the past. What does it look like for you to 'press on toward the goal of the upward call of Christ'? What does that mean to you? What are you putting aside?

5. The things of this world pull people away from the things of God – the people in this passage whose *'god is their belly'* are an example of this. Where is that tension for you? Who can you imitate to help you walk through this area in a godly way?

6. The final hope of the resurrection of the dead, and all things being made subject to the reign of Jesus, looms large in this passage. But before that, Paul makes it clear that we are *currently* citizens of heaven. What does that mean to you? What does the Bible say about it? What difference can that make in your day-to-day life?