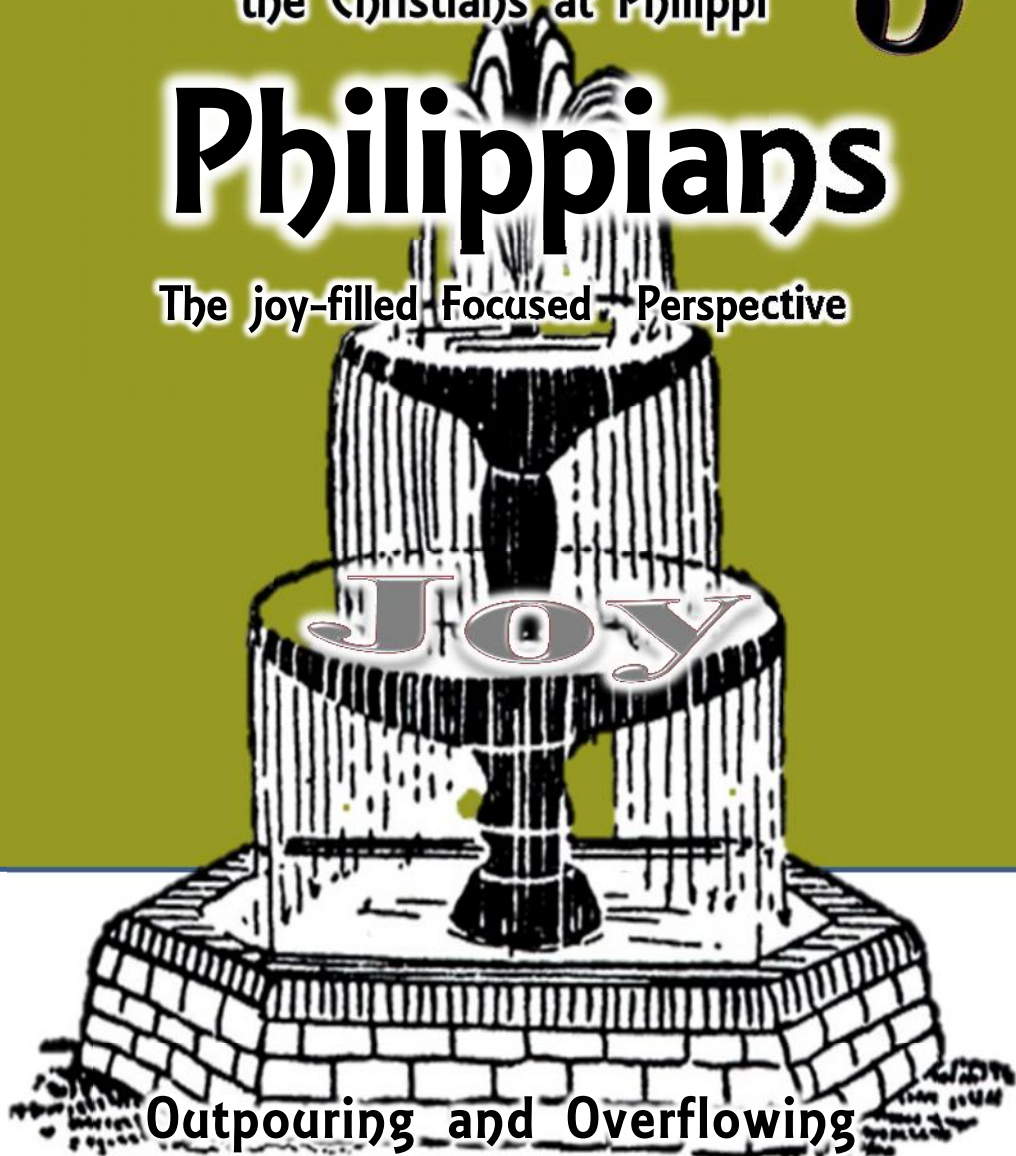


**Paul's Letter to
the Christians at Philippi**

#3

Philippians

The joy-filled Focused Perspective



Outpouring and Overflowing

**From the Pulpit Ministry of Christ E Free Church
April-July 2018**

Jesus Christ

Our Highest Calling

Our Greatest Purpose

Our Soul's Source and Joy

And Our All-Consuming Passion

Table of Contents

Introduction, p. 6

Things We Leave Behind, p.7

When Jesus is Everything, p.35

Growing In Unity, p.44

Growing in Unity, (Pt.2), p.64

Jesus Changes Everything and Everybody, p.73

Repeating References, p.93

ABCs, p.97

Free Resources, p.98

Philippians

*The Proper Joyful
Christian Perspective*

Chapter

3

“The Eternal Perspective”



“The Christian life is one of tremendous eternal hope;
not concerned with what we may have to lay aside,
but rejoicing in what we have ***already*** gained,
and ***presently*** posses.”

“Things We Leave Behind”

Series Title: *“The Book of Philippians: The Proper Joy-filled Christian Perspective”* **August 12, 26; Sept.2, 2018**

TEXT: 3:1-6

Chp. 1: * The **FOCUSED** Joy-Filled Perspective: We do not focus so much on our circumstances, but on Gods’ purpose in our circumstances.

Chp. 2 * The **SURRENDERED** Joy-Filled Perspective: We are never more Christ-like than when we demonstrate a Surrendered Christian Perspective, through an attitude of person humility, in following Jesus in our lives, relationships and ministries.

Chp. 3 * The **ETERNAL** Joy-Filled Perspective: The Christian life is one of tremendous eternal hope, not concerned with what we may lay aside, but rejoicing in what we have already gained, and presently posses.

In Chapter 3, Paul speaks of His past, his present and his future. Today we look at His past.

INTRODUCTION:

Question: If you were asked:, “What is missing in the church today?” How would you answer? Most likely your answer would not be, “Joy – I think Joy is missing in the church today.” Instead, we might reply ¹Power of the Holy Spirit in ministry; or ²Christian giving is missing; or ³Committment is missing in the church today; ⁴Perhaps you may feel that relevance is missing in the preaching; or ⁵revival, or ⁶true fellowship, or ⁷vibrant worship is missing in the church today.

I was reading on article on this topic recently and these were the top items that Christians perceive to be missing from the church:

¹The True gospel message; ²Stimulating teacher/student dialogue; ³Qualified elders; and ⁴Proper church discipline is missing in the

church today. *I personally, believe the proper Joy-filled perspective is often missing in the church today.*

John Piper defines joy this way: “*Christian joy is a good feeling in the soul, produced by the Holy Spirit, as He causes us to see the beauty of Christ in the Word and in the world.*” (A Study in *Philippians*)

In the book of Galatians, Paul tells us that one of the fruit of the Spirit is “joy”. [Gal.5:22]. The Holy Spirit promises in Nehemiah, that “the joy of the Lord is our strength!” [Neh.8:10]

In chapters 1 & 2, Paul has dealt with Christian ministry, Christian attitudes, our Christ-like example and Christology; or Christ focused theology, specifically in the first half of chapt.2.

In Chapter 3, Paul emphasizes “The *ETERNAL* Christian Perspective”. In this, we learn that the Christian life is one of tremendous eternal hope, not concerned with what we may lay aside, but rejoicing in what we have already gained, and presently possess, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul gives us a view of the Proper Joy-Filled, ***ETERNAL*** Christian Perspective with A Vision of Jesus Christ as our **EVERYTHING**. This is not “feel good theology”, or the prosperity gospel. Its not even positive thinking, as often expressed by our secular culture.

When Jesus spoke of the “Eternal perspective, He taught:

Mat 13:44-46 ESV "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. (45) "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, (46) who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

The focus is not on what he gave up for the pearl, but on the Pearl's supreme value to the one who found it. Both, the hidden treasure in the field, and Pearl of Great price in the sea, are intended to represent that which is of utmost value to us; that which is more valuable than anything else we could imagine, desire, possess or hope to achieve. And the **Eternal** Joy-filled Christian Perspective here is not about what we might give up for the kingdom of heaven, but how much it is worth to those of us who discover it's priceless treasure and who are citizens of that eternal kingdom.

With that in mind, let's look at Paul's Input in this section of his letter. He addresses his past, present and future. Today we look at Paul's past.

His Past Experiences:

DANGEROUS EXPERIENCES ENCOUNTERED (3:1-2

* A Joy-filled, Eternal, perspective in Christ will demonstrate that the value of our lives, is not about what we may lose or gain while here on earth; but the true value of our lives is based upon ¹who we are and ²what we **NOW** eternally possess.

Paul deals with some troubling concerns from his past; Not trouble makers in the church, but most likely wolves in sheep's clothing, or false and destructive religious leaders.

Our Past experiences are a collage of forces or influences, whether good or bad, which have molded us into the people we are today. Bad or negative experiences I call, "Land Mines". Land Mine experiences are the negative, frustrating, painful, and generally undesirable experiences that all of us have endured and would probably prefer to forget completely. However, those Land Mine experiences are forces of influence which have contributed to molding you and I into the persons we are today.

The positive experiences are what I call “Land Mark” experiences. These are what we might describe as the good, positive, enjoyable, pleasing, encouraging, or productive experiences in our lives, which also served as forces of influence. These positive experiences also contribute to molding you into the person you are today.

Both positive and negative influences; both Land Marks as well as Land Mind experiences have molded us and have made us into the people we are today. Because of those, you have the personality you have today; you have the temperament you have today. Because of those life forging experiences you have the perspective on life that you have today.

Our Past Experiences often hold us captive. Regret. Failure or perceived failure. Fear. Disappointment. Uncertainty. The past molds us, good or bad; land marks and land mines, Good and bad, pain and pleasure, success and failure, loss or gain, pleasant or unpleasant experiences mold us into who we are today. Even our enemies are used by God to mold us purposefully and productively into the people He wants us to become (1:28). I am not implying that we are simply products of our environment. But all these experiences and circumstances, have been under God’s control, and all are crucial components in God’s purpose and plan for your life.

Remember: God has a purpose for your life. And where God has a purpose, he also has a plan. And His plan includes for us, both land mark, as well as land mine experiences, both of which are intended to mold us, direct us, change us, train us and purify us. This is how God works in the lives of His people.

Paul has...

A Joyful & Patient Encouragement

(v1

* What better prescription for the pain of sorrows, or the darkness of depression than that joy which comes to us, as an eternal and valuable treasure from Christ Himself.

Php 3:1-2 ESV (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

(i) Joy in Jesus: Jesus Christ is the Same, yesterday, today and forever. Christ is unchanging. If we have the unchanging Jesus Christ with us and His Spirit living in us, then not only what He gives us stays with us, but all that He is, stays with us. If Jesus Christ is the prince of Peace, then if the Prince remains with us, then His peace remains with us. If our unchanging Savior Jesus Christ, is our unchanging Source of joy, then not only is our Source unchanging, but the joy He provides remains with us. He is not merely our Resource, He is our Source!

Where is Paul again? (prison) What kind of perspective does Paul possess and nurture while in prison? (a Joy-filled ***Eternal*** perspective).

(ILL) When I get up in the morning its usually still dark. First thing I do, is feed the cat on the back porch, then I open the garage door to let our dog in. Cat stays on the porch, but our dog gets to come inside. But when I open the door our dog is often lying right on the step in front of the door. And when I open the door, the light from inside the house sort of blinds the dog, as he is suddenly overwhelmed by the light.

And I find myself pleasantly blinded so to speak at Paul's consistent joy-filled perspective. In the darkness of his circumstances, the light of Paul's joy seems almost unrealistic and nearly blinds us. We almost have to just close our eyes and turn away, because it's almost too much. Sometimes its almost hard to believe he is so joyful and is not defeated by his difficulties. Paul

does not allow the darkness of his circumstances to discourage or distract him from the Light of Jesus Christ in his life; and though he has laid aside much of his worldly possessions and positions, his unchanging joy remains, because His unchanging Source of Joy remains with him.

Paul's key is his Joy-filled Eternal perspective, that upon which he allows his thoughts to dwell and his mind to focus. Eternity, Jesus and serving Christ is first and foremost, the focus of his attention.

(ii) Same things again (v1): Some point to the “same things” Paul is referring to as things he had preached to them or taught them when they were all together in Philippi. And that may be what it is. But I can't help but think that it is also the JoyFilled Christ-like Perspective which he refers to 5 times in ch.1; and 5 times in ch.2. When Paul writes, he tends to repeat himself. He tends to emphasize and reemphasize the topics and terms he really wants to stick with them.

To repeat myself, is not grievous; its not bothersome to me or irritating for me to have to keep reminding you and repeating myself, because it is a safeguard, or it is a needed precautionary reminder of the devastating and defeating consequences of losing one's Christ-like Joy-Filled perspective. Lose your joy and you lose your strength. Lose your strength and you lose your victory.

A couple of insights here from Matthew Henry:

- 1) Ministers must not think anything grievous to themselves which they have reason to believe is safe and edifying to the people. ((One must unapologetically do what they feel is best for those to whom they are influencing for Christ or discipling in the faith.))
- 2) It is good for us to hear often, the same truths, to revive the remembrance and strengthen the impression of things of great

importance. It is a wanton curiosity to desire always to hear some new thing. It is a needful caution. The joy of the Lord in Christ, warrants repeated proclamation; through which the eternal divine Source of supernatural strength is accessed.

Php 3:1-6 ESV (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. (2) Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh.

Now we pick up in 3:2. I'd like to invite you to underline the 3 things that Paul mentions which are of concern to him. In Chapter 1, Paul addresses the Focused perspective. In Ch. 2, he addresses the Surrendered perspective. And in ch. 3, which is where we are today, he addresses the Eternal perspective; all of which are Joy-filled perspectives.

Unfortunately many Christians are not aware of it, but we are in a battle, a spiritual battle. There is a battle between God and Satan, between heaven and hell and you and I are right smack dab in the middle of that battle. It is a spiritual battle. And as our adversary, the Devil uses as his weapons; ¹events, ²life circumstances and even ³people as his instruments of discouragement and potentially destruction. His goal is to steal, kill and destroy our joy, diminish our strength and defeat our life of faith. (Jn. 10:10) Now, Do you believe that?

So Paul urges his readers to find their joy in the Lord Jesus, who is their prince of Peace, and our Source of eternal, Supernatural joy.

A Caring & Cautious Warning (v2)

* From Paul's example, we see another aspect of a shepherd's heart.

Php 3:1-2 ESV (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.

(2) Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh.

These are 3 descriptions of the same enemy. Paul's shepherd's heart shares a caring and cautious warning to the church then, *and* Now!

Some feel we should never criticize others in the ministry. We should ecumenically embrace and welcome and approve of all "Christian" people and leaders, along with their beliefs and practices, for the sake of unity. Unity can be the most dangerous enemy of genuine Holy Scripture Truth. And the church of Jesus Christ, has enemies!

Psa 23:1-6 ESV A Psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. (2) He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. (3) He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. (4) Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your *rod and your staff*, they comfort me. (5) You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. (6) Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

The Psalmist expressed his confidence and comfort in his Good Shepherd, as his Defender. "*Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.*" These are implements used, not only to guide the sheep, but to fend off any dangerous enemies of the sheep.

A True shepherd, not only provides for the sheep but is willing to step in and defend the sheep (church) against any danger presented by the enemy. So Paul offers this warning to the church.

(i) Beware of the Dogs (v2): This was not a reference to people who were well-meaning and sincere people, who were merely wrong or misguided in their beliefs. This was not a gracious reference to a yard dog or pet; but a pack of wild dogs,

vicious and ravenous; wolf-like, and bent on taking down and devouring its prey. Possibly these were those Paul made reference to when he spoke of those who were adversaries toward the believers there in Philippi(1:28)

These are most likely unbelievers; dangerous, vicious, and bent on destruction of God given Truth of the Apostle's teachings of the historic Christian faith.(Acts 2:42) At that point there was the Jewish faith in transition of being fulfilled in the Christian faith. Perhaps the same kind of people of whom John the Baptist referred to as a "brood of vipers",^[Mat.3:7] Jesus referred to these as: "Blind guides",^[Mat.23:16] "white washed Sepulchers",^[Mat.23:27] Serpents^[Mat.23:33], and Hypocrites^[Lk.11:44],

Jesus also warned of those who had the appearance of holy and/or religious people who professed to be prophets of God, but were in fact, servants of Satan and enemies of the cross of Christ.

Mat 7:15 ESV "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

These adversaries were outwardly disguised as ravenous wolves. "Ravenous" = forceful or violent; "to snatch away". And if the devil can snatch away or rob us of our joy, then he has stripped us of our strength, and Christian victory.

These Ravenous wolves of whom Paul addressed, were disguised as sheep. They were purposefully deceptive. Outside they presented themselves as "religious" and safe. But on the inside there resides destruction.

(ii) Beware of the Evil doers (v2): This most likely refers to false teachers; those who opposed the Philippians in ministry; those to whom he refers to as their *oppressors* or adversaries in 1:28: "...and not be frightened in anything by your opponents". This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your

salvation, and that from God.” What business does a sheep have in fellowshipping or flitting around with a ravenous wolf? Flitting with a wolf is flirting with disaster!

I personally feel there is no place for ecumenicalism in the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Fellowshipping and joining in ministry with other like-minded churches? Yes. With the Alliance churches in our area and with the Community Church, and WFF. But just because someone calls themselves “Christians”, does not mean we are obligated to view them as brothers and sisters in Christ.

2Co 11:13-15 ESV For such men are *false apostles, deceitful workmen*, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. (14) And no wonder, for even *Satan* disguises himself as an angel of light. (15) So it is no surprise if *his servants*, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.

“False Apostles”. “Servants of Satan”. Deceitful “angels of light”. How can we keep from being duped and Hoodwinked by people like these? (1) Become solid students of the Word of God, with discernment. And (2) not be so quick to make celebrities of Christian leaders or to “pedestal-ize” certain people because of how they look, how they teach, how big their ministry is or how captivating their personality may be.

Evil does often look and sound good. False apostles know how to twist the God’s Word. Deceitful workmen are just that – ***deceitful!***

(iii) Beware of the Mutilators of the flesh: Paul uses these words to contrast the difference between the true, believing Jews and the false, faith rejecting person, who may be presenting themselves as Jews or Jewish “authorities”. The Jews refer to themselves as the “circumcision”. That is, through the cutting of the bodily flesh, demonstrate true and genuine faith-filled, covenant devotion to Jehovah God. But the one’s Paul is warning

against are those who present themselves as Jews, and who are circumcised in the flesh, but have no faith in God or are opposing the fulfilled faith in Jesus. These people may have had the same physical circumcision as the true Jews, but the true Jews demonstrate their faith, not by their circumcision but by their faith in God and perhaps in Jesus Messiah.

Not everyone who names the name of Christ is a true believer. If someone states; “If you name the name of Christ, then we are brothers in the Lord”, then they may already be deceived.

But the mutilators of the flesh are those lacking genuine faith, and have been physically circumcised, but Paul refers to that as merely those who have cut their flesh or who have mutilated their own body, refusing to even recognize it as true Jewish circumcision or the true Jewish faith. The words Circumcision and Mutilators of the flesh are very similar words, but their differences reflect a direct and blatant contrast between the two. One refers to true believers, the other refers to false believers and ravenous wolves, or deceivers from Satan.

If we haven’t picked up on it, Paul is addressing the spiritual warfare that both he and the Philippian Church had experienced in the past and was evidently in danger of encountering at the present. The Devil’s weapons can be events, circumstances and even people.

Paul points that out. He is not interested in ecumenical unity, but in doctrinal purity and church protection from destructive forces.

Chp. 3 * The ***ETERNAL** Joy-Filled Christian* Perspective: We learn that the Christian life is one of tremendous eternal hope, not concerned with the opposition we encounter or with what we may have to lay aside; but a hope that rejoices in what we have **already** gained and presently possess. Our Eternal, Joy-Filled Perspective

must somehow include for us, A Vision of our eternal Life, with Jesus Christ as our **EVERYTHING**, in this present earthly life.

And this is what Paul focuses on in the verses that follow.

Some very important points to consider: Remember, Satan cannot steal anything which we don't first surrender to him. We surrender our joy, when we fail to fight for it.

(1) What is it – or -- list all your experiences this week / month, which have either stolen or quenched your Joy-Filled Christ-like perspective? Maybe something that threatened or dampened your Christian joy in some way?

(2) Identify those temporary earthly situations, or those experiences or influences which have superseded or overwhelmed your Eternal Christian joy-filled perspective. Those things which cloud our thinking, crowd our mind and dampen our joy as we relive, rehearse, rewind them in our minds; focusing on them, rather than controlling our thoughts and focusing on what we presently have with our Lord Jesus as our **EVERYTHING**.

If we have Jesus, then we have already gained and presently possess, His joy. He is our Highest Calling, our Greatest Purpose, our soul's Source and Joy, and our All-Consuming Passion.

Sometimes our responsibilities are overwhelming. Our "*To Do*" list is never ending. We experience discouragement in ministry, disillusionment in relationships or problems in the secret areas of life. These are things, people and events that can dampen, if not quench our Christian joy-filled perspective.

This is a prevalent issue among Christians. We must not ignore this issue, nor discount its spiritually destructive potential in our Christian lives. The loss of Christian joy can be devastating.

(3) Confess that to God. Acknowledge any and all of Satan's attacks specifically in the area of your Christian joy. Confess this lost Joy to God as sin and as a victorious attack from the enemy.

(4) Seek God's Joy. Pray for His Joy to fill you. Fight for God's joy that He has for your Christian life. If Christ is in you, then His joy is available for you, NOW. Resist the devil's attempts to steal, kill and destroy your Christian joy.

Trust God to stir up that joy to you. Read God's promises regarding His joy and do not accept anything less. Resist surrendering your Christian joy to Satan. Fellowship with other like-minded believers who evidence Christian joy and spiritual stability. We can be influenced in this area by others.

UP to this point we have been progressing through the book of Philippians as Paul builds toward revealing to us the secret Source of his unstoppable and unquenchable joy. I would like to read some passages of Scripture that connect joy with other important components of our faith.

READ these aloud and thank God for them **ALoud**! This is not positive thinking, but a spiritual reality the devil wants to deceive us into believing we have good reason to be sad, depressed, downhearted and hopeless and defeated.

Neh 8:10 KJV Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the **JOY** of the **LORD** is your strength.

Christian Joy and Supernatural strength are intended to be part of the Christian life. ***God's joy is our motivation to serve. His Strength is our empowerment for ministry.*** If Satan can rob us of our joy, he will strip us of our strength and will succeed in defeating us in effective ministry.

Psa 81:1 ESV Sing aloud to God our strength; shout for joy to the God of Jacob!

1Ch 16:26-27 ESV For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the LORD made the heavens. (27) Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and joy are in his place.

Psa 47:1-3 ESV Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy! (2) For the LORD, the Most High, is to be feared, a great king over all the earth. (3) He subdued peoples under us, and nations under our feet.

Our joy. God's strength. = Spiritual victory over Satan's strategies and his attacks.

1Pet. 1:8-9 ESV Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, (9) obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Rom 14:17 ESV For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Referring to the HS as our Source. Not what we have to muster up. But that which is already with us and in us.

* The **ETERNAL** Christian Perspective: We learn that the Christian life is one of tremendous eternal hope, not concerned with what we may lay aside, but rejoicing in what we have already gained, and presently possess.

Rom 15:10-13 ESV And again it is said, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people." (11) And again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples extol him." (12) And again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope." (13) May the God of

hope fill you with all **joy** and **peace** in believing, so that by the **power of the Holy Spirit** you may abound in hope.

We don't fill our minds with lightweight positive thoughts. We focus our mind and fill our thoughts on the Hope we have in Jesus Christ, and are assured that our strength is not our own but from the HOLY Spirit Himself, who lives within each and every true believer in JC.

ILL) Christian Joy, peace, hope, assurance: Imagine your Christian life is like an inner tube. The air you pump into the inner tube of your life is spiritual joy, Christ focused Peace, eternal hope, Holy Spirit Strength. And all these things, we have already gained and presently possess!

How? Because these are qualities of Jesus Christ Himself. They are traits and blessings that come, not from our own self efforts, or Christian abilities, but from the power of Almighty God, and His indwelling Spirit of Holiness who resides in each and every believing Christian! Its not what we do or work at to get, but is what we already have. If Christ is in you, then these things are already in our possession.

But our problem is that our inner tube has a tiny hole in it. And I don't view it as the qualities of the Holy Spirit leaking out; but the concerns, worries, doubts of the world and of our flesh that tend to find the little hole and seep back into our lives. Troubles press in, so much as to squeeze out those tiny treasures of Joy, Hope, and Peace from the Holy Spirit.(Rom.14:17)

And remember: *If Satan can steal of our Joy, then he can strip us of our strength.*

Joh 10:10 ESV The thief comes only to **steal** and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

But also remember this: *The devil has no power to steal anything from us, that we do not first surrender to him.*

We surrender our joy for the devil to steal, by:

(1) By focusing our mind and filling our thoughts on the bad, negative, discouraging, disappointing, events of our lives. In every single chapter of the book of Philippians, Paul references Christian joy multiple times. And in every chapter in the book, he refers to the mind, or our thoughts or our thinking process or the proper Christian perspective. Focus on what is good. **“Hold onto that which is Good.”** (1Thes.521)

We surrender our joy for the devil to steal, by:

(2) By using Gods’ Word as a medicine we take when we are sick, rather than a stabilizing life sustain vitamin we take in order to keep sickness from developing in us. The sickness of doubt, defeat, discouragement, depression, and joylessness.

Some people think that if they read the Bible they will experience full mental and Christian victory. And Scripture is viewed almost like a book of incantations. If you read it often, and say the words right, then good things happen.

This is not merely something we read about or hear a sermon about. This must become that which we fight for, every day of our Christian life. It is our pursuit to manifest God’s joy which we have already gained, and presently possess, regardless of our circumstances or of our emotional feelings.

God’s word and the promises in it, need to be viewed as a Battle plan for Christian Victory against the enemy. Reading; Meditating; Memorizing; obeying; Holding onto and trusting in God’s promises; fighting for the joy, and peace, and strength and hope we already have within us and already possess as Christians. It is refusing to allow the enemy, our adversary the Devil, to rob us of

the joy of the Lord. Failing to fight, is the same as surrendering to the Devil, all God has given to us.

We surrender our joy for the devil to steal, by:

(3) By failing to Praise the Lord purposefully and regularly.

Psa 27:5-6 ESV For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock. (6) And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of **joy**; I will sing and make melody to the **LORD**.

This is not merely an exercise. But Praising the Lord is bringing to mind the goodness of the Lord and declaring aloud the greatness of our God. When we do this, we remind ourselves of who we are; what He has done for us; what we have already eternally gained; and what we presently possess.

Failing to Praise God regularly. Renounce that. Repent from that. Fight for God's Joy. Pray for God's victory. And Trust God to bring to life, that which you already possess in you, because these are His qualities and evidence of His presence in us.

Let us fight to fill our minds with the goodness of the Lord, and focus our thoughts in the Greatness of our God, in order that we might be filled with Joy and empowered for victory in our own personal, spiritual battles. The Proper joy-filled Christian perspective is dependent upon this.

My Experiences:

SENSATIONAL EXPERIENCES ENDURED (3:3-4)

* In our Christian culture today, We are too easily enamored by sensational talent and magnetic personalities. We are captivated by celebrities, even Christian celebrities; they are pedestal-ized

superstars, and the like.

* ***“Christian celebrity”*** is no such status that God gives, but rather a level of (idolatrous) admiration that others often ascribe to certain servants of Christ.

Paul was once a celebrity of his day. He was pedestalyzed as a religious Superstar.

Paul's Religious Heritage (v3)

* Our relationship with God is not based on what we can do to get to God, but what God has done for us, to allow us to come to him.

Php 3:3-4 (3) For we are the circumcision, ¹who worship by the Spirit of God and ²glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh--

Referring to things we have done, or accomplished, Paul defines Genuine Jews as ¹those who genuinely Worship God as He alone deserves. God is Spirit and not a physical body. Therefore true worship does not come from physical things or human endeavors, but from an attitude of our inner most being or spirit.

²But also a true Jew is not merely an issue of one's heritage, but also having full faith in Jesus as God's Messiah. We Glory in Christ. We rejoice in Him and revel in His work in accomplishing eternal salvation for us, when we could never do anything to earn or deserve eternal salvation.

Paul's Self-Works Accomplishments (v4)

* Nothing of our earthly existence or endeavors can gain us salvation. Likewise nothing we could do or accomplish can keep us saved.

Php 3:3-4 (3) For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh-- **(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:

(i) Think about Our earthly Leaders: Today we often put much confidence in people; human servants, who may be very gifted, and admirable. But there is a danger in over emphasizing titles, ministry accomplishments, religious status, notoriety or positions.

There is a lot of good solid Christian material on the internet. There are lots of good solid Christian ministries on radio, TV, etc. But our confidence or pedestalizing, is a dangerous perspective for Christians.

Beware of setting aside any Christian leader as a celebrity in your heart. That can become idolatry. Don't pedestalize any Christian over anyone else. This is a form of idolatry and demonstrating confidence in the flesh or in the worldly ways of showing importance.

Paul was pedestalized and he presents that as having confidence in his human achievements over God's grace.

(ii) Think about Our Eternal Inheritance:

We are saved by Grace alone. We are kept saved by Grace alone. Some misunderstand eternal salvation as being synonymous with sinless perfection. We are saved by grace, then some feel we cease to sin. But if we sin, we lose our salvation.

The Bible indicates pretty clearly that even after being eternally saved and born again, we will still sin, and we are to fight against that sin. But as we are saved by God's grace, we are also kept saved, by God's sustaining grace. So when we sin we do not lose our salvation, though we must confess our sins to God and he is faithful to forgive us for our sins and to cleanse us from our unrighteousness.(1Jn.1:9)

If a genuine Christian can lose their salvation then John should have instructed his audience to be born again, all over again, because they have fallen into sin. In Paul's other epistles, he should have urged the Corinthians to be born again, again, but he didn't. If Christians lose their salvation when they fall into sin, then somewhere in the book of James, James should have urged his readers to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved all over again. Instead, all the writers, urge the sinful believers to confess their sins to God, repent from their sin and return to serving the Lord with all their hearts.

Some hold that we are saved by grace, through faith alone; and yet deep down inside they seem to believe that they have to work hard and be really good in order to remain saved.

Nothing we do, saves us. Nothing we do will keep us from being saved. The same grace that saves us, keeps us. And while most would not come out and say, "we are kept by our works or by our lack of sin", but practically speaking that is what they believe. And those who believe that, tend to pick sins that they don't struggle with, or think they don't struggle with, as those sins which cause you to lose your salvation. This is scary business and theologically dangerous territory. Paul addresses this indirectly by reminding us that we have no reason for trusting in the flesh, or human works, deeds, activities or sinlessness for salvation. Place No Confidence in the flesh or human accomplishments or deeds.

Nothing we can do will save us. Nothing we can do will keep us saved. The grace that saves us is the same grace that keeps us saved and part of God's family. Our confidence is in God's grace alone, through Christ's sacrifice alone. Period.

The supreme value of Christian joy, must become that which we tirelessly pursue and once found; that in which we exuberantly revel. WE glory in our Lord Jesus Christ as our EVERYTHING.

Paul had some sensational experiences and accomplishments that were pedestalized.

He also had some...

GRIEVOUS EXPERIENCES REMEMBERED (3:5-6

* God does not value us, nor brand us according to our past achievements or failures; *but rather, in spite of them.*

We have been led astray for much of our Christian culture. Yet it is not our culture's fault per se, but our own. It is within each of us to "pedestalize" certain Christians because of their singing ability, organizational giftedness, speaking "persuadeability", ingenious creativity, physical appearances, human performance, etc, etc.

Sometimes we may entertain ideas in our heads like: "I have a great gift, that God wants to use", rather than, "God has blessed me with a gift, that I need to surrender to and humbly use it for His kingdom work and glory."

Paul's Lineage and Reputation (v5

* Paul is comparing his "position and titles" before coming to Christ, as possibly being in contrast to those who are the dogs(v2), evil doers and adversaries, of which he warns the Philippians. Paul's accomplishments were not to be pedestalized. Those among them, in Philippi were not to be pedestalized. Those among us, should not be pedestalized, so as to be viewed as inerrant, or excessively authoritative, or more worthy of admiration than another.

<p>Php 3:5-6 ESV (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;</p>

These are qualities of a Jewish celebrity. ¹Israel: Ethnicity or Race. Nationality. We are “American”. Something we can be thankful for, but not to glory over. ***One of the Chosen.***

²Benjamin: background; notoriety; superiority; One of the 2 tribes that are recorded in Scripture as NOT rebelling against the Lord. Certainly a lineage worthy of celebrity status in NT Jewish times.

One of the Pedestalized. -- ³Pharisee: position; title; exalted reputation; ***One who was Highly esteemed.***

Religious works of “Righteousness” (v6

* Here Paul recounts some grievous experiences. He recounts them, but doesn’t dwell on them. Its not his focus!

Php 3:5-6 ESV (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.*

These are the things which exalted a Jewish religious leader of Paul’s day. These got Paul himself pedestalized.

¹Zeal: Phil.3:8; Col. 1:16-18 “preeminence’

Achievements, Accomplishments, Exaltation which acquired prestige or notoriety, or acclaim or fame or reputation. Religious position and worldly achievements and for Paul, rejection of Jesus Christ.

Col 1:16-18 (16) For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things were created through him and for him. (17) And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. (18) And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be ***preeminent.***

Jesus Christ is our central focus, our Greatest Purpose and our most glorious and exalted thought.

Rom 11:36 ESV For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

And He should be our All-Consuming Passion.

²Righteousness of the Law: (blameless)

In fact, Paul even presents all these things in the religious culture that may have been admirable or noteworthy, but the kind of person that Paul elevates, is that of Timothy and Epaphroditus in Ch.2, as choice servants, with humble attitudes, after the example of our Lord Jesus Himself. Paul is in a sense, saying: “these are things that the religious community might tend to idolize among their leaders”. Perhaps Paul viewed these as things he may have idolized in holding those titles and positions. But none of them are to be viewed so.

Tit 3:4-7 ESV But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, (5) he saved us, **not because of works done by us in righteousness**, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, (6) whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, (7) so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

When it comes to bragging or exalting anyone for anything they may have done or accomplished, Paul directs our attention to the only One worthy of being pedestalyzed, and that is our Lord Jesus.

He is worthy of praise. He alone is to be exalted for who he is and all he has done.

Chp. 3 * The **ETERNAL** Joy-Filled Perspective: The Christian life is one of tremendous eternal hope, not concerned with what we

may lay aside, but rejoicing in what we have already gained, and presently posses.

Paul gives us a view of the Proper Joy-Filled, **ETERNAL** Christian Perspective with A Vision of Jesus Christ as our **EVERYTHING**. And that's where our Joy comes from. Paul speaks of His past, and anything he has done or accomplished that is worthy of admiration or praise is go be directed to Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

From here, Paul goes on to exalt the worth and work of Jesus Christ, so as to remove any confidence we may have in our own work, achievements, positions, titles or even religious groups.

Important points for Consideration:

(1) What are we trusting in for our salvation? What are we evidencing as our genuine faith and service for Jesus Christ? Are you trusting firmly and fully in the saving work of Jesus Christ as Calvary?

(2) What are we valuing most, as Christian, Children of God? What is our greatest desire? What do we hold in highest value? Is our Lord Jesus, your **EVERYTHING**?

What is it perhaps in your own life achievements that you believe to be so noteworthy that you deserve to be elevated above others? Is there a Christian celebrity you idolize or pedestalize? Is there something about yourself – in your own life that you feel makes you a bit of a celebrity, if others would just pay attention and acknowledge it?

(3) Are there people that you follow or are enamored with in Christian circles? If we could go back over the past couple decades, we would find that there have been an unfortunate number of Christian leaders who were reasonably solid and noteworthy; who have fallen into some kind of moral sin or have significantly erred from the Biblical New Testament faith. They

have had TV programs. They have had best-selling books. They have led mega churches and/or been leaders of some well-known ministries.

Oh How easy it is to make celebrities out of people who are in the mainstream media. How easy it is to be deceived, by those we have pedestal-ized, and been led down the path of error in the faith.

1Tim. 1:17-20 ESV To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. (18) This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, (19) holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith, (20) among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.

Notice the terminology Paul uses for Timothy. “Rejecting” = to casting off the ropes that kept the ship stable. And with no moorings to keep the ship from being at the mercy of the storms of the sea.

Straying from the faith, some have made shipwreck of their faith.

He even names names. Hymenaeus and Alexander. This should not be viewed as a loosing of one’s salvation. But those for whom Paul recognizes are erring in the faith, not necessarily losing the faith. But he has handed them over to Satan, or excommunicated them, that they learn not to blaspheme.

Christians can blaspheme? I believe so. Christians can also idolize.

1Co 5:4-5 ESV When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, (5) you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

Are there things I am unwilling to give up or am valuing beyond what is appropriate? Is there something / anything that might be holding me back, from being, not merely the Christian I should be; but is there anything holding me back from possessing the Joy-Filled Eternal Christian Perspective, that would free me to serve Christ more fully and more faithfully?

Phlp 3:7 ESV But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

3:7) “loss” is not worthlessness; but now they are things that are viewed as worth *less* in comparison to Christ and knowing Him. Paul’s Eternal Joy-filled Perspective is Heaven’s perspective.

But what things were gain to me - The advantages of birth, of education, and of external conformity to the law. “I thought these to be gain - that is, to be of vast advantage in the matter of salvation. I valued myself on these things, and supposed that I was rich in all that pertained to moral character and to religion.” Perhaps, also, he refers to these things as laying the foundation of a hope of future advancement in honor and in wealth in this world. They commended him to the rulers of the nation; they opened before him a brilliant prospect of distinction; they made it certain that he could rise to posts of honor and of office, and could easily gratify all the aspirations of his ambition.

Those I counted loss - “I now regard them all as so much loss. They were really a disadvantage - a hindrance - an injury. I look upon them, not as gain or an advantage, but as an obstacle to my salvation.” He had relied on them. He had been led by these things to an improper estimate of his own character, and he had been thus hindered from embracing the true religion. He says, therefore, that he now renounced all dependence on them; that he esteemed them not as contributing to his salvation, but,

so far as any reliance should be placed on them, as in fact so much loss. (Albert Barnes)

It is important to realize that Paul does not mention these things to be of no importance to him. If that was the case, then it would have been of no consequence for him to lay them aside and consider them as loss. But the fact that these are valuable achievements, man's accomplishments and religious attainment is pertinent, but compared to – compared to knowing Christ..... they are nothing. They are of no value. They are inconsequential, next to the surpassing greatness of gaining Christ.

For Christ - Greek, "On account of Christ." That is, so far as Christ and his religion were concerned, they were to be regarded as worthless. In order to obtain salvation by him, it was necessary to renounce all dependence on these things.

Paul's Life transformation.

Act 9:4-6 ESV And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" (5) And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. (6) But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do."

In Chapter 3, Paul emphasizes "The *ETERNAL* Christian Perspective". In this, we learn that the Christian life is one of tremendous eternal hope, not concerned with what we may lay aside, but rejoicing in what we have already gained, and presently possess.

Paul gives us a view of the Proper Joy-Filled, *ETERNAL* Christian Perspective with A Vision of Jesus Christ as our **EVERYTHING**.

I believe it was an unnamed martyr once wrote: "There are people who believe in God. Then there are those who just as sincerely, *believe* that they believe."

There are some Christians for whom, Christ is their everything and is exalted in that preeminence, as Lord over all of life. Then there are some who just as sincerely, *think* they hold to Christ as their everything, but somehow their life betrays that claim.

What have you lost for Christ? What have you given up for the sake of knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, better?

I have discovered that if you have sacrificed for Christ and are grieved over that loss, then you may have given it all up for the wrong reason or possibly you don't fully know Christ and the joy-filling life that only He can bring.

The Joy-Filled Christian perspective is inevitable, only if Christ only when Christ holds the proper place in our lives. When Christ is Everything, then your circumstances don't provide your joy, and your circumstances cannot rob you of that joy.

When this is achieved, Satan loses his power over us and the thief of joy, is rendered ineffective.



“When Jesus is ***EVERYTHING***”

Series Title: “*The Book of Philippians: The Proper Joy-filled Christian Perspective*”
Sept.9, 2018

TEXT: 3:7-14

Chapter 1: The ***FOCUSED*** Joy-Filled Perspective: We do not focus so much on our circumstances, but on Gods’ purpose in our circumstances.

Chp. 2 * The ***SURRENDERED*** Joy-Filled Perspective: We are never more Christ-like than when we demonstrate a Surrendered Christian Perspective, through an attitude of person humility, in following Jesus in our lives, relationships and ministries.

Chp. 3 * The ***ETERNAL*** Joy-Filled Perspective: The Christian life is one of tremendous eternal hope, not concerned with what we may lay aside, but rejoicing in what we have *already* gained, and presently posses.

In Chapter 3, Paul speaks of His past, his present and his future. Today we look at His past.

“WHEN JESUS IS EVERYTHING!”

INTRODUCTION

How important does something have to be, before it is the most important thing to you? How Great does something have to become, before it becomes the Greatest thing to you?

What would Jesus have to do, in order to become ***EVERYTHING*** to you?

“If Jesus is our **EVERYTHING**, then Jesus deserves our **EVERYTHING**.” Jesus gave a parable to help us understand what it means for God’s kingdom work and the person of Jesus Christ, to be the most important and the greatest thing or person in our lives.

Mat 13:44-46 ESV "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. (45) "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, (46) who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

The hidden treasure was Everything to the man who found it, so he did not consider anything else worth keeping that kept him from possessing that treasure which meant everything.

The pearl of great price was Everything to the merchant, so much so, that he was not concerned with the things he had to lay aside in order to fully gain that pearl of great price. So what would Jesus have to do, in order to become *EVERYTHING* to you?

PAUL’S PAST LOSSES (v7-8b)

* Maybe we are reminded of the things we lay aside or leave behind. Paul’s accomplishments, position, respect, title, achievements, and reputation were things he did not mind laying aside for the sake of fully gaining Jesus Christ.

Chp. 3 * The ***ETERNAL*** Joy-Filled Perspective: The Christian life is one of tremendous eternal hope, not concerned with what we may lay aside, but rejoicing in what we have *already* gained, and presently posses.

Paul gives us a view of the Proper Joy-Filled, ***ETERNAL*** Christian Perspective with A Vision of Jesus Christ as our **EVERYTHING**.

This is not “feel good theology”, or the prosperity gospel. Its not even positive thinking, as often expressed by our secular culture.

Paul's Losses and gains

(v7)

* We have all experienced highs and lows; had losses and gains.

Php 3:7 ESV (7) But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ

Last week we looked at all Paul's gains. Now he makes reference to his willful losses.

Paul conveys, “I thought these to be gain” - that is, to be of an advantage in the matter of salvation. I valued myself on these things, and supposed that I was rich in all that pertained to moral character and to personal religion.” Perhaps, also, he refers to these things as laying the foundation of a hope of future advancement in honor and in wealth in this world. They commended him to the rulers of the nation; they opened before him a brilliant prospect of distinction; they made it certain that he could rise to places of honor and of office, and could easily gratify all the desires of his ambition. (**Albert Barnes**)

He goes on to say, “I now willingly consider everything a loss to me and of utmost *un*importance, compared to knowing Jesus Christ my Lord!” Paul was determined to have no barriers and to remove all potential obstacles that might hinder, weaken or somehow minimize his passion for knowing and serving our Lord Jesus.

In Chapter 3, Paul emphasizes “The *ETERNAL JOY-FILLED Christian* Perspective”. In this, we learn that the Christian life is one of tremendous eternal hope, not concerned with what we may lay aside, but rejoicing in what we have **already** gained, and presently possess.

Question: Where is Paul again? *Prison*. And from prison, Paul gives us a view of the Proper Joy-Filled, **ETERNAL** Christian Perspective with A Vision of Jesus Christ as our **EVERYTHING**.

It was an unnamed martyr who once wrote: “There are people who believe in God. Then there are those who just as sincerely, *believe* that they believe in God.”

We realize that Paul’s circumstances do not govern or dampen his joy in Christ. But it is his joy in Christ, which allows him to view his circumstances differently, even joyfully.

There are some Christians for whom, Christ is their everything and is exalted in that preeminence, as Lord over all of life. Then there are some who just as sincerely, *think* they hold to Christ as their everything, but somehow their life betrays that claim.

Things we lay aside for the sake of greater things (v8b

* Things we make time for, are most important to us. Things we pursue are the things of greatest value to us.

Php 3:7-8b 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

Paul’s past losses are mentioned only to emphasize how important his present relationship with Jesus Christ is to him. What have you sacrificed or laid aside for the sake of having Jesus as your **EVERYTHING**?

PAUL’S PRESENT POSSESSION (v8b-11)

* In this section, Paul reveals His Secret Source of the Joy-filled Christian Perspective. It is not shallow. It is not fake. It is not

based on circumstance. The Secret Source of Paul's eternal joy-filled perspective is Jesus Christ as his *EVERYTHING*.

This is what Paul has been referring to and working toward since the beginning of his writing.

Jesus Is Everything

(v8

* And when Jesus Christ is our Everything, He deserves *OUR* Everything. We don't tend to give half our heart or half our attention to the things which are of average meaning.

Our lesson today is based on Cause and Effect. 2 of the main portions of Paul's letter to the Philippians, is our passage today, and a passage we covered in chp.2. And in order to understand where Paul is coming from in this lesson, we have to review a previous passage; 2:6-11. This is the *Cause*, in today's Cause and Effect lesson.

-- *Who Jesus is and what Jesus Did* --

Phil.2:6-11 ⁶Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross! ⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

This is Who Jesus is and what Jesus Did. This is the Cause and effect in today's lesson.

You see, Jesus death on the cross is absolutely key to anyone who is concerned for their eternal destiny. And once Paul came to faith in Jesus Christ; his past as a religious zealout, a religious terrorist,

a man with a title, a position, and reputation not only was of any consequence to him, but he also understands that without the work of Christ, he would have spent eternity apart from God, paying for his own sins.

And now as a believer in Jesus Christ who is our Cause, Paul makes this statement. This is this *Effect*, in the Cause and Effect lessons.

Php 3:8b (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

Because Jesus is Paul's Everything, then...

Knowing Christ is the Greatest Thing (v9)

*Knowing Christ is a faith based relationship.

Php 3:9 (9) and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law(3:5-6), but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith--

This was the Cause and Effect of Jesus Christ in Paul's life. Paul considered all things, that is all the accomplishments of his past, as loss, as nothing and no longer as valuable, in order that Christ might be his EVERYTHING.

To know Jesus Christ, necessitates faith in Christ; it also necessitates a relationship; ¹Not based on works or good deeds. ²Not based on talent or ability; ³Not based on appearance or performance. ⁴Not based on position or title. This relationship is also based on our awareness of our need for Christ.

Salvation is a gift of God to all who believe in Jesus Christ and weakly and willingly receive His forgiveness for sins, salvation for your soul, and everlasting life for your eternity.

Paul's Eternal Joy-filled Perspective (v10-11)

Php 3:10-12 (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 resurrection from the dead.

You see, Paul's concern is not what he laid aside, but what he has already gained and presently possesses, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Question: I have to ask today: (1) What is the greatest thing in your life? Is it Jesus? Is He the greatest desire of your life? (2) What are you trusting in for your salvation forgiveness of your sins? Is it Jesus? Is Jesus the sole focus of your faith for salvation?

PAUL'S GOALS FOR THE FUTURE (v12-14)

* Paul never stops or considers himself as having arrived, but is always in process. He is always going forward with Jesus in His life.

"I Press On"

(v12)

Php 3:12 (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.

"I press on"; that is, I make this the most important thing in my life. I view Jesus Christ as my Everything in this life. And because HE is my EVERYTHING, I have no regrets nor reservation in giving Him my *EVERYTHING*.

Question: Have you ever come to that point with our Lord Jesus? Can you imagine what would happen if we made that our goal for the future? To Press on with Jesus above all things and as our *EVERYTHING*.

Eternal Joy-filled Focus

(v13)

Php 3:13-14 (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.

Our lesson today was written by Paul to communicate His eternal joy-filled outlook on living, because of what His Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has done for him.(2:6-11)

“Cause and Effect”: Because of what Jesus has done for me; then I consider my life no longer my own. I consider everything in my life of lesser importance, compared to the Supreme and all-surpassing Importance of knowing Jesus as my Lord and Savior.

This is why this church exists. This is what we are about. We are “pressing on.” Not pressing on alone, but pressing on Together. We are daily, facing our own flaws and weaknesses; daily striving to live the life that pleases our Lord; daily failing in some areas and winning in other areas – but always, always pressing on as we make Jesus Christ our *EVERYTHING*.

“Cause and Effect”: Because of Jesus’ sacrifice for our sins. How have you personally been affected? I don’t know where you are today. I don’t know your level of interest or need. But if you are interested in meaning business with God, I want to invite you to join us regularly, as together we “press on” and help and encourage one another along the way.

“Cause and Effect”: What is it that prevents you from having this same perspective on your relationship with Jesus? Is it your

busyness? Personal pursuits? Your day to day struggle to keep your head above water? Maybe it's the attitude that "Life is far too complicated to think about that right now?"

What I have discovered is this: With Christ as our Everything, we have everything we need for this life and for the next. And together, If you are willing, we can press on together.

May I suggest to you today: Because of what Jesus Christ has done for you, that today, you Trust in Him as your *EVERYTHING*.

Question: What more would Jesus have to do, in order to become *EVERYTHING* to you?



“Growing in Unity”

Series Title: “*The Book of Philippians: The Proper Joy-filled Christian Perspective*”

Date : Sept. 23, 30, Oct7

TEXT; Phil.3:15-21

Chapter 1: The **FOCUSED** Joy-Filled Perspective: We do not focus so much on our circumstances, but on Gods’ purpose in our circumstances.

Chp. 2 * The **SURRENDERED** Joy-Filled Perspective: We are never more Christ-like than when we demonstrate a Surrendered Christian Perspective, through an attitude of person humility, in following Jesus in our lives, relationships and ministries.

Chp. 3 * The **ETERNAL** Joy-Filled Perspective: The Christian life is one of tremendous eternal hope, not concerned with what we may lay aside, but rejoicing in what we have already gained, and presently posses.

In Chapter 3, Paul speaks of His past, his present and his future. Today we look at His past.

INTRODUCTION

Peace and Unity in the Church; We might say this is about fighting to keep peace and unity and to experience joy in our church relationships. Unity does not imply, you believe what you want and I’ll accept that. That is Ecumenicalism or unity as the cost of Truth. But Biblical Unity is loving, peaceful relationships even in the face of disagreements.

Unity is not similarity. A hammer, saw and a nail are all different tools which we would not mistake, as they are all different. But when they all work together in unity, a house gets built.

Unity is not uniformity. Unity is not about being alike, but in working together with our differences in order to accomplish a common goal.

Remember, Paul's Eternal Joy-Filled perspective, is motivation to live a joy-filled life, focusing on what we have already gained in Christ and presently possess. That is motivation for Christians to live differently than non-Christians. This is also motivation to fight for joy and unity in our church relationships and ministries.

And as we grow in our faith as Christians, things that stole our joy a couple years ago, should not be able to so easily rob us of our joy today. Paul's emphasis in this passage, is that spiritual maturity, should be evidenced, not only in our doctrinal beliefs, but in our manner of treating others and daily living.

Paul reflected back on his past experiences. He realistically took time to evaluate his Present life. Now He looks forward to where this is all going to take him in personal relationships in the church family.

Context is 3:7-14

Php 3:7-14 ESV But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. (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-- (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 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. (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.

Paul spent much of this chapter focusing on his own personal religious experiences in relationship with Jesus Christ. as his EVERYTHING. Now, he transfers his focus to the church and urging the body of Christ to be united and at peace together in Christ.

In light of Paul's reflections in v.7-14, he shares the following sentiment.

Paul speaks of being...

UNITED IN BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING (3:15-16

** **Growing in Unity** does not necessarily imply uniformity in all our beliefs.*

It is important to note that "united in Understanding", does not necessarily refer to agreeing on all areas of Biblical or doctrinal positions. But what he is referring to is Christian peace, respect, love and kindness being exercised in all things, even when we disagree.

Unity is not about being alike, but being able to get along in our differences. When differences exist due to personal preferences, then we must be willing to compromise for the sake of Biblical Unity and peace.

Lesson #1: We are all Growing and Changing into a Holy Spirit formed, Joy-filled Eternal Perspective v15

* Paul Acknowledges that Christians are all growing at different speeds and are at different spiritual levels of understanding and faith practice.

Php 3:15-16 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. (16) Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

Q: Anybody here with perfect faith? Anyone here with a maturing faith?” There we go. There is an important difference there right? Some versions read “Perfect” or “mature” faith. This is not referring to what we might think of being perfect in the faith, as though we are knowledgeable in all areas of Biblical knowledge, inerrant on any area of theological doctrine, or flawless or infallible in all manner of Christian living. And it certainly doesn’t refer to one Christian being any better than another Christian.

Paul uses a word that has been translated as “perfect”, in some versions, which unfortunately presents us with an inaccurate perception in our understanding today, of what He is communicating. We know for sure that Paul does not mean “perfect” as we understand the word, because he just confessed his own imperfection, using the same word in v12: “***Not that I have already obtained or have already become “perfect”, but I press on...***”.

But Paul uses a word that literally means to complete something.

A Hammer and a saw and a nail work together to complete one another on the job site. A left glove does not make a right glove a perfect glove. But the Left glove does complete the right glove, so they are a pair. One goes with or is made for the other. Like Salt and Pepper; Bread and Butter; knife and fork; Eggs and bacon . You know that’s right!. Macaroni and cheese. Mashed potatoes and gravy. Trick or Treat. Pencil and Paper. Needle and Thread. Nuts and Bolts. Sugar and Spice. Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum. *Somebody stop me..*

These things are not alike, but together they can complete one another in order to accomplish a grand common goal. So Paul is referring to two things that go together, to **complete** one another. What are those 2 things? (1) What we believe or understand to be true. And (2) How we live. Faith and **Practice**. Our Talk and our **Walk**. Remember, Unity is not uniformity. And differences, need not be synonymous with division.

When we have differences because of personal preferences, then there is room for and need for mutual compromise for the sake of unity and peace.

So Paul admonishes his readers, that whoever is Mature or Complete – or those of us (Paul includes himself in this), whose faith and lifestyle complete one another, let us “Think this way”.

The next Question is: “Think **what** way?” How are we to think as Mature Christians? “This way” refers back to what I read at the beginning, from chap.3:7-14. In that portion, Paul reveals why His “religion”, and his position, and his achievements and his reputation fell so short. As he expresses in 3:7-14, Christ alone is his ***EVERYTHING***. 3:7-14, its faith alone (he states that twice); 3:7-14, it is not a matter of personal goodness, or hard work. In 3:7-14, it is not about keeping the law or living by a set of rules someone or some denomination has set forth. Unified in our Biblical understanding of who Christ is to us and what he has done for us.

To believe firmly and fully in Jesus Christ alone; to be found in Christ, to be covered with His blood, to be recipients of the gift of His own personal righteousness; to be trusting in His personal Resurrection power to accomplish in us the resurrection to come.

He trusts his personal life outlook or world view to be growing and changing into a Holy Spirit formed, joy-filled eternal perspective.

This is the “*this way*” that Paul instructs us to think, believe and understand.

We are all familiar with our human, physical growth process. From the moment we are born into this world, we are growing. We grow from infancy and we grow up to “maturity”. Depending on the culture in which we live, our growth may be viewed differently.

In some cultures, a male is considered a “man” or a grown-up when he is able to hunt and bring back his first wild boar. Adulthood is determined by an event which demonstrates his successful hunting skills.

In some farming environments a young boy may enter manhood when he can drive a tractor and plow a field responsibly on his own. In America, we traditionally ascribe an age to this level of maturity; perhaps 18 or 21 yrs of age.

But at some point an infant grows to a physical level we refer to as “maturity”. It is often viewed as when he or she has “grown-up” or you are as grown up as you are going to get.

One fellow stated: “I have finished growing up, but I am continuing to grow *out*.” When we get our drivers license renewed our height usually remains the same, but our weight is what keeps changing.

Paul is dealing here with the difference between spiritual infancy and spiritual maturity; This is not necessarily related to physical age, but is more dependent on the inner, spiritual transformation into the Christ-like, joy-filled obedient child of God, that he desires us to become.

Other passages in Scripture referring to spiritual maturity or immaturity.

1Cor. 3:1-3 ESV But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ.

1Cor. 14:20 ESV Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature.

Eph 4:13 ESV until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, [*Note: Heb.5:13-24]

Regarding our spiritual life or level, we may be infants due to being “recent converts” to Christ. OR we may be spiritual infants due to lack of spiritual growth, even over many years.

As Christians we must be continually *growing* and *maturing* in the faith. We may be spiritual grown-ups, as describing a higher or deeper level of spiritual growth and maturity. However, like Paul, we must guard against the perspective that we have “arrived” or that we have become “full grown”, so as to indicate that we can grow no further.

Some of us may have stopped growing spiritually, yet we never become fully grown in this life, or become all that God means for us to become. We are always growing; Always maturing. We might put it like this; Spiritual Maturity = Biblical Understanding + Personal obedience + loving attitudes or treatment toward others in the church.

Now we come to...

Lesson #2: We trust God's Sovereignty while recognizing our personal responsibility for obedience (v15-16)

* In v.11, Paul makes it clear that he certainly has **NOT** attained to Christian perfection but that He too, is growing in his completeness between faith and practice. In other words, he has not “arrived” at his ultimate destination.

Php 3:15-16 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. (16) Only let us hold true to what we have attained.*

Or “grow up In the faith”. Let us be people of growing, maturing, Biblical faith, which is completed or complemented by our Christian living.

A person of mature faith, is: *(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 had a Confidence in God’s working in their hearts, minds and Christian perspective. Paul knew that some things were worth remaining inflexible on, while some had other understanding. He was able to allow God time to move and convince himself or others, as to the accuracy of Truth.

Q: Who then, is a person who is “maturing” in the faith?

(1) A person whose beliefs are complemented by their faith practice.

(2) A person of “mature” faith is one whose Faith in Jesus Christ is preeminent! That is a believer in Christ, who has their spiritual priorities straight; that Jesus is **EVERYTHING** and is #1 in their lives. When Jesus Christ is noticeably the Lord of your life, then that is a sign of a maturING person.

(3) A Maturing person may be one who keeps peace and seeks to remain unified, even when disagreements arise. Not that there is any inference that we are to be slack in our doctrine or our Biblical studies; but that we study, grow, and are able to discuss and disagree while keeping peaceful, conversations and respectful discussions.

This may mean, the “maturing” person does not demand their own preferences be embraced by others.

(4) A maturing person is one who is able to trust God to make right the wrongs, to clarify the misunderstanding and to bring us to a more accurate knowledge of the Truth.

3:15c “...God will reveal that also to you.”

Paul trusts in the Sovereignty of God in bringing those who are lacking in knowledge or mistaken to come to a knowledge of the truth, including himself.

Prayer of Personal Evaluation: ** Lord, where am I in my Christian growth toward a good mature balanced completeness in my faith and my practice; Beliefs and lifestyle?

This is what Paul is addressing that we all should be growing and Changing into a Holy Spirit formed, Joy-filled Eternal Perspective.

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

v.15) reminds us that we must trust God’s Sovereignty to work in each person’s heart, in His own time, as He so desires; as we allow Him. And v16) helps us see that we must recognize our own personal responsibility to obey God’s word, and allow our walk to “complete” our talk; or for our lifestyle to match our beliefs.

“If we can’t determine what a man believes by how He lives, then he may not really believe what he claims.”

v.16) Only let us live up to what we have learned or what we know to be true. ***Let us be complete.*** A well balanced faith and practice working together! Let our walk match our talk.

Literally: “Only what we have understood; by that same understanding, let us live and think accordingly.” Thinking

accordingly reflects an exercising of the mind, and a growing Christian perspective.

Be United in our Understanding, so that we allow what we know and understand from Scripture, to govern our actions as well as to strengthen our eternal, Joy-filled or perspective.

So our level of depth of maturity is not gauged by age or by how much knowledge we have stored up in our brains, but how well that Biblical knowledge is lived out or how it completes our faith. So the Christian “faith” is Biblical understanding completed by practical Christian living and obedience.

1Cor. 8:1 ESV Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that "all of us possess knowledge." ***This "knowledge" puffs up,*** but love builds up.

In other words, knowledge alone, puffs up or nurtures pride.

Paul warns about mere acquisition of knowledge.

2Tim. 4:1-4 ESV (1) I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: (2) preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. (3) For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having “*itching ears*” they will **accumulate** for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, (4) and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

We went to an estate sale this weekend. The woman who used to live there was obviously an avid seamstress. There were bunches and bunches of yarn and rolls and rolls of unused fabric. If anyone was ever starving from lack of fabric, this woman could have fed the world!. She had accumulated so much that she never used.

Paul's warning is addressed to those who are interested in accumulating knowledge or a constant gathering of information; which piles on and heaps up learning, but doesn't utilize those resources. Stockpiled information is of no use to anyone!

These people had "itchy ears". An insatiable desire or curiosity or lust for more information; even Bible knowledge. Not for the purpose of greater obedience or growing in maturity, but simply for the quantity of information. "Itchy" ears are scratched by more information, but does not reflect spiritual maturity.

Jas 1:22 ESV But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

Paul didn't think that he had accomplished anything on his own, certainly not anything that would make him worthy at the resurrection at the last days. He put it all on Jesus. This not only motivated Paul to greater obedience, but it also stirred up a greater Joy.

So here in v.16) Paul places responsibility upon each and every true believer in Christ, not merely on the church as a whole, but on every single believer; we are each responsible before God for what we believe, how we live or act and how we represent the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ in our own, personal lives. And what our own personal lives display individually, will become the overall characterization of the life and reputation of His church. The church is nothing more or less, than the sum total of every believing Christian.

We are individually held responsible before God, not only for the quantity of information that we take in, or even what we hear and understand, but how we act, how we live, how we obey or apply that Biblical knowledge in everyday living; and especially, in this text, how we treat one another as Christians.

This is the importance of being united in our understanding. So Paul speaks of being United in Biblical Understanding, which involves both Biblical knowledge completed by personal obedience.

In v.17ff, he continues addressing...

BEING UNITED IN FAITHFUL LIVING (3:17-19)

** **Growing in Unity** means exemplifying a growing completeness in our Biblical Faith and our Christian living.*

Php 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.

Paul instructs his readers to be United in our Understanding of knowledge, content and doctrine. But also United in *the Faith*, is our beliefs, derived from our understanding and exemplified in our lifestyle. Biblically speaking, “**The Faith**” is not solely what we believe. “*The Faith*” refers to our overall completeness of the whole of the Christian life, or “***the faith***”.

2Cor. 13:5 ESV Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in **the faith**. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?--unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

We are to examine ourselves or to give careful consideration to our faith in beliefs and our faith in our lifestyle. This refers to an honest open personal evaluation of faith and practice; not of the other people, but of myself. Doctrine leads to lifestyle. Understanding leads to obedience. Is this so, for me?

Act 14:22 ESV strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in **the faith**, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

“The Faith is the whole of the Christian life. In Acts 13:8, Elymas opposed them and led some away from “*the faith*”. In 1 Tim.6:20-21, by accepting and professing false “knowledge” some swerved from “*the faith*”. These are not references of people merely leading others astray in their doctrine, but of the whole of their Christian lives.

2Ti 2:18 ESV who have swerved from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already happened. They are upsetting “*the faith*” of some. [2Tim.3:8; Titus 1:13]

Subverting the Truth of Scripture is the beginning to straying from or overturning “*the faith*” of believers or even those who were close to saving faith.

2Tim. 4:7 ESV I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept “*the faith*”.

Keeping “the faith” is far more than just clear and accurate doctrine. It is Biblical knowledge, accurate understanding, solid beliefs, Christ-like attitudes and faithful obedience; this is the whole of “*the Christian faith and life*”.

In Acts 14:22, Paul preached, encouraging the disciples to “continue in ‘*the faith*’”. This is a reference to the whole of the Christian life and journey. In 2 Timothy 3:7-8, Paul refers to those who are always learning, but never understanding, and who those who have corrupted minds and have disqualified themselves regarding “*the faith*”. Again, “*the faith*” refers to the whole of the Christian life as Paul implies in v.10.

We Realize...

God desires the Example of Christ to be evident in the lives of His servants (v17

* Spiritual Maturity is not so much about how much we know, but what we do with what we know.

Php 3:17-19 ESV (17) Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who *walk* according to the example you have in us.

“Brothers, Join me”: or Be united with me. “Take note of the example you have in us; become like us in faith and in life.” Their “walk”, refers to their lifestyle and their “example” refers to the example of Christ (ch.2)

How dare any human challenge us to be like they are? Do we know why Paul would invite us to imitate **His** life? Do we remember who Paul’s own personal example is? It is Jesus Christ Himself and His example of servanthood and sacrifice.

Php 2:6-8 ESV who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, (7) but **emptied** himself, by taking the form of a **servant**, being born in the likeness of men. (8) And being found in human form, he **humbled** himself by becoming **obedient** to the point of **death**, even death on a cross.

“the example you have in **US**”. Whos is the **Us**? Paul is referring specifically to Timothy, Epaphroditus; both of whom Paul has commended to the church at Philippi as choice servants and Christ-like examples of humility and servanthood.

Paul was not bragging or telling people they need to become **like** him! He was inviting them and us, to follow him, as he follows Christ. He invites us to make Christ our own example of faith and life in all areas. He invites us to make Christ our #1 priority, as though to state; “Join me in making Jesus Christ our **EVERYTHING**”,

“Imitate me and grow in maturity according to the example that you have in us”. I believe this was not any level or degree of spiritual maturity that might be somehow measured, but to become like them, first and foremost, as they are seeking to make Christ their Everything.

This was nothing more than Paul’s own way of reflecting the words of Jesus Himself.

Luk 9:23 ESV And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross *daily* and follow me.

Jesus said: “Follow Me”, then he leads us on a one way trip to the graveyard to die to self. Leonard Ravenhill stated: “one thing is for sure, if you saw a man carrying his cross out of town, you knew he wasn’t coming back.” Joe Warsak often said; “A lot of people wear a cross, but not many are willing to nail themselves to it.”

Carrying our cross was never meant to refer to a piece of jewelry or even a pilgrimage. Carrying a cross meant a one way trip to the grave yard, as we willingly die to our own ways and our own desires, in order for Christ to take first place and have preeminence in all areas of life.

One day I may have the opportunity to show you my own grave stone. Here lies Jeff Wilson. Born: Dec.24, 1957. Died to self: Sept. 1984, and subsequently every day after that.

Dying to self is not meant to be optional. We are not expected to die to ourselves once and that’s the end of it. Like when we got saved; or when we had an additional, significant spiritual experience with the Lord. But we are expected to die daily (Lk.9:23). It is a continuous and ongoing necessity for every day of your Christian life.

Let every true believer deny themselves. Take Christ as our Example. Let every true follower of Our Lord Jesus, take up his or her cross daily, and follow Him. Follow Him where? To die to self!

And Friends, if this isn't convincing for us, consider this:

Mat 10:38 ESV And whoever does not take his cross and follow me *is not worthy of me*.

“You mean God doesn't want me comfortable?” “Are you implying God doesn't want me happy?”

Friends, God wants us Dead!

Dead to ourselves and alive for Christ. As Christians, we would all do well, to remember these words of our Lord Jesus. Words of sober personal evaluation, to make Christ our EVERYTHING, or else Nothing at all. Because when we truly trust and follow Jesus, He will lead us right to the graveyard.

Q: How long has it been since you followed Christ to the graveyard? To die to self and to live for Him?

God seeks those who are led by the Holy Spirit and not by our flesh, interests, preferences, or desires. (v18

* We may be tempted to think; “Well there is no danger of that. Right?” Yet Paul alerts us to the very real possibility that any church, any Christian or any group is not immune or isolated from that possibility.

Php 3:18-19 (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.

Evidently these were some that Paul and the church of Philippi knew personally, possibly some who allowed their differences to guide them, influence them and ultimately divide them. And Paul shares this as something that was grievous to him. “I tell you with tears..” that they have walked away from Christ and “the faith”. These were not strangers, nor unchurched.

But no doubt these were some people they had known. Perhaps some that may have ministered with them at some level. Perhaps some who were along for the ride; who found “*the faith*” all quite interesting for a short period of time, but those who never fully believed or never fully surrendered to Christ control of their lives and certainly those of whom the Holy Spirit never converted their hearts. Their interests, their perspective, their focus, their purpose, their pursuits focused on themselves. For sure, Christ was not their everything! And Paul recounts this with tears of grief.

And Paul’s grief was not merely because they were at some level, once connected somehow, but the end result of their faith, and their lifestyle was not completing one another. Their acquisition of knowledge never affected their lifestyle nor converted their hearts.

v.19) “their end is destruction”. These were not believers who had strayed or were mistaken or lost their salvation. These were the opposition of those mentioned in 1:28. They were the “dogs, evil doers” and the false believers in 3:1.

Their glory is shame and minds we only on earthly, physical, fleshly or sinful things. “Minds” here is an action word which reveals that their mental perspective was not an eternal perspective, and certainly not joyful. And their minds – there’s the exercising of the mind AGAIN; referring to remaining focused on one’s own interests and allowing the mind to linger while entertaining thoughts of personal preferences and perhaps fleshly desires.

Were these embracing a Biblical Christian outlook? NO. Were they possibly evidencing a Holy Spirit formed eternal perspective? NO. Were any of these demonstrating a life surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ? Evidently not.

Their mind, thoughts and interests; their attention and own affections were set on earthly things". These things having to do with this life, this world and things that actually opposed God and made them enemies of the cross of Christ.

Rom 16:16-19 ESV Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you. (17) I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. (18) For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive. (19) For ***your obedience is known to all***, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil.

These were people who were outside "the faith", and outside the kingdom of God. But they are contrasted with those who are Christians in v.19, whose faith, affected their lifestyle and their faithful obedience to Christ was what characterized their living and formed their reputation, being evidence that they were indeed, part of "***the faith***".

POINTS OF APPLICATION:

For Paul, it wasn't just about knowledge, doctrine or content.

1Co 8:1 ESV Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that "all of us possess knowledge." This "knowledge" puffs up, but love builds up.

For Paul and for us, it is an issue of Christ related spiritual Growth and Maturity.

(1) As a Christian, how am I different today than who I was 5 yrs ago? What is your personal testimony of how God is at work in your spiritual life? Not just your testimony of Salvation, but your testimony of the Lordship of Jesus Christ in your life and the working of the Holy Spirit in converting your heart? In transforming your life?

How have you grown in Biblical understanding and in obedience? Its not about what we know or how much we know, but about what we do with what we know, that makes us growing in maturity.

Is the Biblical information I take in, making a difference in my Christ-lilke character, personal relationships, and or my ministry effectiveness? Is the Holy Spirit changing my worldly perspective, to a Joyfilled, Eternal perspective?

(2) How have I allowed God's Holy Spirit to form in me, that Joy-filled Eternal Perspective? I don't know really how to gauge this, but most of us realize that: (1) either you are becoming more skeptical, more irritable and more negative or (2) you have a realistic sense that Gods' Holy Spirit is developing in your attitude and perspective on life; a greater peace, a fuller joy, a more stable and consistently positive outlook on your Christian life and ministry. Perhaps you may even realize that the devil does not steal your joy as much or as easily as he used to.

(3) How have you grown in your understanding of God's character and how have you grown in your trust in God's Sovereign Purposes for your life, especially in light of your most recent challenging circumstances?

(4) When was the last time you denied yourself, took up your cross and died to yourself; following Jesus to death? Unfortunately, like I was for so very long, there may be someone here today that might answer... “**Never**”. I have never purposefully, willingly denied myself, much less, died to myself.

Then my friend, right now, while God has it on our minds why not pray this prayer.

“Lord, Help me to separate myself from the things that tend to keep me distanced from you.”

I can’t help but believe, this is a prayer God would be pleased to answer!



“Growing In Unity” pt.2

Series Title: “*The Book of Philippians: The Proper Joy-filled Christian Perspective*”

Date: Oct. 14, 2018

TEXT: Phil. 3:20-21 “ ”

INTRODUCTION:

SERIES: The Book of Philippians Oct.14 2018

Sermon: “Growing In Unity: A Family United in Hopeful Expectation”

Philippians: “THE PROPER JOY FILLED CHRISTIAN LIFE”

Chapter 1: The ***FOCUSED*** Joy-Filled Perspective: We do not focus so much on our circumstances, but on Gods’ purpose in our circumstances.

Chp. 2 * The ***SURRENDERED*** Joy-Filled Perspective: We are never more Christ-like than when we demonstrate a Surrendered Christian Perspective, through an attitude of person humility, in following Jesus in our lives, relationships and ministries.

Chp. 3** * The ***ETERNAL Joy-Filled Perspective: The Christian life is one of tremendous eternal hope, not concerned with what we may lay aside, but rejoicing in what we have already gained, and presently possess.

INTRODUCTION Text Analysis Phil.2: 20 & 21

The Joy of the Lord is our Strength. If we have Christ, we have His joy. Jesus does not give this joy, He brings it.

His joy is our motive for service. His strength is our empowerment for ministry. If Satan can steal our joy, then he will strip us of our strength.

**** We are familiar with contrasts and comparisons. Comparisons refer to things that are similar, like a Ford and a Chevrolet. Contrasts refer to things that are different, like a Car and a bicycle.**

We have another exercise to help us identify things that are contrasts or are different from one another and you fill in the blank:

Before and After. We've been through thick and thin. They fought like cats and dogs. As different as night and day. These are contrasts. Jesus is the beginning and the end. Are you a friend or foe. He's wanted dead or alive. This is a matter of life and death. We got married for better or for worse. Apples and Oranges. Black and White. Ebony and Ivory. Just checking to see if there are any Paul McCartney fans out there.

Contrasts put things together that are different in order to highlight or emphasize their differences.

In our Previous Lessons, the Apostle Paul makes a comparison. In v.1) he urges his readers to be like-minded or unified. And he invited us to become like him in his pursuit of Christ and making Christ, his **Everything**. Then in v.18, he contrasted those he was writing to with those who were enemies of Christ; those who followed their own desires, who fulfilled their own lusts and who opposed the work of the gospel of Christ (v.18) And he identified their eternal destination as that of eternal destruction(v.19).

And that was where we ended last week. TODAY, our lesson is another contrast.

“AS A FAMILY: UNITED IN HOPEFUL EXPECTATIONS”

Philippians chapter 3. IN your bulletin is point #3.

*** *A Family Growing in Unity* shares a common expectation in our eternal home and reward.** And we begin reading in v.18, where

we left off last week, our focus will be on the next contrast Paul introduces in v.20.

^{3:18}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. ¹⁹Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things.

As a Family, We are United in Hopeful expectations.

And an important aspect of our eternal Joy-filled perspective is...

Our Great Hope in Christ, and Our Eternal Home in Heaven (v20)

* Here is where the contrast is introduced between those of whom Paul wrote who were enemies of the cross and workers of evil; contrasted with true believers whose lives and hope and existence were not bound up in this world or its subtle yet enslaving attractions.

Php 3:20-21. (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.

Here, Paul presents the Source and Object of our Joy-Filled Eternal perspective. Earlier Paul states; “we...rejoice in Jesus Christ” (3:2). Here he unravels that a bit more for us.

In v.20) Paul points out that our Eternal Perspective is focused on...

Our Eternal Home- (v20a)

* For the true believer in Jesus, our home is in Christ’s home.

Php 3:20-21. ²⁰But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹who, 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.

For the Christian, our eternal home is our basis for our eternal hope.

“BUT our citizenship is in heaven” (v20): The unbeliever’s Eternal destiny was eternal destruction(v19) or eternal hell. But in contrast to that in v.20, the eternal destiny for the Philippian believers and for us today, is in heaven. That is every true believers eternal home and hope.

“Our citizenship” is a word referring to politics, or Governmental Administration; Or policies, as in a constitution or guiding documents. So the difference presented here is between those who were believers and those who were unbelievers; between those who lived according to their fleshly human nature and those who lived with heaven in mind.

*Don’t let anyone fool you. It is a good thing to be heavenly minded. Being heavenly minded surely must include, an earthly concern for the lost, passion for the church and an excitement about what is to come. Paul was heavenly minded and he invites us to be heavenly minded as well. Because there in heaven is our home, and from there, will come our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some people don’t want to die, simply because they don’t want to be removed from the pleasures of their earthly life. When contrasting the present life with our future eternal life, the writer of the book of Hebrews stated this:

For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. --Heb. 13:14 (referring to heaven)

“**BUT** our citizenship is ***in heaven***”: Heaven is not a reference to the clouds, sky, atmosphere or outer space. Thayer’s Bible Dictionary refers to the context of heaven as “the eternal region beyond the visible heavens; the seat of order of things eternal and perfect, where God dwells with other heavenly beings.”

Heaven is the throne and dwelling of God.

Heb 1:3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat ***down at the right hand of the Majesty on high***,

Eph 1:19-21 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might (20) that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead ***and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places***, (21) far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

All the NT writers lived and wrote with heaven in mind. The Apostle Peter wrote of this to encourage the Christians in exile, fleeing persecution and scattered around the nations of Galatia and Asia and surrounding areas:

1Pet. 1:3-7 ³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance ***is kept in heaven for you***, ⁵who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all

kinds of trials. ⁷These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Col 3:1-3 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, *seated at the right hand of God*. (2) Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. (3) For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Scripture promises that for the Christian, our home is in heaven, through faith in Christ.

“BUT our citizenship *IS* in heaven”: Interesting the wording Paul uses here. He doesn’t use the typical word for “is”; or a form of “to be” verb. HE uses a word that means to ***EXIST***; It could be literally translated; “But our citizenship presently ***EXISTS*** in heaven”; emphasizing that it is a literal reality. So much of Christianity views so much of Holy Scripture as symbolic, or figurative, or allegorical, or metaphorical or non-literal. But the emphasis here is a literal reality. Meaning that heaven is literal, it is known, experiential, verifiable and certain.

The literal, ***ETERNAL*** Joy-Filled Christian Perspective: The emphasis is that The Christian life is one of tremendous eternal hope, not concerned with what we may lay aside, but rejoicing in what we have ***already*** gained, and presently possess. Our citizenship exists in heave and it is a Present possession of absolute certainty, for every believer in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Also, Our Eternal Joy-Filled Perspective is also focused on...

Our Eternal Savior- *the person of Jesus* (v.20b)

Php 3:20 (20) *But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,*

* So much of Paul's writings include the Joy-Filled, Hope-Full promise of what is going to happen to us as believers when we step into eternity. He often refers to heaven and or the return of Jesus. Throughout Philippians he reflects on Jesus being our Everything. Christ is our Hope, our Salvation, Our Source and Joy for this life and the next.

The Return of Christ or the Rez. Of believers in Phil.

Php 1:6 ESV And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at *the day of Jesus Christ.*

Php 1:9-10 ESV And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, (10) so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for *the day of Christ,*

Php 2:14-16 ESV Do all things without grumbling or disputing, (15) that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, (16) holding fast to the word of life, so that in *the day of Christ* I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

Php 3:9-11 ESV *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-- (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 resurrection from the dead.*

Php 3:20-21 ESV 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.

Php 4:4-5 ESV Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. (5) Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. *The Lord is at hand*;

Our home in heaven and the return of Jesus Christ are absolutely fundamental necessities in order for us to experience the joy of the Lord as our strength. These promises are reassuring promises of eternal hope in our Eternal Savior.

POINTS OF APPLICATION:

Question: What thoughts have you allowed to fill your minds this week?

Joy doesn't occur accidentally or automatically. The Joy of the Lord is a fight for every believer. It is a fight against what our enemy desires to rob and strip away. Perhaps you have been fighting for joy this week. That is a good thing! It is a battle worthy of engaging but can be ferocious.

As Paul, we must demonstrate a purposed discipline of filling our mind and focusing our thoughts with the hope filled promises of Jesus Christ as Lord over all things. And we, as His church, must strive to find our Life, Hope, Peace and fullness of Joy in Him and His promises.

This is what must take place and be practiced in order to acquire our Joy-filled, eternal perspective.

The joy of of the Lord is our Strength. IF we have Jesus, then we have His joy. We have already gained it and we presently possess it.

If Satan can steal our joy, then he has stripped us of our strength. Once he has accomplished that, we lose our motive to serve and are stripped of our power in ministry. Once our joy is lost, it is an often overwhelmingly difficult task to regain it.

Satan can take nothing from us, that we don't first surrender to him. And failing to actively fight to fill our minds and focus our thoughts on the goodness of the Lord and the greatness of our God is to surrendered our joy to the evil one. Failing to strive to fill our minds and focus our thoughts on our eternal home in heaven, and our eternal Savior, Jesus; is like bearing our throats in defeat to our enemy, the hungry wolf..



“Jesus Changes *EVERYTHING*”

Series Title: *“The Book of Philippians: The Proper Joy-filled Christian Perspective”*

Date: Oct.21, 28 2018

TEXT: 3:20-4:2

Chapter 1: The **FOCUSED** Joy-Filled Perspective: We do not focus so much on our circumstances, but on Gods’ purpose in our circumstances.

Chp. 2 * The **SURRENDERED** Joy-Filled Perspective: We are never more Christ-like than when we demonstrate a Surrendered Christian Perspective, through an attitude of person humility, in following Jesus in our lives, relationships and ministries.

Chp. 3 * The **ETERNAL** Joy-Filled Perspective: The Christian life is one of tremendous eternal hope, not concerned with what we may lay aside, but rejoicing in what we have already gained, and presently posses.

In Chapter 3, Paul speaks of His past, his present and his future. Today we look at His past. The Joy of the Lord is our Strength. If we have Christ, we have His joy. Jesus does not give this joy, He brings it. His joy is our motive for service. His strength is our empowerment for ministry. If Satan can steal our joy, then he will strip us of our strength.

“When Christ becomes our Everything, then Christ Changes Everything”. And when Jesus comes into a life, His intent is never to leave us the same. When we receive Christ, we receive all He brings and all He is.

INTRODUCTION

There is what is referred to in our society today as a “Happy Place”. I’m not sure of its origin. But A Happy Place is a memory,

situation, experience, or an activity that helps alleviate stress and increase our sense of peace, joy, and contentment. When we go to our Happy Place, we can escape the stress of life and ideally be refreshed and ready to step back into the real world in a more appropriate and more productive manner.

The question today is: “Where is your Happy Place? What do you think about? Or Where do you escape to?”

For the Apostle Paul, his Happy Place was the practice of looking outside of his circumstances to think about and tell others about Heaven, the return of Christ or the believer’s Resurrection in the last days. That is how he filled his mind and focused his thoughts; on eternity. That was his Happy Place.

As the family of God, we will one day share the same eternal home, in peace and in the fullness of His Joy. Psalm 16 offers encouragement to the believer in Jesus Christ. We have reason to rejoice in this life and reason to be assured in life after death.

Psa 16:8-11 ESV I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. (9) Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. (10) For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. (11) You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

As the family of God, we will share the same eternal home, in peace and in the fullness of His Joy; even with those Christians with whom we have differences; with those who have angered you or who you have angered; People who frustrated you, offended you, or exasperated you. Maybe you can’t image yourself having them live with you in your earthly home, but we need to be rightly

focused and realize we will be together in God's eternal home, together.

"And When we all get to heaven...

there ain't gonna be no such thing as church hoppin'."

Last week our focus was on our home in heaven with Christ as our Savior. Today our focus begins with Living under the life transforming power of the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

We begin today focusing on...

THE POWER OF GOD IN THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS (3:21)

* This Speaks of Our Eternal Joy, under the ultimate Lordship of Jesus Christ, over all creation. Lordship: being Jesus ruling our hearts and lives and attitudes and actions.

This refers to the ultimate, authority and power and glory of Christ's Lordship filling and changing our lives. And what was begun on earth, will be completed in heaven. If we are uncomfortable with the Lordship of Christ in our lives now, in this life, we are not going to be comfortable with it in heaven.

<p>Php 3:20-21. (20) But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, <u>(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.</u></p>

This answers why we are awaiting that Savior. Because He is going to change every *thing* and every *body*. Remember, Heaven's population, will one day be part of the New Jerusalem or the New Earth's population. So when Jesus comes into our lives, His intent is to change us and begin preparing us for our eternal dwelling place.

Through Paul, the Holy Spirit reminds us of the promise that when Jesus Christ returns...

We Shall All be Changed (3:21a)

* Paul reminds us of The Power of God in the Resurrection to come. This change takes place to make us as temporary, physical, humans, conducive or compatible with our eternal home in heaven. Flesh and blood will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Php 3:20-21 (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.**

Whether this is reference to the Rapture of the Church or the Resurrection in the last days, either or both; nevertheless, so much of Paul's writings focused on Christ's return and our Resurrection in the last day. IT forged his eternal perspective and characterized His Joy-Filled outlook on his Christian life and ministry. Here, Paul encourages the readers by sharing this contrast. That is, He will transform our lowly bodies; that is our humble, corruptible, perishable, diseased, decaying bodies, with all our afflictions and infirmities will become like Jesus' own glorious heavenly body.

The term "**transform**" refers to a complete makeover; makeover not confused with "make up", as something that is cosmetic in nature. It is a total change; total transformation. He will Transform our lowly bodies, to be like his glorious body.

Lowly: literally, humble, weak; sin prone; corrupted; mortal; And the process of changing our temporary body into the likeness of Christ's glorious resurrected body. Jesus Christ is presented as the Ultimate Transformer! He is in the life changing business!

When Paul wrote to encourage the church in Corinth, he wrote:

1 Cor.15:50-54 ⁵⁰I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—⁵²in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be ***changed***. ⁵³For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. ⁵⁴When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.” ⁵⁵“Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” ⁵⁶The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

In **v.52** When Paul refers to being ***changed*** in this passage, he uses another term which refers to changing from one thing into another; or to exchange one thing for the other. The idea is that we sort of turn in our old decrepit, earthly body; in exchange for a Transformed, heavenly, glorified body.

It seems we have to undergo this change, in order to be prepared for our heavenly home. Flesh and blood will not inherit the kingdom of God.

1Jn 3:2-3 ESV (2) Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears ***we shall be like him***, because we shall see him as he is. (3) And everyone who has this hope in him, purifies himself as He is pure.

It seems that our temporary body needs to be exchanged for our eternal, heavenly Glorified body.

1Pet. 1:3-9 ESV Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from

the dead, (4) to an inheritance that is **imperishable**, **undefiled**, and **unfading**, kept in heaven for you,

Our old body is temporary, earthly, physical, corruptible, perishable, decaying. Our new body will be eternal and spiritual; but not **just** spiritual, but Glorified, as Christ's glorified body. This Glorious change is part of what prepares us for our heavenly dwelling place. Why does this have to take place? Can't our souls just remain in heaven? Our bodies must be resurrected and reunited with our souls, and then we will eventually become part of the New Earth in the last days.

Php 3:21 (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.

So what is Jesus' glorified body like? Some refer to our glorified bodies as "spiritual" bodies, but they will be much more than that. I did some research on that.

When our lowly bodies are transformed to be like His glorious body... then our residual corruption will become incorruptible. The leftover sinful flesh will be fully and forever purified. All that which was temporary will be purged and will be eternal. All that which was flesh and blood will be gloriously changed and transformed into our eternally glorified, Christ-like state.

Our bodies will be Physically resurrected, eternally exalted, and unmistakably glorified.

So what was Christ's glorious body like? And What will our glorious body be like? Christ's Resurrected Glorious body was:

(1) Visible. (1)Acts 1:3, after His resurrection in His resurrected body, Jesus appeared and ministered and performed many infallible proofs or convincing miracles; for 40 days. The Glorious

body is visible. (2) In 1 Cor.15:5-6, we are told that after the Resurrection Jesus appeared visually to over 500 people. (3) Acts. 1:9, Jesus ascended before their eyes until he disappeared out of sight. His body was visible. It seems our resurrected body will be similar.

(2) Not confined to typical earthly, physical limitations.

(1) Again in Acts. 1:9, the glorified body of Christ ascended into heaven. (2) Jn.20, Jesus somehow entered a room with locked doors; evidently passing through the door or the walls. So our resurrected and glorified bodies will likewise, not be confined to typical earthly, physical limitations.

(3) Touchable: (1) Jn.20:17; - Mary, “Don’t cling to me...”

(2) In Jn.20:27; “Thomas, who was doubting the resurrection of Jesus, did not immediately believe. Jesus appeared to him and Thomas put his finger into the holes in Jesus hands, and put his hand into the hole in his side. His glorious resurrected body was touchable.

(4) He could consume food: We don’t know that he needed food, but only that he ate with the disciples. In Luke 24, Jesus walked with the disciples on the road to Emmaus and then they had a meal together. Then afterwards the disciples ate a meal of fish together, on the seashore.

(5) Will not grow old, decay, diseased or die.

(1) 1Cor.15: We will be raised and changed into that which is incorruptible, immortal, and imperishable. (2) Rev 21:4 – No more decay, nor death, nor pain, for the former things have all passed away”. All things will be transformed into their eternal state.

So our glorified, resurrected bodies will not be just spiritual, but may retain certain present elements, yet far more advanced.

In Paul's 2nd letter to the Corinthian church, he conveys this concept in a bit of a different way.

2Cor 5:1 ESV For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

The tent or tabernacle is referring to our earthly body. In other words, if this tent, or our corrupted, decaying, afflicted, temporary, human, physical, earthly body is destroyed – which is exactly what will eventually take place. The assurance for us is that we have a building or a home dwelling from God which is eternal and in heaven. That is reference to our eternal home in heaven being a reference to our eternal, resurrected, glorified bodies.

In short, whatever we lose pertaining to this life, we ultimately lose nothing. But what we gain is of such surpassing eternal quality and value, that nothing, nothing could compare with it. So we lose nothing. But we gain everything. When Christ is our EVERYTHING, He changes Everything. And when Christ changes everything, it is all changed for the eternal good!

2Cor 5:2-5 ESV (2) For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, (3) if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. (4) For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened--not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. (5) He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

Whatever you think you have in this life, anything worth hanging onto; anything that would keep your attention off heaven and on this earthly life; maybe your appearance or perceived good looks. For some that is all they think about. Your looks; your earthly home; your position; your title; your bank account; your talent or

ability; your earthly trinkets, play-prettyps; things that occupy and distract from more important things. Just think about it. None of it. None of it. None of it is going to last. Everything. Everything. Everything is going to be consumed, burned up, transformed, exchanged, or destroyed when the end of this age arrives. All that you treasured in this life; everything on earth that brought you pleasure, assurance, excitement, enjoyment, pride, – everything will be changed, much of it will be destroyed and gone forever.

All that Paul addresses, everything he refers to helps to Dispel the belief that the Resurrection or the Rapture, or the Return of Christ; or that the Ascension of Christ was figurative, symbolic or a hoax or mistake. Anything less than literal and real, Paul lays those fantasies to rest. It is all real. For the true and obedient child of God, it will all be real and it will all be glorious.

So when Christ becomes our EVERYTHING, then He begins to change everything and everybody. The Promise is we will all be changed.

WE will also acknowledge His Lordship (v21b

* We will all experience the Power of God in the Triumph over all His enemies. He is Lord of all of heaven and earth. Physical and spiritual, Temporary and Eternal. This power to triumph over his enemies is the power that created everything. It is the power that sustains all things and for us in the end times, will be the life giving power that changes us.

i) “Power”

Phil.3:21

Php 3:20-21 (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.***

“by the power that enables him to subject all things unto Himself.”

Mat.28:18 – Jesus said: “All Authority has been given unto me..”

Jn.,17:- God Gave Jesus power over all flesh and to give eternal life. And the power of God to usurp His Lordship over all things, is the eternal glorious power of the transformation and resurrection restoration of every aspect of creation.

Rom.8:11 ¹¹And *if* the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, (*then*) he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

The resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of believers to come are the result of the power of the God of all life, carrying out His plan and exercising His Lordship over all His creation.

ii) “subject all things”

* This reaches beyond our bodies, to not just people or souls, but **all things**,

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.

All things of Creation will be subjected under His authority and Lordship. The living and the dead. The saved and the unsaved. The animate and inanimate will be changed and subjected to Christ;

Rom 8:19-21 ESV For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. (20) For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope (21) that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

All creation groans under the curse of sin. All of creation will be redeemed or transformed with the return of Jesus, the rapture of the church and the resurrection of the dead.

This is Paul's Happy Place. It is his focus of his life. It is what brings him joy and peace and hope amidst his trials and temporary unpleasanties.

[Phil.3:21] “Subject”: a military term referring to “out ranking”; Demonstrate Authority; to bring into obedience all things to bow to his authority and Lordship.

When Christ returns...

1) All people past, present and future will bow to the Lordship of Christ

Php 2:9-11 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, (10) so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, (11) and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

hen Christ returns...

2) All spiritual demons and servants of satan in the angelic realm will bow to Jesus Christ

1Cor. 15:24-26 ESV Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every **rule** and every **authority** and **power**. (25) For he must reign until he has put all his **enemies** under his feet. (26) The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

They are not given another chance. They are merely doing in eternity what they refused to do in the present time; that

acknowledging and bowing to the Absolute Authority and Supreme Lordship of Jesus Christ.

When Christ returns...

3) Every enemy of Jesus Christ and of His church will be defeated and will rightfully bow to Christ, declaring Him Lord of all, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil.2:9-10)

Heb 10:12-13 ESV But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, (13) waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet.

And When our Lord Jesus Christ returns...

4) Even death itself, will bow under the Lordship of Christ.

1Cor.15:26 “The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”

When Christ becomes our EVERYTHING,
He begins changing Everything!

I wanted to share this portion from a commentary on Philippians by Albert Barnes. He writes:

Let us look for the coming of the Lord; Php 3:21. All that we hope for depends on his reappearing. Our day of triumph and of the fulness of our joy, is to be when he shall return. Then we shall be raised from the grave; then our vile bodies shall be changed; then we shall be acknowledged as his friends; then we shall go to be forever with him. The earth is not our home; nor is the grave to be our everlasting bed of rest. Our home is heaven - and the Saviour will come, that he may raise us up to that blessed abode. And who knows when he may appear? He himself commanded us to be ready, for he said he would come at an hour when we think not. We should so desire his coming, that the hours of his delay would seem

to be heavy and long and should so live that we can breathe forth with sincerity, at all times, the fervent prayer of the beloved disciple, “Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly;”[Rev.22:20]

For the believer in Jesus Christ, the return of Christ affects all of life, all of ministry and all of our relationships. When we begin making Jesus our Everything, He begins changing everything. He may begin changing your attitude or softening your heart. He may begin changing your desires to be more Jesus focused, than self-focused.

He may begin changing your conversation by convicting us and empowering us to control our tongues. He may actually begin changing the direction of our lives, by giving us a greater purpose for living.

All this is the result of the Lordship of Jesus Christ in every area of our lives, before the return of Christ to this earth to rule in righteousness.

While still in this life, Jesus offers the opportunity and extends the invitation to willfully surrender to His lordship in our life, affecting our attitudes, our will and our decisions. Like a great King who says to the world: “All you wandering, homeless immigrants out there, come to my kingdom; live under my loving, holy, Righteous reign.”

The time is come when Jesus will no longer Invite, but he will usurp his power and conquer his enemies and reclaim all kingdoms as his own.

So we Learned of The Power and Promise of God in the restoration of all things.

We also see...

THE POWER OF GOD IN THE RELATIONSHIPS OF ALL BELIEVERS (4:1-3)

Now in Philippians chapter 4, Paul transitions from the *Eternal* Perspective to the *FUTURE* Christian perspective. He identifies a problem in the church that no church in church history has been immune to. In this address, he transitions from the Lordship of Jesus Christ (3:20-21) to the issue of strife in the church.

This address refers to the ultimate purpose of God for the church to fully and freely submit to Christ's Lordship; that is, His rule over every area of every believer's life.

God will one day, by His absolute power and supreme Authority, bring all powers and all people under His control and Lordship. With that in mind, Christians must not wait until Christ exerts that power in the last days. We must submit ourselves to live under lordship of Jesus Christ, here and now until the end comes.

Jesus will return to change our bodies and rule the world. But until then, there are some house keeping matters that need tending to.

*3:21 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. **4:1-2 (1) Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord, my beloved. (2) I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord.***

How should the Lordship of Christ be evidenced? By loving, peaceful church family relationships. This is Paul addressing this issue, as we progress through the book of Philippians. This is the time and the passage of Scripture, where the Holy Spirit has brought us.

Paul identifies the issue of strained relations within the church family. He addresses the problem with timeless, sound instruction. And begins this chapter; “Therefore”, here’s what we need to do”.

Paul begins this chapter by emphasizing...

The importance of Peace in church family relationships (4:1-2)

As Christians, we should expect to experience...

i) Meaningful, trusting, Family Relationships (v1a)

“My brothers”: Refers to our eternal, spiritual family relationships. This communicates our common relationship with our common Source. When the disciples came to Jesus to ask him to teach them how to pray, he began his teaching by telling them to pray: “Our Father...” Indicating not merely a focus on individual believers, but the corporate body of Christ, and the family of God, as we address our prayers to Our heavenly Father. We have 1 Father. We are 1 family. We are brothers and sisters of that eternal, spiritual family.

“Whom I love and long for”: Paul’s expression of appreciation and affection to the church is his way of communicating his love for this church family and that he misses them. “I long for you.” “I miss you”. And he goes on to refer to them as **My joy and crown**. Again, this was Paul’s way of stating that they were his **“pride and joy”**, those to whom he writes with such inner joy as to their relationships and demonstration of spiritual life together.

Paul’s expressions of love and joy over the believers is contrasted with his tears of grief over those who were once evidently close associates at some level, but are not viewed as enemies of the cross of Jesus Christ (3:18).

Paul also addresses...

ii) Stable Peaceful Family Relations (v.1b)

* Therefore: In light of all that was shared regarding our joint home in heaven and our common Lord and Savior's return.... In light of all that, the idea is that when Christ is Lord, Christians stand firm together, rather than separated by divisions.

4:1-2 (1) Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, ***stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.*** (2) I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord.

Standing firm is to remain stable and don't let the storm sink your boat. ***“Stand firm*** in the lord” refers to remaining immovable. HE is not referring to having no differences, but to having no destructive divisions. To Stand Firm, refers to remaining faithful in service to Christ, under the Lordship of Christ, with our relationships in Christ. Don't give an inch. It's a plea for the church to refrain from capsizing their own boat. Do not be moved. Do NOT Allow for any compromise. Do NOT Allow for even the slightest foothold for the evil one. No tempers. No anger. No resentment. No rifts in the body. Stand Firm, is Paul's admonition to the church in Philippi to fight for their joy and unity. He also now begins urging them to fight for peace in their church family and ministry relationships.

Don't allow differences to deteriorate into divisions. Because when those things – compromise, anger, resentment, grudges and unforgiveness are allowed to enter into the church family, then we are no longer standing firm and in reality, no one wins.

**And remember, the devil can take nothing from us
that we don't first surrender to him.**

But once the devil steals our joy, then he can steal our peace in our Christian relationships. Here it is; one falls prey to the devil, then he falls out and away from the church family. Then another brother or sister falls out and away from the church family. Then another

falls. Then another falls. Then your boat is in the process of capsizing and you don't even realize it. When that happens we allow ourselves to be picked off one by one. Once our enemy gets a foothold, and between you and me, I believe he has a foothold. I believe at the moment, "the days are evil".

1Cor 16:13 KJV Watch therefore and be **stand fast** in the faith, act like men, be strong.

Eph 6:13 ESV Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand **in the evil day**, and having done all, to **stand firm**.

Php 1:27 KJV Only let your conversation be as is appropriate for the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you **stand fast** in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

Php 4:1 ESV Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, **stand firm** in the Lord, my beloved.

1Th 3:8 KJV For now we live, **if** you **stand fast** in the Lord.

2Th 2:15 KJV Therefore, brethren, **stand fast**, and hold the traditions which you have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

1Pet 5:12 ESV By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. **Stand firm** in it.

We will live. We will survive. We will recuperate, if as believers in Jesus, we stand firm in the Lord together.(1Thes.3:8)

Paul issues...

iii) a Plea to those who are divided (v2)

* Paul is addressing the church of Philippi and urging them to intervene. Not the pastor. Not just the elders but the church family. Everyone who has the opportunity to be a peacemaker has the responsibility of being a peacemaker. The individuals involved and who are closest to the issues, if they are of the level of spiritual maturity to do so, are to do their part in making things right again.

4:1-2 (1) Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved. (2) ***I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord.***

What occurs in private should typically be dealt with privately. But what is made public, may well need to be addressed publically. This division is public and will affect the church. Strife in the church will become a joy stealer. Differences that are allowed to become divisive are joy and peace stealers, and are always destructive.

*So under the Lordship of Jesus Christ... **Be Agreed:** “be of the same mind”.* This is the umpteenth time Paul has addressed this in his letter. His focus is for the church and specifically for Euodia and Syntyche to have the same perspective as the mind of Christ Himself.(2:5)

Entreat or beseech; beg, urge; **paraklete**: to call along side; in the holy Spirit; Verb which implies to comfort, implore or admonish;to strongly urge; **Paraklete** is the word Jesus uses to describe the Holy Spirit as the Helper, in Jn. Chs. 14, 15, & 16. I come along side you and “paraklete” you. I strongly encourage you. I urge you to agree!! Come to peace with one another. Stop your anger, bickering, arguing, grudge holding. Forgive. Love. Bless. Fight the good fight together. Be reconciled.

No longer allow your differences to divide you. No longer be focused on what has divided you, but look ahead with a ***Future***

perspective at what can be done to reconcile, restore and renew the church family relationships.

Therefore, with the promise of the power of Christ exerting His lordship; in light of our joint home in heaven; since the Lord Jesus Himself is returning from heaven – and possibly quite soon; How should we be living? The church should be living peacefully within the church family relationships. God may call you to leave your church. But he never leads or calls or directs people to leave angry, resentful, vengeful, unforgiven or unreconciled. Rather we are to pursue reconciliation and protect our strained church family relations.

This is Paul's way or saying: "In the name of all that is holy, be reconciled!" Talk it out. Work it out. Share. Forgive. Heal. Be at peace. Send the devil home. Don't invite him to take up residence.

"Therefore..." in light of the Lordship of Jesus Christ; in light of the return of Christ; in light of all that Paul has already communicated throughout the book until now, be at peace! Fight for joy! This is the reason for writing this book.

Therefore...

Rejoice in Peace

(v3-4)

* Blessed are the peacemakers....sons of God. (Mat. 5: 9) Paul urges the church family to look ahead with a future perspective and work together in restoring peace.

4:3-4 (3) Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, ***who have labored*** side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life. (4) *Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.*

Paraphrased: “Fight for joy in the Lord; again I say fight for joy!”
Don’t willingly surrender anything to the enemy.

CONCLUSION:

Question: What are you willing to give up in order to keep peaceful relationships within your church?

Question: How far are you willing to go to be a peacemaker and a reconciler of the brethren in your church family?

Question: How much do you demand your own way and push your own agenda in church relationships and/or ministries?



JOY / REJOICE / GLAD (16x)

1) Php 1:4 always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with **joy**,

2,3) Php 1:18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I **rejoice**. Yes, and I will **rejoice**,

4) Php 1:25 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and **joy** in the faith,

5) Php 1:26 ESV so that in me you may have ample cause to **glory** in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

6) Php 2:2 complete my **joy** by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

7,8) Php 2:17 Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am **glad** and **rejoice** with you all.

9,10) Php 2:18 Likewise you also should be **glad** and **rejoice** with me.

11) Php 2:28 I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may **rejoice** at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious.

12) Php 2:29 So receive him in the Lord with all **joy**, and honor such men,

13) Php 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.

14) Php 4:1 Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my **joy** and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

15,16) Php 4:4 **Rejoice** in the Lord always; again I will say, **rejoice**.

OUR MIND, OUR THOUGHTS; Christian perspective (18x)

Our thinking process; our memory banks; our mental outlook or perspective on life.

1) Php 1:3 ESV I thank my God in all my **remembrance** of you,

2) Php 1:7 ESV It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my **heart**, for you are all partakers with me

of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.

3) Php 1:12 ESV I want you to **know**, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel,

4) Php 1:27 ESV 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,

5,6) Php 2:2 ESV complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one **mind**.

7) Php 2:5 ESV Have this **mind** among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,

8) Php 2:6 ESV who, though he was in the form of God, did not **count** equality with God a thing to be grasped,

9) Php 2:20 ESV For I have no one **like him**, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare.

10) Php 3:7 ESV But whatever gain I had, I **counted** as loss for the sake of Christ.

11) Php 3:8 ESV 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

12,13) Php 3:13 ESV 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,

14,15) Php 3:15 ESV Let those of us who are mature **think** this way, and if in anything you **think** otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.

16,17) Php 4:7 ESV And the peace of God, which surpasses all **understanding**, will guard your hearts and your **minds** in Christ Jesus.

18) Php 4:8 ESV Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, **think** about these things.

Don't close this booklet yet

without considering this all important question.

Is Jesus Christ the Savior or *your* soul and the Lord of *your* life?

Every person is born guilty of sin and in need of forgiveness.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;
--Rom 3:23

Our sin is against God, therefore our forgiveness can only come from God.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only
begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should
not perish, but have everlasting life. --John 3:16

God has appointed His Son as the payment for sins and sent Him to die in our place.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is
eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
-- Romans 6:23

God's love is demonstrated through the sacrificial payment of Jesus Christ in our place for our sins.

...but God shows his love for us in that while we were
still sinners, Christ died for us. ---Romans 5:8

For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord
will be saved." -- Rom 10:13

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his
name, he gave the right to become children of God,
- John 1:12

Before you close this book, why not be absolutely certain that you are truly a citizen of God's eternal kingdom and loving family?

*Trust in Jesus Christ today and receive forgiveness for your sins
and citizenship into God's family and His Kingdom.*

The ABCs

A - Admit you have sinned and are in need of a Savior.

B - Believe Jesus died in your place, and you can no way help yourself.

C - Confess your sins to God. He already knows. Also Confess Jesus as you LORD. He desires and deserves to be your Lord.

Prayer: Take time to talk to God right now and open your heart and life to His instruction and leadership.

Connect with a local Bible believing, Christ centered church.

Commit yourself to meeting regularly with other Christians who are growing in their faith.

Heb 10:24-25 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, (25) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Act 2:41-42 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (42) And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

For more information or for spiritual help, please contact us at:
Christ E. Free Church, PO Box 619, 19682 Hill Rd,
Saegertown, Pa, 16433, Ph: 814-763-2934, www.christefca.org

*It is our prayer that you find **Jesus Christ** to be...
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your greatest purpose,
your soul's source and joy,
and your all-consuming passion.*

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