

PHILIPPIANS 3 - "All For Christ; Pressing Toward the Goal; Our Citizenship in Heaven!"

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: www.ptwente.com Click on "Bible Studies" on the left column. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

Outline of Philippians

Philippians chapter 1

Php 1:1-8. Paul testifies his thankfulness to God, and his love towards them, for the fruits of their faith, and fellowship in his sufferings;

Php 1:9-11. daily praying to him for their increase in grace;

Php 1:12-20. he shows what good the faith of Christ had received by his troubles at Rome;

Php 1:21-26. and how ready he is to glorify Christ either by his life or death;

Php 1:27. exhorting them to unity;

Php 1:28-30. and to fortitude in persecution.

Philippians chapter 2

Php 2:1-11. Paul exhorts them to unity, and to all humbleness of mind, by the example of Christ's humility and exaltation;

Php 2:12-15. to a careful proceeding in the way of salvation, that they be as lights to the wicked world,

Php 2:16-18. and comforts to him their apostle, who is now ready to be offered up to God.

Php 2:19-30. He hopes to send Timothy to them, and Epaphroditus also.

Philippians chapter 3

Php 3:1-3. He warns them to beware of the false teachers of the circumcision;

Php 3:4-6. shewing that himself has greater cause than they to trust in the righteousness of the law;

Php 3:7-11. which notwithstanding he counts as dung and loss, to gain Christ and his righteousness;

Php 3:12-14. therein acknowledging his own imperfection.

Php 3:15-16. He exhorts them to be thus minded;

Php 3:17. and to imitate him,

Php 3:18-21. and to decline the ways of carnal Christians.

Philippians chapter 4

Php 4:1-3. From particular admonitions,

Php 4:4-9. he proceeds to general exhortations,

Php 4:10-18. shewing how he rejoiced at their liberality towards him lying in prison, not so much for the supply of his own wants as for the grace of God in them.

Php 4:19-23. And so he concludes with prayer and salutations.

Philippians 3:1-21

Too many Christians get wrapped up in "things" and lose the joy and peace they ought to have in Christ. They "mind earthly things" ([Php 3:19](#)) and lack that spiritual mind of the dedicated believer. Notice how many times the word "things" is used in this chapter. Here Paul describes the spiritual mind — the mind that thinks God's thoughts and is directed toward God's goals. Read [Rom 8:1-17](#) for more about the spiritual mind. In this chapter, Paul describes his past, present, and future, a full biography of the Christian life.

I. Salvation: The Christian's Past ([Php 3:1-11](#))

II. Sanctification: The Christian's Present ([Php 3:12-16](#))

III. Glorification: The Christian's Future ([Php 3:17-21](#))

Higher Ground – J. Oatman, Jr - Joslin Choral Group - Hymn #60

1. I'm pressing on the upward way, New heights I'm gaining every day; Still praying as I'm onward bound, "Lord, plant my feet on higher ground."

Refrain: - Lord, lift me up and let me stand, By faith, on Heaven's tableland, A higher plane than I have found; Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.

2. My heart has no desire to stay Where doubts arise and fears dismay; Though some may dwell where those abound, My prayer, my aim, is higher ground. (Refrain)

3. I want to scale the utmost height And catch a gleam of glory bright; But still I'll pray till heaven I've found, "Lord, lead me on to higher ground." (Refrain)

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INTERPRETATION

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PHILIPPIANS 3 - "All For Christ;

Php 3:1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.

Php 3:2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation!

Php 3:3 For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,

Php 3:4 though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so:

Php 3:5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee;

Php 3:6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

v. 1 Finally As for the rest of my letter, my brethren, Paul, shifting gears from love and grace for the Philippian church **to beware of legalism from false teaching coming into the church.** Also, sort of a summary, ***rejoice in the Lord.*** Not in circumstances, that would be very hard, but in the Lord! **In who and what He is** – always pure, holy, loving, always working to make us like Him! **It's so important that we focus on Him, not on ourselves or on our problems. If we keep our focus on the Lord, then we will find that you can always rejoice in the Lord. ...the same things to you is not tedious,** Alluding once again, in the following verses, to the teaching, in the following verses, that he will be **giving against legalism which add works to the free gift of salvation.** Paul has to constantly teach on this. Our Lord knows of forgetfulness, therefore the reminds us often in the Scriptures!

v. 2 Beware of dogs, In those days, mixed-breed mutts, stray, diseased, vicious, dogs ran in packs. They were frightening and dangerous. He is comparing false teachers and their spiritually, dangerous teaching to these kinds of dogs! Beware of these spiritual mutts!

beware of evil workers, Here he is referring to religious people. Today Satan will lead more people to hell than anything else! One who denies the cross, including their saying the cross alone is not enough, but it's Jesus AND something else! Teacher are subject to harshest terms because of the importance of not spiritual misleading with eternal consequences. (***James 3:1***)

beware of the mutilation! Legalists were teaching that salvation had to include circumcision of the flesh. Paul is saying that for anyone who is already saved, that would not be circumcision, but mutilation!

v. 3 For we are the circumcision, We believers wear a spiritual circumcision as distinct a marking for Christians as the physical circumcision set the Jews apart. What does that look like? Paul tells us, ***who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,*** We no longer relate to God through rites, rituals or legalism, but we relate to God through the Person of the Holy Spirit, anytime, anyplace! ***rejoice in Christ Jesus,*** We don't rejoice in our works, but in what Jesus has done for us. ***and have no confidence in the flesh,*** We have no confidence in our works or in our own fleshly efforts. (***Romans 2:25-29 [29]***) ***but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.***

v. 4 though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: Paul is saying I've done legalism like no one else! Don't waste your time. I count it all loss or rubbish! If anyone thinks they can get to heaven through their own works, look at my background, "I more so"! See if any of these false teachers can compare to what I have done! You can't get there by anything you alone can do yourself!

v. 5 circumcised the eighth day, I didn't come recently – I'm not a Johnny come lately! ***of the stock of Israel,*** I have Jacob's blood in my veins! I'm an heir to God's covenant, the same as you! ***of the tribe of Benjamin,*** I'm from the tribe from which the first king of Israel was chosen! ***a Hebrew of the Hebrews;*** All, both sides of my lineage is completely Jewish! There is no component of Gentile blood in my body! ***concerning the law, a Pharisee;*** I was a member of the very select legalistic group, like making our Olympic team – the Pharisees, the sect most strict in the Jewish law, judging everyone else who weren't living up to our standards and our interpretations of the law. I was not a liberal Sadducee.

v. 6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; Thirty years ago, my zealousness would have had you all arrested, and your church closed. Those false teachers can't compare to Paul's zeal thirty years ago. ***concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.*** Paul had achieved the accepted standard of righteousness for that time, but that standard fell short of God's holy standard. If anyone could lay claim to pleasing God by law-keeping and the works of the flesh, it was Paul.

v. 1 We are to rejoice in the Lord, not in circumstances! Because of our forgetfulness, we need to be reminded of important things, hence we see frequent repeating, by His design, in the Scriptures! But there is not a single wasted word in the Bible! **We need to be reminded of important truths!**

v. 2 Beware of legalistic false teaching! Notice the clarity of referring to these false teachers as ***evil workers, whose faulty teaching has eternal consequences!***

v. 3 How distinctly different from the world is our spiritual circumcision? How obvious to observers is that difference?

v. 4 What we have in Christ is so awesome, it makes legalism, works of the flesh, nothing or even a loss! **Do we still have any remnant of confidence in our flesh, in our human accomplishments?**

v. 5 Paul lays out his credentials here – going all the back to the time of his birth (8th day), **Do our lives reflect our having walked with the Lord for some time?**

v. 6 How zealous are we in our work of the Lord? **Would you describe your ministry as being done in a zealous manner?**

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Php 3:7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.

Php 3:8 Yet indeed I also count (30 yrs ago and to the present) all things loss for the excellence (compared to the greatness) of the knowledge (gnosko) of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish (vilest dross), that I may gain Christ

Php 3:9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith (what Jesus had done for him and not in what he had done, was doing or would do1);
Php 3:10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.

v. 7 But what things were gain to me (these were the things I was counting on), *these I have counted loss* (as nothing, but really damaging) *for Christ*. Any of the false teachers in Philippi would be proud to claim Paul's experience and credentials., but he says it plainly, *these things I have counted loss for Christ*. Paul thought all these legalistic things he was doing were most important and impressive. He had that Pharisaical kind of pride that looked down on everybody else, but when he came to the truth about Jesus Christ on the Damascus Road, he found the former things that he was doing to please God were harmful, preventing him from coming to Christ.

v. 8 Paul, in looking back 30 years to the time he put those things away to gain Christ, now can say, in the present tense, "*Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge (gnosko – knowledge of Christ that has come by experience) of Christ Jesus my Lord ("Lord, what do You want me to do? ") , for whom I have suffered the loss of all things* (friends, career, family, reputation, future) , *and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.*" Paul, using very strong language here says these former things were to be considered as excrement - as dung; not only worthless, but outright offensive.

vs. 9-11 Paul will list six things that he has found in his relationship with Christ, none of which could be found in "religion", *and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ*, Paul could say, having gained in Christ, I now have – The great difference between the legal relationship stressed by false teachers and his personal connection with Jesus Christ:
(1) the righteousness which is from God by faith; A superior righteousness! So, Paul says my desire is to be found in Him. Not having my own righteousness, that which I once was seeking to attain through the law. That is the righteousness of the law, the righteousness that self-righteousness that came by keeping the law, but the righteousness now, which is through the faith of the Messiah, the righteousness, which is of God by faith. The imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ! The righteousness that God imputes to you is the righteousness of Jesus Christ. You can't improve on that! Often people want to go back under a system of laws to improve on the righteousness of Jesus Christ, but you can't improve on what God has imputed to you—the righteousness of Jesus Christ through your faith and trust in Him! It's complete. You are complete in Him!

(2) v. 10 that I may know (gnosko) Him; A simple plea unknown to the legalists. That I might know Him by personal experience, having a real, steady and abiding, personal relationship with God!

(3) and the power of His resurrection. The power now, that is needed to keep His Word! Yes, God, I want that power! Oh, how I want to know the power of the resurrection of Jesus in my life! We're all excited with the thought of the power of Jesus!

(4) and the fellowship of His sufferings. I'm not sure! I want to know the power, if it involves suffering? Don't talk to me about the suffering. I want power, not suffering. But by and through His power that I may count it a privilege to suffer for God, not be feared or endured as it in in religion! That I may love to suffer in fellowship with Him! Suffering is part of our heritage as the children of God--we get to be a part of the family of suffering!

v. 7 Have we laid aside all our former self-righteous things that were done in the past?

vs. 8-9 Paul here put a *personal relationship with Jesus Christ* at the very center of the Christian's life. He joyfully accepted the loss of all other things for the greatness of this personal relationship. **Do we have that same acceptance in the loss of all other things for our personal relationship with Jesus Christ, having a desire to always please Him in everything that we do?**

vs. 9-11 We see in these verses six things Paul says that he now has, which religion could never bring!
1 the righteousness which is from God by faith

2 that I may know Him!

3 and the power of His resurrection!

4 and the fellowship of His sufferings!

5 being conformed to His death!

6 I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Do you agree with Paul, not to waste our time on legalistic religion, which cannot begin to compare with what we have in Christ?

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(5) being conformed to His death. I want to be fully identified with Him! Yes, I want the power of the resurrection, but am I willing to also have the fellowship of the sufferings? **Am I willing to give my life for Him, being conformed to His death? Day by day I'm growing in my surrender to the Father. A surrender not based on works, guilt, condemnation or fear, but the beauty of my Savior's surrender to the Father's will! I long for the fulness of that in my own life! Giving my life for Jesus Christ!**

(6) v. 11 if, by any means (even if it includes giving my life or whatever), I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. I want to come to this glorious experience of the resurrection of the dead, of having have the confidence of everlasting life, of heaven, of receiving an eternal reward for my faithfulness – no wondering or questioning whether I going to make it!

v. 12 Not that I have already attained or am already perfected; Paul has been saved for about 30 years, actively serving the Lord for 25 years. What a record of sanctified service! But **notice he says he not perfect yet!** That gives us hope. Each week we seem to be able to continue to grow! How wonderful it is that the learning curve for us continues to be steeply upward! **but I press on.** But after all these years, Paul says he is pressing on to fulfill what God has called him to do in his life!
that I may lay hold (*katalambano* - apprehend) **of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold** (*katalambano* - apprehended) **of me.** When Paul was saved on the Damascus Road, he realized God had done much more than just to save him from the eternal fires of hell. **God had a hold of his life. God had a purpose in his life.** Here Paul is stating that! Paul is saying, when the Lord apprehended me, He had a purpose and a plan for my life. I've not yet or accomplished or fulfilled that purpose and that plan. Similarly, the Lord has a plan and a purpose for our life. **It should be the chief goal of our lives to accomplish those purposes for which the Lord laid hold or apprehended us.** Why did the Lord save us? He had a plan, a work for each one of us to do.

Php 3:11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Pressing Toward the Goal;

Php 3:12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

vs. 12-14 In the following verses, Paul anticipates the objection from the legalists that the freedom of grace and the gift of eternal life based on what He has done will produce weak and sin-prone believers! Note Paul's stressing that he has not already attained or perfected but that:

1 He presses on!

2 He may lay hold!

3 He is reaching forward!

4 He is pressing toward the goal!

He the Lord, indeed, has laid hold or apprehended each one of us for a purpose.

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Php 3:13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,

Php 3:14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Php 3:15 Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.

Php 3:16 Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by (look for, search out) the same rule (pattern), let us be of the same mind.

*v. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended but one thing I do, Consider the things Paul has seen and done during his 25 years of ministry -- being stoned, shipwrecked, beating beyond number -- all he has seen and been through, here he says, but one thing I do! Here is that "one thing" - forgetting those things which are behind. Paul's one thing is forgetting the things of the past, leaving those things in God's hands, not trying to live in the past experiences. Going back to our past will paralyze us either through condemnation for the wrong things and being prideful for the good things and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, Forgetting those things that are behind and reaching forward to that which lies ahead. He is using the imagery of running a race, Paul is saying, **I can't run forward with full strength, while looking backward or being obsessed with our past!** I forget those things in the past, leaving them in God's hands, knowing that Rom. 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. . Not all things are good, but God will work all things together for good!*

*v. 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Paul's standard not what he did in comparison to others, but what has **he done with respect to what God had called him to do!** Paul says, I will forget those things and lay hold, reach forward, always forward toward that goal for the prize of the upward call of God! To hear these words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter in to the joy of the Lord!"*

2Ti 4:6-8 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. [7] I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. [8] Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

vs. 15-16 Paul says this, even though he knows there will be those who would say, "how convenient for you, Paul, to forget what's behind. What a way to take away your responsibility for your past and your actions! Just look what you did in the past!" But he says, no it's not a sign of immaturity, a sign of lack of desire for godliness. It's a sign of maturity! *Therefore, let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.*

Nevertheless, **let us never feel guilty** for leaving the past in God's hands. Trust Him to work all things together for good! Never view it as an easy way out. **Our Savior paid a tremendous price**, note the symbols of His body and His blood! A tremendous price was paid for us to be able to move forward as a new creation from the things we once were and once did!

v. 13 Note that Paul, even with 25 years of great, church planting ministry indicates he had not yet apprehended the goal. **Do we share that overwhelming desire and love to continue to grow in the Lord? I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, not constantly looking backward and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,**

v. 14 Paul's goal was not just to do well in comparison to other men, but his standard was what he had done with respect to what God had called him to do? **Is that our standard? Jas 1:12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.**

vs. 15-16 Forgetting the things we've done in the past, which is not a sign of immaturity or a lack of godliness, but a sign of maturity in wanting to run and finish the best race possible. **How does that compare with our practice and goal?**

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Our Citizenship in Heaven!" (The end game!)

Php 3:17 Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.

Php 3:18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ (carnal adversaries, in the context of legalists-dogs, and libertines):

Php 3:19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.

Php 3:20 For our citizenship (community, conversation) ***is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,***

Php 3:21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

v. 17 Brethren join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. Join me in following my example of rejecting legalism, giving his full heart to the grace that is in Christ and his example in forgetting those things that are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, as a Christian, always continuing to grow. ***Heb 12:1-2 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, [2] looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.***

vs.18-19 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, I'm not the only one. There are many who walk like me. You have us for a pattern. Follow us, ***not these false teachers. and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:*** He now speaks of ***the legalists are the enemies of Christ. The idea that I can work my way to heaven.*** Anyone who says to add anything else to what Christ has done to earn salvation, is an enemy of the cross of Christ.

v. 19 Now Paul speaks of those false teachers, who were not legalists, but were known as the libertines, usually Gentiles, who say that God is gracious and would boast about their sin and would abuse Christian liberty to defend their behavior, saying that God will save everybody. ***whose end is destruction,*** Anyone who says anything about adding the finished work on the cross ***is an enemy of the cross of Christ,*** whose end is eternal destruction. But Paul warns concerning this group too! He was completely intolerant of them, saying, ***whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.***

v. 20 In contrast to those people ***For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,*** Who set their minds on the things of heaven. Those in Philippi knew that advantages of being a Roman citizen, even though they lived in a distance city from Rome in a different country. They knew what it was to have a citizenship in someplace else.

v. 21 One day He is going to ***...transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*** The false teachers set their minds on the things of destruction. Don't follow them!

v. 17 Paul is exhorting the Philippians to follow his example of trusting only in the finished work of the cross of Christ – not that of the false teachers. ***We need to be aware of false teachers and follow godly examples? Are we?***

vs.18-19 Paul says to be clear that false teachers, including legalist and libertines, are enemies of the cross of Christ, no matter how nice or great speakers they are, if they are teaching false doctrine, which will have devastating and eternal consequences for the listeners. ***This clarity is sorely needed in the church today.***

vs. 20-21 We believers know that this earth is not our home. We're merely passing through. Oh, how we long for that day when our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ returns or that day He takes us home individually if our last breath precedes the Rapture! So we look to the heavens, our life is in the heavens, from whence we look for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who when He comes, He is going to change our vile bodies. It will be a metamorphosis, a change in bodies. We are told in ***1Jn 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*** Oh, what a day that will be!