

Monday 2/7**Phil. 3:11-12**

11 If perhaps I may attain to the out-resurrection from the dead.

12 Not that I have already obtained or am already perfected, but I pursue, if even I may lay hold of that for which I also have been laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

Related Verses**Phil. 3:8**

8 But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ

Heb. 11:35, 26

35 Women received their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured to death, not accepting deliverance, in order that they might obtain a better resurrection.

26 Considering the reproach of the Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he looked away to the reward.

1 Thes. 4:16-17

16 Because the Lord Himself, with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are living, who are left remaining, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and thus we will be always with the Lord.

1 Cor. 15:52-53

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

Portions from the Life-study messages

In 3:7-11 Paul gives us the way to experience Christ. In verses 12 through 14 Paul applies to himself the things presented in verses 7 through 11.... [In verse 11] Paul's endeavor was to attain to this outstanding resurrection. In verse 12... Paul admits that he had not yet attained the out-resurrection, but he continued to pursue that he may lay hold of it. For this out-resurrection, Christ had laid hold of him, and now Paul's desire was to lay hold of the out-

resurrection. The purpose of Christ in laying hold of him was that he might obtain the out-resurrection. Hence, in verses 11 and 12 the out-resurrection is Paul's goal, the object of his pursuit.

The Greek word rendered perfected [in verse 12] also means completed or matured in life. Paul's meaning here is that he was still growing, for he did not regard himself as one who had reached maturity. If Paul needed to say that he had not already obtained or was not already perfected, even though he had so much growth in life and so much experience of Christ, how much more should we have such an attitude about ourselves!

The Greek word translated 'lay hold of' may also be rendered gain, grasp, take possession of. It may even be rendered seize....Paul aspired to gain that for which he had been gained by Christ Jesus. At the time of his conversion Paul was gained by Christ. Christ had gained Paul with the intention that Paul would gain Him [v. 8].

The Lord has taken possession of us so that we might take possession of Him. This was His purpose in grasping us. Christ wants us to gain Him. The Lord's aim in His salvation is to seize us that we might take full possession of Him. Not even when Paul was writing to the Philippians did he regard himself as having gained Christ in a full way.

In Philippians 3 Paul uses three Greek words that are rendered gained, obtained, and laid hold of. The meaning of these words is very close, for to obtain is to gain, and to gain is to lay hold of. The strongest of these expressions is lay hold of. Christ has laid hold of us that we might lay hold of Him. He has gained us that we might gain Him. Thus, the Christian life is a life of gaining Christ. How much have you gained of Christ?...The degree to which we have gained Christ is the degree to which we have grown with Christ. We all need to gain Christ in order to grow in life. Spiritual growth is measured by how much we have gained of Christ.

Paul's use of the little word "if" in verse 12 indicates that he was not certain about his growth in life. It is right to be sure of our salvation, but not to be certain of our growth in life. If we have the assurance that we have grown in life to an advanced degree, we probably have not grown to that extent. We should join Paul in saying, "If even I may lay hold...."

Even though Paul was a matured saint and a very experienced apostle, he tells us that he had not already obtained and had not yet been perfected. He did not regard himself as one who had obtained the full enjoyment of

Christ or the full maturity in life. He, of course, had obtained the common salvation by the common faith (1 Tim. 1:14-16), but he was still pursuing Christ in order to gain Him. Furthermore, Paul was also seeking Christ in order to have the extra portion of resurrection. In order to have this portion of resurrection, called the out-resurrection, we must pursue, run the race, and finish our course triumphantly.

Like Paul, we have been regenerated, but we are not yet perfected, or matured, in life. At the time of our conversion, we were gained by Christ so that we may gain Him. Now as those who have not yet obtained and who have not yet been perfected, we are pursuing Christ. (*Life-study of Philippians*, pp. 191, 465, 191, 192-193, 194)

Corporate Reading of “How to Enjoy God and How to Practice the Enjoyment of God” Chapter 11 – Sections: How God Becomes Man's Enjoyment; The Christian Life Being To Eat And Drink God; The Meaning Of Eating And Drinking God (paragraphs 1-2)

Tuesday 2/7**Phil. 3:12-13**

12 Not that I have already obtained or am already perfected, but I pursue, if even I may lay hold of that for which I also have been laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

13 Brothers, I do ¹not account of myself to have laid hold; but one thing I do: ²Forgetting the things which are behind and ³stretching forward to the things which are before,

Related Verses**1 Cor. 6:19-20**

19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

20 For you have been bought with a price. So then glorify God in your body.

1 Cor. 9:24-26

24 Do you not know that those who run on a racecourse all run, but one receives the prize? Run in this way, that you may lay hold.

25 And everyone who contends exercises self-control in all things; they then, that they may receive a corruptible crown, but we, an incorruptible.

26 I therefore run in this way, not as though without a clear aim; I box in this way, not as though beating the air;

Heb. 6:1

1 Therefore leaving the word of the beginning of Christ, let us be brought on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith in God,

Eph. 4:14-15

14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,

15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,

Portions from the footnotes**Phil. 3:13¹ not**

Paul had experienced and gained Christ tremendously, yet he did not account of himself to have experienced Christ in full or gained Him to the uttermost. He still endeavored to pursue toward the goal — the gaining of Christ to the fullest extent.

Phil. 3:13² Forgetting

In order to gain Christ to the fullest extent, Paul not only forsook his experiences in Judaism but also would not linger in his past experiences of Christ. He forgot the past. Not to forget but to linger in our past experiences, however genuine they were, frustrates our further pursuing of Christ.

Phil. 3:13³ stretching

Christ is unsearchably rich. There is a vast territory of His riches to be possessed. Paul was stretching out to reach the farthest extent of this territory.

Portions from the Life-study messages

We should not be satisfied simply with Bible knowledge, not even with the knowledge of Philippians 3. We need to have the actual pursuing of Christ. The Greek word for pursue [in verse 12] can also be translated persecute. Before Paul was saved, he was persecuting Christ in a negative way. After he was saved, he pursued Christ to such an extent that we may even say he persecuted Christ, but in a very positive way. To persecute a person is to trouble him and refuse to let him go. Before Paul was saved, he bothered Christ and would not let Him go, persecuting Him negatively. But after he was saved and had been gained by Christ, he still persecuted Him, but positively, for he refused to let Christ go. We also should persecute Christ in this way. This is to pursue Christ in order to gain Him. Do not let Christ go. Bother Him,

persecute Him, in order to gain Him. To persecute Christ in this way is exhausting. As we persecute Christ, we should spend ourselves completely. Our whole being with all of our strength should be consumed in pursuing Christ....Do not allow Christ to get away from you, but seek Him, pursue Him, persecute Him in such a positive way. Then you will gain Him.

The first aspect of the way to pursue Christ is that we do not consider ourselves to have gained. Following this, we need to do one thing: forget the things which are behind and stretch forward to the things which are before....I believe that the things which are before are things concerning Christ and His Body, the church. Let us all forget the things behind and pay attention to the bright future ahead of us, a future of gaining Christ and experiencing Him to the uttermost in His Body.

Today's Christianity is without impact, power, and authority because it has been cut into pieces and made subject to confusion. What is the remedy for such a degraded situation? The remedy...consists simply in pursuing our wonderful Christ. If we would set our mind on pursuing Christ, there would be no problems. Only Christ can enable believers of different nationalities and cultures to be truly one. Let us all pursue Christ to such an extent that we are willing to count as loss even our national philosophy and characteristics on account of Him.... Our national characteristics are used by the enemy, Satan, as substitutes for Christ. The enemy uses them to keep Christ from having adequate ground in our being. May the Lord have mercy on us that we would...pursue Christ, forgetting the things behind and stretching forward to the goal established by God that we may obtain the prize He has prepared for us. (*Life-study of Philippians*, pp. 198, 194, 198, 205-206)

Corporate Reading of “How to Enjoy God and How to Practice the Enjoyment of God” Chapter 11 – Sections: – The Meaning Of Eating And Drinking God (paragraphs 3-7)

Wednesday 2/9**Phil. 3:13-14**

13 Brothers, I do not account of myself to have laid hold; but one thing I do: Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before,

14 I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has ⁴called me upward.

Related Verses**Luke 9:62**

62 But Jesus said to him, No one who puts his hand on the plow and looks behind is fit for the kingdom of God.

2 Tim. 4:7-8

7 I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith.

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing.

Heb. 10:35-36

35 Do not cast away therefore your boldness, which has great reward.

36 For you have need of endurance in order that, having done the will of God, you may obtain the promise.

Heb. 12:1-2

1 Therefore let us also, having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, put away every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us and run with endurance the race which is set before us,

2 Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.

Acts 20:24

24 But I consider my life of no account as if precious to myself, in order that I may finish my course and the ministry which I have received from the Lord Jesus to solemnly testify of the gospel of the grace of God.

Portions from the footnotes**Phil. 3:14⁴ called**

To be called upward is for the obtaining of the prize to which God has called us from above, from the heavens. This heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1) corresponds with the heavenly commonwealth in v. 20. It is not an earthly calling like that given to the children of Israel in the flesh. This upward calling is to take possession of Christ, whereas the earthly calling to the children of Israel was to take possession of the physical land.

Portions from the Life-study messages

The goal toward which we are pursuing is the full enjoyment of Christ, and the prize is the extra enjoyment of Christ. I believe this extra portion of the enjoyment of Christ will be in the millennial kingdom. In the millennial kingdom the overcomers will enjoy Christ in an extraordinary way. This extraordinary enjoyment of Christ corresponds to the out-resurrection in verse 11. This out-resurrection can be illustrated by the experience of a few members of a high school graduating class. At the time of graduation, a few outstanding students will enjoy an extra portion. Although hundreds of students may graduate at the same time, only a small number will enjoy this special portion. In like manner, all believers who die before the Lord comes back will be resurrected, but some will enjoy an extraordinary resurrection, an outstanding resurrection. Paul speaks of this as the out-resurrection from among the dead, a prize to those believers who are successful in running the New Testament race.

Many Christians hold the concept that as long as they are resurrected when the Lord comes back, they will not have any problems. This concept is wrong....There will be a distinction

not only between the resurrection of the believers and the unbelievers, but also a distinction among Christians at the time of resurrection. Yes, we shall all be resurrected. But many will participate in resurrection merely in a common way; they will not enjoy the out-resurrection. They will be like the majority of a high school graduating class. Others, however, will enjoy the extra portion of resurrection. They will be like the few out of the graduating class who enjoy an outstanding graduation.

Some Christians may not agree with the interpretation that the goal and the prize in 3:14 are related to the millennial kingdom. But no matter how we interpret this verse, the fact remains that there is a goal for us to reach and a prize for us to gain. I do not insist on my interpretation of this verse, but I would point you to the goal and the prize. In order to reach the goal and gain the prize, you must run in a proper way. Otherwise, you will come short of the goal and fail to receive the prize.

Do not be content with the fact that, as a believer, you will be resurrected. Yes, you will "graduate" in resurrection, but will you have the extra portion of resurrection? Do not be under the influence of the teachings popular with Christians today that all believers will be kings in the

millennium. All true believers are eternally saved. However, not all Christians will be on the same level as far as reward is concerned. The time Christ comes back will be the time of reward. Whether or not we receive a reward from Him depends on how we run the race today.

In [chapter three] Paul shows us our need to gain Christ. Christ is the goal and also the prize. Do not be distracted by the effort to understand just what kind of prize you will obtain when you reach the goal. What is crucial is that you realize that, according to the divine revelation, God has set forth Christ as your goal and prize. Furthermore, He has called you to stretch forth toward the goal. (*Life-study of Philippians*, pp. 195-196, 197)

Corporate Reading of “How to Enjoy God and How to Practice the Enjoyment of God” Chapter 11 – Sections: Christ Being Our Life By Becoming Our Food

Thursday 2/10**Phil. 3:15-16**

15 Let us therefore, as many as are ¹full-grown, have ²this mind; and if in anything you are otherwise minded, this also God will ³reveal to you.

16 ¹Nevertheless ²whereunto we have attained, by the ³same rule let us ⁴walk.

Related Verses**Phil. 1:25, 27**

25 And being confident of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of the faith,

27 Only, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, that whether coming and seeing you or being absent, I may hear of the things concerning you, that you stand firm in one spirit, with one soul striving together along with the faith of the gospel,

Phil. 2:2, 5, 20

2 Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing,

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,

20 For I have no one like-souled who will genuinely care for what concerns you;

Phil. 4:2

2 I exhort Euodias, and I exhort Syntyche, to think the same thing in the Lord.

Heb. 5:14

14 But solid food is for the full-grown, who because of practice have their faculties exercised for discriminating between both good and evil.

Eph. 4:13

13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

Portions from the footnotes**Phil. 3:15¹ full-grown**

I.e., mature, perfect. Maturity is a stage. We may be mature but not mature in full. Full-grown here is used in a relative sense — relatively mature, neither childish nor fully mature. Hence, further pursuing, further growth, is needed.

Phil. 3:15² this

In this book the dealing with the Philippian believers is focused on the mind, the leading part of the soul. This book charges them to strive together with one soul along with the personified gospel (1:27), to think the same thing, to be joined in soul, even to think the one thing (2:2; 4:2), to let the mind that was in Christ be in them (2:5), and to have this one mind, a mind focused on the pursuing and gaining of Christ to the uttermost. When our mind is thus occupied, we have the same mind, thinking the same thing, even thinking the one thing — the fullest gaining of Christ — being joined in soul, like-souled (2:20), and made one soul.

Phil. 3:15³ reveal

The pursuing of Christ must be our goal. We should not be otherwise minded. God reveals to us that we need such a mind, a mind focused on the pursuing of Christ. He desires to continually adjust our mind, turning it toward Christ as the center.

Phil. 3:16¹ Nevertheless

This word concludes the preceding verses, charging us with only this one thing: to walk by the same rule.

Phil. 3:16² whereunto

Whereunto we have attained modifies walk.

Phil. 3:16³ same

Same line, same path, same steps. Paul's use of this word indicates that by the same path we should walk according to the elementary principle.

Phil. 3:16⁴ walk

Gk. stoicheo, meaning to walk orderly, derived from steicho, which means to range in regular line, to march in

military rank, to keep step, to conform to virtue and piety. The word is also used in Rom. 4:12 and Gal. 5:25; 6:16. It is different from the word walk in vv. 17 and 18, which means to live, to deport oneself, to be occupied with, to walk about, as used in Rom. 6:4; 8:4; 13:13; 1 Cor. 3:3; Gal. 5:16; and Eph. 4:1, 17. By this word the apostle charged us to walk and to order our lives — whereunto we have attained, at the state to which we have attained — by the same rule, in the same line, in the same path, in the same footsteps. Whatever state we have attained to in our spiritual life, we all must walk, as the apostle did, by the same rule, in the same path; that is, we must pursue Christ toward the goal that we may gain Christ to the fullest extent as the prize of the upward calling of God. See note 252 in Gal. 5.

Portions from the Life-study messages

Pursuing after Christ must be our goal. We should not be otherwise minded....Paul's word in verse 15 indicates his assurance that there was just one goal. Because of this assurance he could say that if in anything we were otherwise minded, this also God would reveal to us.

In verse 16 Paul speaks of walking by the same rule....The Greek word for walk in this verse means to walk according to the elementary principles. The governing principle of our Christian life should be the pursuing after the enjoyment of Christ and the experience of Christ. This principle will preserve us in the proper oneness. In the past we have said that the genuine ground of oneness keeps us in the real oneness. This is true, and we continue to proclaim this teaching today. However, the ground of unique oneness may be considered somewhat as an outward matter. Along with this, we need something inward to govern us and preserve us in the oneness. This inward matter is what Paul describes as "this mind" [v. 15]; it is also the unique path for our Christian walk. Both the unique mind and the unique path are related to pursuing Christ. Pursuing Christ in order to experience Him and enjoy Him should be the basic and elementary principle of our Christian life. (*Life-study of Philippians*, pp. 200, 204-205)

Corporate Reading of “How to Enjoy God and How to Practice the Enjoyment of God” Chapter 11 – Sections: Living The Christian Life By Enjoying Christ (paragraphs 1-8)

Friday 2/11

Phil. 3:17-19

17 Be imitators together of me, brothers, and observe those who thus walk even as you have us as a pattern.

18 For ¹many walk, of whom I have told you often and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the ²cross of Christ,

19 ¹Whose end is destruction, whose god is their stomach, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on ²earthly things.

Related Verses

Gal. 5:24

24 But they who are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and its lusts.

1 Cor. 11:1

1 Be imitators of me, as I also am of Christ.

2 Thes. 3:9

9 Not because we do not have the right, but in order that we might give ourselves to you as a pattern that you might imitate us.

Matt. 20:21-22, 26-28

21 And He said to her, What do you want? She said to Him, Say that these two sons of mine will sit, one on Your right and one on Your left, in Your kingdom.

22 But Jesus answered and said to them, You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup which I am about to drink? They said to Him, We are able.

26 It shall not be so among you; but whoever wants to become great among you shall be your servant,

27 And whoever wants to be first among you shall be your slave;

28 Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.

Portions from the footnotes

Phil. 3:18¹ many

Probably those who practiced the Epicurean philosophy, which promoted indulgence in the pleasure of eating and drinking and encouraged self-gratification in other things, all of which are contrary to the cross of Christ. Verse 2 shows that the Judaizers were a damage to the Philippian believers, and this verse, that the Epicureans were another kind of damage to them. The former was of Jewish origin; the latter, of a heathen source.

Basically, the exhortation in this chapter was prompted by these two groups of people. In speaking of the Judaizers, it edified the Philippians concerning the matter of dealing with the soul (vv. 1-16), especially with the mind; and in alluding to the Epicureans, it instructed the believers concerning the matter of dealing with the body (vv. 17-21). To deal with the soul we must count as refuse all religious, philosophical, and cultural things. In dealing with the body, we should take care of our physical need but should not indulge in excessive physical enjoyment.

Phil. 3:18² cross

The cross of Christ terminated the indulgence of the lusts of the physical body (Gal. 5:24).

Phil. 3:19¹ Whose

The Epicureans, who worshipped their belly and served their stomach. In promoting the enjoyment of eating and drinking, they were more concerned with physical indulgence and enjoyment than with ethics or morality. Their stomach was their god.

Phil. 3:19² earthly

Physical things, material things, matters of eating and drinking. We need things such as food and clothing; however, we should not indulge ourselves in these things.

Portions from the Life-study messages

After his fellowship with the believers in chapters one and two, Paul gave them instructions in chapter three concerning how to deal with the soul and the body. To deal with the soul, they had to count as refuse all religious, philosophical, and cultural things and not treasure them. Nothing religious should be regarded as a treasure. Nothing philosophical can compare with Christ, and no cultural element should be allowed to be a substitute for Him. We must condemn all religious, philosophical, and cultural things and count them as refuse in order to gain Christ in our soul and to be filled with Him in our soul, especially in our mind. This is the way to deal with our soul.

Turning to the matter of physical enjoyment, Paul says in verse 17, "Be imitators together of me, brothers, and observe those who thus walk even as you have us as a pattern." The pattern here does not refer to what Paul has covered in the foregoing verses. Instead, it is the example set by those who deal with the physical body in a proper way. How do we know that verse 17 refers not to the things of the soul, but to the things of the body? We know it by the fact that verse 18 begins with the word "for," indicating

that this verse is an explanation of verse 17....Concerning our body, we need to eat properly and be nourished in order to have a long life for the Lord's expression. But we should avoid indulgence or excessive enjoyment of physical things. We should not practice Epicureanism. We need clothing, a house, and transportation. But we should not indulge in these things. On the one hand, we must reject the Judaizers; on the other hand, we must also avoid the Epicureans. In these matters we should follow Paul and imitate both him and those who followed him. (*Life--study of Philippians, pp. 211, 213*)

Corporate Reading of “How to Enjoy God and How to Practice the Enjoyment of God” Chapter 11 – Sections: Living The Christian Life By Enjoying Christ (paragraphs 9-15); Living Continuously In The Spirit To Enjoy Christ

Saturday 2/12

Phil. 3:20-21

20 For our ¹commonwealth exists in the ²heavens, from which also we eagerly await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, **21** Who will ¹transfigure the ²body of our humiliation to be conformed to the ³body of His glory, ⁴according to His operation by which He is able even to subject all things to Himself.

Related Verses

Rom. 12:2

2 And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.

1 Cor. 15:42-43, 51, 54-55

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption;

43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed,

54 And when this corruptible will put on incorruption and this mortal will put on immortality, then the word which is written will come to pass, "Death has been swallowed up unto victory."

55 Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?

Titus 2:11-13

11 For the grace of God, bringing salvation to all men, has appeared,

12 Training us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in the present age,

13 Awaiting the blessed hope, even the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,

Portions from the footnotes

Phil. 3:20¹ commonwealth

Or, citizenship. The Greek word denotes commonwealth, associations of life.

Phil. 3:20² heavens

In contrast to earthly in the preceding verse. Those who practiced the Epicurean philosophy set their mind on earthly things, but our commonwealth is in the heavens.

Phil. 3:21¹ transfigure

The transfiguration of our body is the ultimate consummation of God's salvation. In His salvation God first regenerated our spirit (John 3:6), now is transforming our soul (Rom. 12:2), and consummately will transfigure our body, making us the same as Christ in all three parts of our being.

Phil. 3:21² body

Our natural body, made of worthless dust (Gen. 2:7) and damaged by sin, weakness, sickness, and death (Rom. 6:6; 7:24; 8:11).

Phil. 3:21³ body

Christ's resurrected body, saturated with God's glory (Luke 24:26) and transcendent over corruption and death (Rom. 6:9).

Phil. 3:21⁴ according

The transfiguring of our body is accomplished by the Lord's great power, which subjects all things to Himself (Eph. 1:19-22). This is the almighty power in the universe.

Portions from the Life-study messages

Because our citizenship is in the heavens, we should not be occupied with earthly things, with the physical things needed for our existence. We should not place such a high value on material things. This does not mean, of course, that we should not have proper food, clothing, housing, and transportation. We definitely need these things. But anything that goes beyond need falls into the category of

indulgence. Such indulgence is to be condemned. If we love the earthly things needed for human life, this is an indication that we do not treasure our heavenly citizenship. May we all remember that our citizenship is in the heavens and that we are a heavenly people sojourning on earth. If we have food, clothing, housing, and transportation to maintain life, we should be content. Let us not indulge ourselves in any earthly, material things.

I believe that now we can grasp Paul's basic thought in Philippians 3. In this chapter Paul instructs us both concerning how to deal with the soul and how to deal with the body. To deal with the soul, we must count as loss all religious, philosophical, and cultural things so that Christ may occupy our entire being and that we may gain Him to the uttermost. To deal with our body, we should take care of our physical need, but not indulge in excessive physical enjoyment. Our aim should be to care for the body in a proper way that it may be healthy for the Lord's expression. But our intention should not be to glorify the physical body through the overenjoyment of physical things. Our body is not to be glorified in this way, but is to be glorified at the time of the Lord's coming back. At that time, He will transfigure our body of humiliation. Thus, we are waiting for Christ to come back that we may be brought into the ultimate consummation of God's salvation—the transfiguration of our body.

While we are waiting for the Lord's coming, we should take care of our physical needs without indulging in material things. At the same time, we should deal with our soul, counting as loss all religious, philosophical, and cultural things so that our soul may be transformed in full. Day by day, we are undergoing the process of transformation in our soul as we are waiting for the Lord to come to transfigure our body and thereby to bring us into the ultimate consummation of God's salvation. (*Life-study of Philippians, pp. 213-214, 215*)

Hymns, #499, #947, #1205, #593

Outline

IV. Pursuing Christ to gain Him (3:1-21)

C. Gaining Christ by pursuing Him (vv. 12-16)

D. Awaiting Christ for the transfiguration of the body (vv. 17-21)

Crucial points

Philippians 3 is on pursuing Christ to gain Him. In verses 7 through 11 Paul gives us the way to experience Christ. In verses 12 through 14 he applies this to himself. Paul's attitude about himself was that he had not already obtained nor was he already perfected; that is, he did not regard himself as one who had obtained the full enjoyment of Christ or the full maturity in life (v. 12). Rather, Paul aspired to continue growing in life in order to gain, or lay hold of, that for which he had been gained, or laid hold of, by Christ Jesus (v. 12). The Lord's aim in His salvation is to seize us that we might take full possession of Him. Christ is unsearchably rich. There is a vast territory of His riches to be possessed. Paul was stretching out to reach the farthest extent of this territory, to gain Christ to the fullest extent (v. 13). For this, Paul not only forsook his experiences in Judaism but also would not linger in his past experiences of Christ. He forgot the past (v. 13). To linger in our past experiences, however genuine they are, frustrates our further pursuing of Christ.

The goal toward which we are pursuing is the full enjoyment of Christ, and the prize is the extra enjoyment of Christ (v. 14). This extra portion of the enjoyment of Christ will be in the millennial kingdom, in which the overcomers will enjoy Christ in an extraordinary way. This extraordinary enjoyment of Christ corresponds to the out-resurrection in verse 11. All believers who die before the Lord comes back will be resurrected, but some will enjoy an extraordinary resurrection as a prize to those who were successful in running the New Testament race.

Pursuing after Christ to gain Him must be our goal. We should not be otherwise minded (v. 15). From verse 16 we see that whatever state we have attained to in our spiritual life, we all must walk, as the apostle did, by the same rule, in the same path, that is, we must pursue toward the goal (Christ) that, to the fullest extent, we may gain Christ as the prize of the upward calling given by God. Both the unique mind (v. 15) and the unique path (v. 16) are related to pursuing Christ. Pursuing Christ in order to experience Him

and enjoy Him should be the basic and elementary principle of our Christian life.

Verses 17 through 21 are concerned with our awaiting Christ for the transfiguration of the body. In verse 17 Paul charges the believers to imitate him as one who deals with the physical body in a proper way. We should take care of our physical need, but not indulge in excessive physical enjoyment (vv. 18-19). Because our commonwealth exists in the heavens (v. 20), we should not love the earthly things needed for human life. Our aim should be to care for the body in a proper way that it may be healthy for the Lord's expression. But our intention should not be to glorify the physical body through the overenjoyment of physical things. Our body is not to be glorified in this way, but is to be glorified at the time of the Lord's coming back. At that time, He will transfigure our body of humiliation, conforming it to the body of His glory (v. 21) and thereby bringing us into the ultimate consummation of God's salvation.

Lord's Day 2/13**Related Verses****S.S. 1:4, 7-8**

4 Draw me; we will run after you-The king has brought me into his chambers-We will be glad and rejoice in you; We will extol your love more than wine. Rightly do they love you.

7 Tell me, you whom my soul loves, Where do you pasture your flock? Where do you make it lie down at noon? For why should I be like one who is veiled Beside the flocks of your companions?

8 If you yourself do not know, You fairest among women, Go forth on the footsteps of the flock, And pasture your young goats By the shepherds' tents.

S.S. 2:10, 14

10 My beloved responds and says to me, Rise up, my love, My beauty, and come away;

14 My dove, in the clefts of the rock, In the covert of the precipice, Let me see your countenance, Let me hear your voice; For your voice is sweet, And your countenance is lovely.

S.S. 3:4

4 Scarcely had I passed them When I found him whom my soul loves; I held him and would not let go Until I had brought him into my mother's house And into the chamber

of her who conceived me.

S.S. 5:2

2 I sleep, but my heart is awake. A sound! My beloved is knocking: Open to me, my sister, my love, My dove, my perfect one; For my head is full of dew, My locks with the drops of night.

S.S. 6:1, 3

1 Where has your beloved gone, O you most beautiful among women? Where has your beloved turned, That we may seek him with you?

3 I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine; He pastures his flock among the lilies.

S.S. 7:11-12

11 Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the fields; Let us lodge in the villages.

12 Let us rise up early for the vineyards; Let us see if the vine has budded, If the blossom is open, If the pomegranates are in bloom; There I will give you my love.

S.S. 8:5, 14

5 Who is this who comes up from the wilderness, Leaning on her beloved? I awakened you under the apple tree: There your mother was in labor with you; There she was in labor and brought you forth.

14 Make haste, my beloved, And be like a gazelle or a young hart Upon the mountains of spices.

Further Reading:

Life-study of Philippians, msgs. 23, 53, 24, 55, 25