

“Flippin’ Thru Philippians: Philippians 3”

Philippians 3: 7-14

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We need to be determined. We need to press on towards the goal. We on faith’s journey need to put one foot in front of the other.

However, a word of caution...make sure...you have your eye on the proper goal. Take a look at this very short video. Watch closely or you may miss it. It’s only 15 seconds.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=04e850pLtus>

Bless her heart. She was determined. Her mind was on the goal. But friends, I could have told her an easier way to get to her goal. Turn around...and then get on the walkway that is ACUTALLY going the way she needs to go. Friends I don’t want you to be spiritually going up the down escalator. I don’t want you to be spiritually walking down the wrong walkway.

And yet Paul in chapter 3 makes a sports analogy about getting the prize, in a way a running or race analogy. So in our sermon series we are Flippin’ Thru Philippians...this week chapter 3 and then we will finish the sermon series next week as we look at chapter 4.

Get your Bibles, or your electronic devices (wi-fi is PHUMC Guest) and let’s look at Philippians 3. The passage that was read begins with the word “But.” This means that there is an opposite involved. For example...the other day I was at a restaurant and had a hamburger. It was hamburger, medium well, covered in Pimento Cheese topped with a fried egg and 2 pieces of bacon. Oh yes, but it also had some tomatoes and lettuce. Now the sandwich was good, BUT probably not the most healthy for me.

So our scripture lesson for the sermon begins with Paul saying, “But whatever gain I had.” So we need to go back and if you have your Bibles you can follow, this part won’t be up on the screen. In verses 5 and 6 Paul tells who he is and why it is important to listen to him when he gets to verse 7 that begins with “But.”

I’m paraphrasing a bit here. Paul says I’m not going to really brag, but I am a great God believer. I have been a good Jew. I was circumcised on the 8th day---just like Jewish law said to be. I am from the tribe of Benjamin. And you know that Benjamin was one of the favorite sons of the Patriarch Jacob! I knew the religious law...I was a Pharisee. I know what is in the book. In fact, I go by the book and by the letter of the law. I have a passion. In fact I persecuted the church and those people that didn’t believe the way I believed. Why, Paul says, under the law I have righteousness, I am blameless.

Wow could be a great ministry team member. He seems to have perfect credentials. He has a great pedigree, great degrees and he has seemingly attained it all.

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

Degrees don't matter. Stay with me here...being religiously perfect doesn't matter, status doesn't matter. Pedigree doesn't matter. Let me contemporize a little and say money doesn't matter. It has been said a variety of ways but money is not the do all and end all in our life.

Money can buy a house, but not a home.

Money can buy a bed, but not sleep.

Money can buy a clock, but not time.

Money can buy a book, but not knowledge.

Money can buy food, but not an appetite.

Money can buy you friends but not Love.

Money can buy position, but not respect.

Money can buy insurance, but not safety.

Money can buy a Bible, but not a relationship with Jesus.

Maybe we are not rich until you have things money can't buy. What are some things money can't buy? A child's picture seems to capture that. **(image)** The best things in life are free. Hugs, smiles, friends, kisses, family, sleep, love, laughter, good memories. Oh and yet one major free thing is missing.

Salvation. Did you know that salvation is free?

Ephesians 2:8-9 English Standard Version ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Salvation is a gift...therefore by nature it is free. Paul wrote this letter to the Ephesians and echoes what he said to the Philippians. Not a result of works, so that no one may boast. Salvation is not of your own doing. So Paul it doesn't matter what you said in verses 5 and 6...without Christ everything is nothing. Let me say that again. Without Christ, everything is nothing.

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

Without Christ everything is loss. Why??? Because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Not just intellectually knowing. Not just emotionally knowing. Not just experientially knowing. Rather all 3 knowing Jesus with your heart, soul, mind and strength.

Notice he personalizes and says Christ Jesus MY Lord. Knowing Jesus is worth more than everything. Everything else is rubbish.

Now that word “rubbish” in the Greek is only used here in scripture. It is the Greek word Skubalon. It means waste thrown to dogs. Something fitting to be scraps of garbage. Refuse---good for nothing except to be discarded.

But the original King James Version, the New English Translation and the current Message Bible has an interesting interpretation of this word. There is some scholarly discussion on this, but a point is well made. So let me read a section from The Message Bible. This is verse 8 and 9 from The Message. You will note the word translation of Skubalon---and it is not the word rubbish.

“Yes, all the things I once thought were so important are gone from my life. Compared to the high privilege of knowing Christ Jesus as my Master, firsthand, everything I once thought I had going for me is insignificant—dog dung. I’ve dumped it all in the trash so that I could embrace Christ and be embraced by him. I didn’t want some petty, inferior brand of righteousness that comes from keeping a list of rules when I could get the robust kind that comes from trusting Christ—*God’s* righteousness.”

Compared to everything else without Jesus and knowing Him as your Lord all is rubbish..stinky refuse that should be not only discarded, but also repulsive to us. Is everything rubbish to us except for that relationship and knowing Jesus?

We are doing this in order that we may gain Christ. Our heritage, our pedigree, our money, our degrees and attainment mean nothing. All of that is not how we gain Christ. It only through relationship with Him.

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—

Certainly not our own religiosity. We must count on Christ---for it is through Him that we are deemed righteous. The righteousness from God depends on faith. In this world, in this fight, on this journey we must count on God and His saving grace through Jesus Christ, His strength in times of trial and count on God for His guidance and direction.

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.

I love that first party.... “so” that we may know Him and the POWER of His resurrection. What is more powerful than His resurrection. And to know that power is in us! Woo-hoo!!!

But then I get to that next phrase...share in His sufferings becoming like him in his death. Okay...I wish that part was not part of scripture.

What does it mean to share in His sufferings? Well...Christ was abused, chastised, ridiculed, and even endured physical suffering for who He was and in essence His belief.

Yay!!! Sign me up!!! Don't really hear anyone shouting that out...and yet the reality is we are partners in His suffering. That's not real attractive, and winsome...but is a reality. Are we aiming for that goal so that we are even willing to suffer like Him? To suffer for Him?

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.

Now friends, nothing personal, but none of us have already obtained it and none of us are perfect. I know that I'm not. But...I press on to make it my own. My own---I want to make it personal. And I love this part of the verse. Christ Jesus has made me His own.

Great truth of scripture. Christ Jesus has made me his own. Say that with me: CHRIST JESUS HAS MADE ME HIS OWN.

How do you feel about that? Wowzers!!! Yippee!!! Woo-Hoo!!!! I am His and He is mine!!!! That is worth more than anything and everything!!!!

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,

We do not make it on our own. In fact let's try forgetting what lies behind. You know...our ugly past, our baggage, our mistakes, our sin. Let's be honest we have all messed up! So Paul with his theme of encouragement in Philippians tells us what we need to do: forget what is behind, and instead straining forward to what lies ahead.

This analogy reminds me of a race. Now some of you may remember me saying this, but I was on the track team when I was in high school. In was on the track team all 4 years. In fact I received a varsity letter each of those 4 years, including my Freshman year. Now here's the catch...I "lettered" in track without ever having run a race. You see I was the Manager for the Track Team. Okay...yes the water and towel boy. The one who took the hurdles up and down, the one who got the starting blocks out, and in those days we even change the length of the spikes on the shoes. So I watched a lot of track.

It is nothing really compared to the race that Olympians do. Take a look at a 2012 photo of the Olympics (**image**) Usain Bolt is there winning the 100 meter Gold medal. Now look at his form and position. He is straining forward, to get to the finish line.

Paul encourages us to be 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.

That finish line, that goal is the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

With Christ's help I can press, straining forward to do what He calls me to do in obedience.

Now here is an important reminder. **(image)** We are judged by what we finish not what we start! I don't care how you started, I don't care how messed up your life was, I don't care what you did yesterday, or even 30 minutes ago...right now, this moment are you pressing on toward the goal, are you straining forward to what lies ahead.

Here's the plan, here's the goal. **(image)** Keep moving forward. What are we to do! KEEP MOVING FORWARD! Don't be a sitting target for Satan and his attacks, keep moving. As in the Madagascar movies by Dreamworks Animation... "I like to move it move it, I like to move it, move it. You like to move it????

However, the scary reality sometimes looks like this. **(image)** Whoa!!! You see we do it step by step. We depend on God, we count on Him. Next week we will talk about the strength that He gives. Runners, even Olympians, run by taking one step at a time. They have their eyes on the goal...and they keep their eye on the goal. They make it literally one step at a time.

Friends, don't keep going on the moving walkway in the opposite direction! Stop, turn around and get on the right path. Straining forward to what lies ahead, pressing on toward the goal!!!

In verse 3 of this chapter of Philippians 3 it says "for we who worship...we rely on what Christ has done for us...put no confidence in human effort.

It's Him! It's Him! Church let's press on toward the goal for the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

<http://www.sermonspice.com/product/68202/you-are-the-church>