



9/10/26

Philippians 3:12-21

I won't belabor the point... I know there are a lot of things people are suffering with that are far more devastating than losing a pet. But I'm just so thankful for all the sweet messages I've gotten from so many of you, and I want to say thank you. I love how the body of Christ is used as the hands and feet of Jesus to love one another with His love. I have received great comfort from these sweet messages.

Also, our women's study, Truth and Lies, will be starting Wednesday, September 30th. If you'd like to learn more info and register, here's the link... <https://summitpoint.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/3622465>

*Blessings,
Jonna*

I was reading some scripture, comparing Psalm 23 with Jesus and scriptures from the New Testament that show how Psalm 23 is still true, and one passage gave me better understanding of why Paul and the other apostles were so willing to go through any suffering "for the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus." In John 16:22, Jesus said to the disciples, "So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you." There is such a joy that comes in being totally devoted to Jesus that no amount of suffering can take it away. It's light and momentary.

Paul displayed this joy throughout all his letters. Part of the reason he encouraged the believers (and me) to follow his example as he follows Christ, was to give us ample opportunity to experience joy from the Lord that no one can take away.

O Lord, please show me from Paul's example in Philippians 3:12-21 how I can live in that joy that no one and nothing can take away.

Vs. 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."

What is "all this" that Paul had not yet attained? He had not yet attained the resurrection from the dead (though he has now). He wanted to "share Christ's sufferings." That is a heart totally sold out for the Lord. That is a heart totally focused on the hope and truth of the gospel.

I love Paul's motivation... He pressed on to make this knowing God even in death and resurrection his own, because Jesus had made him His own. That's the hope I need to constantly set my mind on. Jesus has made me His own.

Vs. 13-14 ~ "Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

Paul needed to forget what lies behind... and so do I. But I think Paul had lots of reasons to remember his past in a way that could have caused arrogance. He had been a Pharisee, highly respected. He had been blameless in keeping the Mosaic law. I have nothing like that in my history. I have a lot of regret. But I imagine Paul had some regret, too. I'm sure the memory of persecuting believers stung his heart many times.

No matter the reason for letting go of what lies behind, we can still let it go. What accomplishment is there that anyone could point to that even holds a candle to the gospel? And what regret is there that anyone could point to that holds a candle to the merciful power of the cross? It's all worth forgetting when we have something so much greater to strain forward to in what lies ahead. What lies ahead? "The goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." The goal, the target, is not an easy or comfortable life here on earth. The goal, the target, is knowing that the greatest reward and treasure is hearing Jesus say, "It's time to come home. It's time to cross that finish line and run into My arms."

Every morning, I get on my knees and sit with the Lord for a few minutes saying, "good morning, Father," and trying to picture myself climbing up into my Father's lap, so close I can hear His heartbeat. I so desperately want to hear His voice and see Him face to face. Right now, that time with Him is sweet, but it's just a shadow. Someday, I WILL hear His voice. I will run into His arms. I will get to come home forever. O Lord, let that be the prize and treasure I always set my heart on. Hebrews 11:26 says of Moses that he "considered the wealth of suffering for Jesus greater than the treasures of Egypt." He had all the treasures of Egypt at his disposal, and he gave it all up because Jesus is better, even suffering for Jesus is better. I see that example in Paul, too. I pray that it will be true for me as well.

Vs. 15-16 ~ "Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained."

This mindset of treasuring the Lord more than anything else is not just for Paul or the elite.

It's for all "mature, complete, fully grown" believers. Well, someone might say, "Phew! That leaves me out. I'm a believer, but not a mature one." But isn't that the goal? What does a 15-year-old want more than anything? To turn 16 so that he can get his driver's license... to be considered mature enough that he can be trusted with the car. No one is truly satisfied to never grow. Are we really satisfied when we're not growing in the Lord?

Paul said, "Even if you have a different mindset, God will disclose that to you." Why? God loves us and He knows that the most satisfying life is a life that's focused on Him as the prize. I pray that I will let go of anything the Lord discloses to me that doesn't align with His will.

Only... whatever I already have come to understand from the Lord, hold true to that. Don't let what I don't know stop me from walking according to the truth that I do know. There is a lot I don't know. That's because my God is infinite and I am finite. He understands all mysteries because all the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Jesus. But there's a lot I can understand as I give access to the Holy Spirit to lead me in the truth.

Just as I would never stop using addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division because I don't understand calculus, I need to hold true to the wonderful things God has revealed to me through His word and keep studying and growing in Him so that grasping the "calculus" (the wonderful mysteries) of His word is in my future. His mysteries far more valuable and important than calculus. 🧐

Vs. 17-21 ~ "Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself."

As in so many other places, Paul calls me to join with the rest of the members of my Kingdom Outpost to imitate him and also watch for others who walk according to his example. This is really important. When I listen to the advice of others, are they wholeheartedly aligning with the word of God as Paul did?

In 2 Corinthians 5:12, Paul spoke this to the believers, "We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart." There ARE people in the church who are there for the wrong reasons. They're not there to lift high the name of Jesus, but to lift high the name of themselves. I need to be so careful to watch for their fruits. Do their words and actions together point to Jesus? How do they respond when they aren't honored for what they say? Do they seek to please man or Jesus? The only way I'm going to be able to discern that is if I am seeking Jesus, if I'm studying His words, if I'm asking the Spirit to lead me to truth.

In the church, there are "dogs, evildoers, mutilators of the flesh" who are not seeking the glory of God, but the glory of self. Many people have been deeply hurt by trusting these kinds of people, and they often turn away from the Lord because of it. But if I pay attention to God's word, I'll know that these people exist, and I'll know how to watch out for those who walk as enemies of Christ and twist His words to glory in their shame, though they don't call it shame. Their minds are set on earthly things, on things that look good, feel good, and show them off. But the fulfillment of all their efforts is destruction. Don't align myself with them. O Lord, please give us wisdom to discern who is really with You. As a bank teller does not study the counterfeit but only what's genuine in order to expose the counterfeit, please help us to study the genuineness of Your word so that the counterfeit is obvious to us.

Here's the wonderful hope! This broken world is not my home! I am a sojourner, a stranger, an alien, a visitor here, because my true citizenship is in heaven with my Lord who will someday take me home. As the song goes, Jesus, my Savior, is going to ride upon the clouds with a crown on His head and His nail scarred hands and take me home. He's going to transform what the Greek calls "this body of humiliation" to be like His glorious, majestic, honorable body. This is far bigger and better than outward appearance. This is a glory that will bring the unity and love and joy that God has been waiting to fulfill in all His children.

By what power is God able to change me so beautifully and majestically? By the power that spoke the world into existence and holds the universe together with His word, by the power that ended the eternal devastation of sin and death, by the power that raised Jesus from the dead and transferred His life to me so that I'm a new creation walking in the newness of life, by the power of the Holy Spirit who seals me as a guarantee of the promise of my new citizenship, by the power that enables Him to put all things under His feet so that at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

THIS is the joy set before me. This is the treasure and prize that makes me run with endurance and press on... because Jesus has made me His own. O Lord, please let the truth of this be branded on my heart so that I never forget and never take it for granted. There is nothing better than the surpassing worth of knowing You. Praise Your name.