

# ***“Three Things We Must Desire!”***

***Philippians 3:1-16***

**Intro.** – A man by the name of F. E. Marsh wrote a book entitled *Pearls, Points and Parables*. In this book Marsh gave the following account: “I asked a student what three things he most wished for. He said, ‘Give me books, health, and quiet and I care for nothing more.’ I asked a miser, and he cried, ‘Money, money, money!’ I asked a pauper, and he said faintly, ‘Bread, bread, bread.’ I asked a drunkard and he called loudly for strong drink. I asked the multitude around me, and they lifted up a confused cry, in which I heard the words, ‘wealth, fame, and pleasure.’ Then I asked a poor man who bore the character of an experienced Christian. He replied that all he wished for could be met in Christ. He spoke seriously, and I asked him to explain...” What this experienced Christian said is worth developing in this message based on this text of Scripture.

This fittingly helps to illustrate the very essence of our text. In verse 2, three times the word “*beware*” is used by the apostle Paul as if it were a gavel, signaling for our attention. Paul’s HS inspired warning is to the Philippian Christians, as well as, to the Church of Christ in Eaton. Beware! Beware of those who teach and lead that all wishing, desiring or confidence must be put in the flesh. I read this past week of a lawyer reading a wise old man’s will to the relatives: “Being of sound mind, I spent every dollar I had.” Paul makes clear that what we wish and/or desire can and must be met in Christ. To go any other direction will be futile! Our desire must be Christ centered rather than that of the flesh!

*Purpose: to realize that all we could ever desire can only be met in Christ!*

To accomplish this purpose we are going to look at Paul’s detailed explanation as to what our desires/wishes out to be. Thus, breaking this down into outline form, I believe Paul makes clear there are three matters we must desire above all others:

## **I WE MUST DESIRE TO BE *IN* CHRIST (vv 1-9a)**

### **A. The Cost of Discipleship**

#### **1. It cost to follow Christ (to be a Christian)**

- a. Illus. – it cost Abraham the willingness to yield his only son (Isaac) as offering to God...
- b. Illus. – it cost Stephen a death by stoning...
- c. Illus. – it cost Peter a martyr’s death...
- d. Illus. – it cost Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego a fiery furnace...
- e. Paul gave up much (world’s point of view) making clear he of all had reason to place his desires in the flesh...**BUT**, he counted all things but rubbish in order to be *in Christ!*

#### **2. It cost more not to follow Christ**

- a. Illus. – like a Fram oil commercial... (pay me now or pay me latter)... in long run it will cost far more in not following Christ than it cost to follow Him
- b. no life in the present and no hope for life in the future...

Thus, a question is obvious – What is it costing you to be a Christian? Recognizing the cost and being willing to pay it means you desire to be “in” Christ.

### **B. Being a Part of His Body (The Church)**

1. Galatians 3:27 “*For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.*”
2. Acts 2:47 “*...And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.*”
3. To be *in Christ* enables one to have the following:
  - a. to be able to participate in the greatest of all earthly organizations...(the Body of Christ)
  - b. to be a recipient of joys and strength designed by God Himself to sustain His people (Church)
  - c. to be a promoter, representative and ambassador for the King of kings and Lord of lords!

Do you desire to be part of the Body of Christ? To do so means you desire to be “in” Christ!

### **C. Depending on Christ’s Righteousness**

1. V 9 “*...not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ.*”

2. Realize our works can't/won't save us = crux of matter addressed in this text and book...

3. Righteousness of Christ the ONLY means to the Father...

- through Son we come to Father... salvation only through Christ... pray through Him...

Thus, don't you see? The need of every Christian is the desire to be *in Christ*! Outside Him = no hope!

## II WE MUST DESIRE TO BE *LIKE* CHRIST (vv 10 – 14a)

### A. Perfection Hasn't Been Reached

1. The apostle Paul recognized he fell far short of Christ's example...

2. We too have and are falling far short of the holiness/righteousness of our Lord...

a. Illus. – heard about the perfectionist who kept a newspaper under his cuckoo clock?

b. Illus. – *perfectionist* is a person who takes pains gives them to others

c. each of us wrestle everyday with temptation and sin... even with the gift of His Spirit we “quench His Spirit” – we falter we sin... again, where would we be without His grace?!

### B. Forgetting the Past

1. This includes *FAILURES* - ever been preoccupied with past disappointments/failures?

a. Illus. – Stephen Pile written a book entitled *The Book of Heroic Failures*... In 1978 when firemen were on strike in England, the British Army had taken over emergency firefighting. On January 14, 1978 they were called to out to an elderly lady in South London to rescue her cat. They arrived with impressive efficiency and quickly rescued the cat. They started to drive away when the grateful lady invited the squad of heroes in for tea. Driving off later with fond farewells, the conquering heroes promptly backed up over the cat and killed it.

b. C.S. Lewis, in *The Screwtape Letters*, vividly describes Satan's strategy: “He gets Christians to become preoccupied with their failures; from then on, the battle is won.”

c. how we need to put aside all past failures, disappointments and discouragements...

2. This includes *ACCOMPLISHMENTS* – ever been enthralled by past triumphs?... know of areas in my own life where I've reveled in my past achievements... know of churches living in their past...

### C. Reaching Forward

1. Never let a day, a year, a decade go by without stretching for the finish (i.e. of growing in grace)..

2. This phrase referring to being more like Jesus (individually... as local church)

### D. Press Toward the Goal

1. Being more and more like Jesus is the goal spoken of here:

My desire, to be like Jesus,

My desire to be like Him.

His Spirit fill me, His love or' whelms me

In deed and word to be like Him!

2. The prize (remembering nothing we can earn) is our last point

## III WE MUST DESIRE TO BE *WITH* CHRIST(vv 14-16)

- Paul alludes to this desire each professing Christian must have and show:

### A. Assurance of His Return

1. Jesus *promised* to come again – are we confident He will return?

2. You can bank on it – He gave us His Word and we've found His Word to be Truth!

### B. Preparing for His Return

1. Our Lord has asked us to be *ready* and *prepared* for His return realizing today could be the day!

2. Illus. – years ago there was a Heinz ketchup commercial showing an obviously famished little boy sitting in front of a big, juicy hamburger holding a bottle of Hunt's catsup... In the background someone is singing song “Anticipation” as the catsup slowly makes its way to the burger...

Thus, be assured, those who desire to be “in Christ” and “like Christ” desire also to be “with Christ”

**Conclusion:** In Chicago, IL May of 1980, a James Moresis was determined to visit his girlfriend. She lived in a high rise apartment where you ring the doorbell then somebody in the apartment hits a button to open the door for you. So, James rang the doorbell, but nothing happened. Fearing the doorbell was out of order or even worse his girlfriend was ignoring him, James took the elevator to the roof of the adjoining building. From the ledge of the roof it was only twelve feet down to the window of her apartment. With a window air-conditioner protruding from the window, he calculated he could land on top of it and make his way into the apartment. Thus, he lowered himself over the edge and let go. He missed the air-conditioner and fell to the pavement. He WAS 26 and she WAS out of town!

Pat Boone and Elvis Presley were contemporaries. Just before his death at age 42 Presley wished he could find one week when he could just live “a normal life.” He wrote that he would pay a million dollars for just one week of peace. Boone said this of Presley around his death, “I cared a lot for Elvis. He went in the wrong direction. Ironically, we met for the last time when I was going toward the East and he was on his way to Las Vegas. He said to me, ‘Pat, where you going?’ And I told him I was going to be involved in some kind of ministry. He responded, ‘Hey, I’m going to Vegas. Pat, as long as I’ve known you, you’ve been going in the wrong direction.’ Pat Boone answered, ‘Elvis that just depends on where you’re coming from and where you’re going.’”

Let me use all the above to conclude and make application of this text. Are we desirous of the right things? From whence are we coming and where are we going? Do we desire the world and place our confidence and hope in it or are we persuaded of higher more noble desires? I pray that all assembled here desire the following:

Being *IN CHRIST*  
Being *LIKE CHRIST*  
Being *WITH CHRIST*