

# Philippians 3:10-21

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[0:00] I'm glad that you were here this morning and I'm glad to be here with you. Please take your copy of God's Word and join me in Philippians chapter 3. Our text for today is Philippians chapter 3 verses 10 through 21.

Before I begin reading this morning's text, I have a brief note for our guests. Many churches this morning will spend extensive time making an apologetic case for the resurrection of Jesus Christ. They will do so because they will be inundated with guests this morning. And the resurrection of Jesus is the linchpin to a camelline case for the Christian faith.

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verse 19 and 20. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. Without the resurrection, we have no Christianity.

[1:10] However, this inundation of guests is not typically the case for us. Our gatherings most regularly consist of devoted followers of Jesus Christ. So we think it best to press on in our exposition of the book of Philippians as we have arrived at a text that speaks to the sanctifying implications of the resurrection.

That said, if you have found yourself here this morning, we do not believe that this is an accident and hope. If you haven't already turned from your sin and thrown yourself on the mercy of God found in the personal work of Jesus Christ, that you will do so today.

If Jesus was not raised from the dead, then he was a liar and a lunatic. If he was, then he is God. And we should listen to all that he said and all that was written concerning him in the scripture. To help you believe that Jesus is God, if you don't find yourself in that position this morning, there's a little book available out in the book, Nick, called Your Verdict on the Empty Tomb.

It looks like this. I think there's about a dozen of them out there and they're available for free. And I would just strongly encourage you to take one and read it. It won't take you very long to read and see if God doesn't work believing faith in you as a result.

[2:34] So today, Philippians chapter 3, beginning in verse 10 is our text formally for this morning. But I would like to begin by reading, starting at verse 7.

Let me remind you before I do, beloved, that this is God's word to us, written for his glory and our good. So we would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands. Beginning in verse 7. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 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 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, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

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. 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.

[4:04] 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. 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.

If we are to have any hope in this world at all, it must be a gospel hope. This world is a terribly wretched and broken place.

If you don't feel this to be true, you just haven't lived very long. Begin to pay attention to the world around you. Something is deeply wrong with it.

[5:17] I think that I feel this especially as a pastor. Much of what I do is dealing with the brokenness, the sin ravages of the world in which we live.

And I find that if I'm going to have any motivation for living at all, it must be rooted in the transforming, resurrected power of Jesus Christ.

My gospel hope has to outbroad all of the misery that I experience around me. So I look for joy in this.

This text is packed full of it, and we won't have time this morning to look at every one of these phrases. I really wish we did. I'd love to keep you here until 2 o'clock this afternoon. But there would be a mutiny, I'm quite sure.

So we're going to keep the main point of this text in mind, and I may have to skip over some phrases as we do that together. But this large, this overarching hope that is out in front of us is what we are looking to today.

[6:19] We must have it. I will say also, as an aside, as a pastor, I look for tiny joys, right? This is the large joy. I need the large joy, the hope of the gospel. But I look for tiny joys as well.

And alliteration brings me a tiny bit of joy. And so the outline in advance of our study is as follows. It's five points, and they alliterate. Number one, new motivation.

Number two, new memory. Number three, new mindset. Number four, new mentors.

And number five, new mediator. First, let's look at a new motivation. We can see this in verses 10 and 11.

And we'll spend the majority of our time here with the other points supporting and building on this one. We see Paul say in verse 10, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.

[7:29] Now, he has just begun to address with these Philippian believers a heresy that was going around in their day. And it was common. He wrote about it to other churches as well. And we know these people, these teachers, as the Judaizers.

They were saying, yes, faith in Christ is good, but you must add to that faith the law. You must be circumcised specifically in order to be found righteous before God.

They were suggesting that salvation comes by works. And Paul does not mince words about this. He is clear to say, no, no.

Righteousness comes by faith. And so he uses himself as an example. He says, if anybody should have any confidence in the flesh at all, I should. He uses himself.

I, the Jew of Jews, should have confidence in the flesh. Who are these men to tell you to have confidence in the flesh? But then he says that he counts all of that gain, all the things that would have been in that Judaic system of benefit to him as loss.

[8:34] He puts it in a loss column. And what he puts in the gain column is Christ. Paul is willing to lose all things.

He now counts them as loss. Why? Verse 7 tells us, for the sake of Christ.

And verse 8 tells us, because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord. And, in verse 8, in order that I may gain Christ.

Paul wrote in Philippians chapter 1 and verse 21, for to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Because? More. Christ. Here in verse 10, he says, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, identified with him in his death.

[9:39] All of Paul's spiritual fervor has a new motivation. Christ himself. And it has a new aim.

He says in verse 11, that by any means possible, I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Let's look first at the first part of this verse, that by any means possible, I may attain, or you can think, arrive at, the resurrection from the dead.

James Montgomery Boyce, this is on your bulletin this morning, said of this text, Paul wanted to know Jesus in the truest biblical sense, personally and experientially.

And he wanted this to affect his day-to-day living. And so here we find the doctrine of progressive sanctification.

Those who are in Christ will persevere in holiness and be preserved to the end. If you are saved, you will grow in Christlikeness until the end, until your life is over or until the Lord returns.

[10:54] We are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. And we are kept by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

But this saving and this keeping will be evidenced in our living. How, after all, are we to know that we are saved?

How can you know that you are saved? Should we tie our confidence to a particular pastor or ministry or event? What does the Bible have to say about this?

Does it tell us to know that we are in Christ because we prayed a prayer or raised a hand or walked an aisle? No. A thousand times no.

The scripture does not say this. Although many in our day do. Listen to the teaching of the apostles.

[11:58] John in 1 John chapter 5. Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God. And everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of Him.

So if you're in Christ, you're going to love the church. By this we know that we love the children of God when we love God and obey His commandments.

For this is the love of God that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. God, by the power of His Spirit, makes us new creations.

Sets us on a different trajectory. Not a trajectory of rebellion against His good commands, but one of grateful obedience to them. Peter, the Apostle Peter, after a list of divine qualities found in 2 Peter chapter 1, says in verse 10, Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election.

For if you practice these qualities, you will never fall. So he's saying, look at your life. Examine it. Be sure that it's exemplifying these things.

[13:14] Be diligent in this practice to confirm your calling and election. And Paul in Philippians chapter 2, verse 12 and 13, says, Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence, but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

For it is God who works in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure. So if God is in you, these efforts to obey will be rewarded with obedience.

We'll be able to see that, yes, in fact, I am growing in grace. And finally, if you just say, well, those are the apostles, I hope you don't do that with the scripture, but just in case you do, some people only want to listen to red letters, so here they are.

Jesus in Matthew chapter 7, verse 17 and 18, says, So every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit.

A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. And in John chapter 14 and verse 15, he says, If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

[14:33] Now, we must be so careful at this point. No one is suggesting that we are saved by our works. None of us are perfect.

I have a confidence that I am redeemed. I can see that God works mightily in my life, but I am far from perfect. But the trajectory of my life, the graph, if I were able to graph holiness day to day,

would trend toward holiness.

It's got its ups and it's got its downs, but it would trend toward holiness. We cannot be saved by our works. We will never be good enough to meet God's standard because God's standard is perfection.

Every one of us, every person who has ever lived has fallen short of perfection. We are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

And any holiness we possess is because of God. It's divine because we are kept by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Let's not lose sight as Paul's going to talk about attaining and striving that he stated in Philippians 3, verse 9, which I read as part of the intro to today's text, that he would be found in Christ, not having a righteousness of his own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.

[16:05] Reese referenced earlier, Martin, last week, Martin Luther called this an alien righteousness, a righteousness from outside given to us by God.

We are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, and we are kept by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, but this saving and this keeping will be evidenced in our living. This is what Paul is talking about. Showing himself to be in Christ to the very end. And, beloved, the way of Christ is the way of suffering.

We will give up every advantage that this world has to offer for the sake of Christ in order to know him and be known by him.

Why would someone do such a thing? It's divine. It's supernatural. God gives us a new motivation.

[17:09] He recreates us as we were meant to be. To be in fellowship with him in this life and forevermore.

this is so important to understand for your Christian living. So that, by any means possible, I may attain the resurrection of the dead.

One day, those who are in Christ will have resurrection bodies. We are saved, soul and body. And the work of redemption is not fully complete until we are transformed transformed to be like Christ. Embodied. The embodied Christ will be like him with resurrection bodies. In Romans chapter 8, verse 23 and 24, Paul stated that we wait eagerly for the redemption of our bodies.

And he adds, for in this hope we were saved. saved. This is also called glorification. We run across those texts from time to time.

[18:20] Paul wrote further in Romans chapter 8, this is verse 30, and those whom he predestined he also called. Those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Because you're saved, if you're in Christ, there's a future guarantee that you will have a resurrected body. You will be glorified, set free from the bondage of sin forever.

Wayne Grudem's seminal work, Systematic Theology, defines glorification this way. Glorification is the final step in the application of redemption.

It will happen when Christ returns and raises from the dead the bodies of all believers for all time who have died, and reunites them with their souls, and changes the bodies of all believers who remain alive, thereby giving all believers at the same time perfect resurrection bodies like his own. So you see, glorification is Paul's new motivation. It's the thing that he is looking forward to, this wonderful forever state of freedom from the death of sin in the presence of our Savior.

[19:34] We will experience Christ more fully than we could possibly experience him here and now because we will be freed from sin forever.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ guaranteed for all who are in Christ a resurrection and future hope. What a wonderful truth.

I will close this point with one further scripture reading which makes the point a bit further. Romans chapter 6 verses 1 through 6.

Paul says, What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means. How can we who died to sin still live in it?

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father we too might walk in newness of life.

[20:38] For if we have been united with him in a death like his we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

If you are in Christ the resurrection of Christ is a foundation for a new motivation. Secondly, new memory.

We see this in verses 12 through 14. Paul says not that I've already obtained this or I'm already perfect. Right? He's being very clear. We haven't reached sinlessness.

He's saying as an apostle I've not reached sinlessness but I press on to make it my own because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Right? grateful obedience.

A response to the grace of God to him in Christ. Verse 13. Brothers, I do not consider that I've made it my own but one thing I do forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead.

[21:47] I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Paul's sanctification depends on a reorientation of his memory.

You see that he's going to apply a great deal of effort. He's forgetting and he's straining and he's pressing towards this goal.

The upward call of God in Christ Jesus. The resurrection of his body. He states that in his effort to attain the resurrection from the dead, he is forgetting what lies behind.

What's he referring to there? I think he means all the things that he thought were his game that he has now countered at his loss right back in verses five through six of the chapter.

I think he's referring to all of those things but I also think that he is referring more broadly to a sin because he is forgetting. He hasn't just forgotten but it says forgetting and this is one of those wonderful places where the English nails it right on the head.

[22:56] The original Greek word for this is in the present tense which means it's active and it's incomplete. So he's continually forgetting. He's forgetting and he's forgetting and he's forgetting and he's forgetting as he's straining and pressing.

The power of the gospel has set us free from bondage to present and future sin and it has set us free from the guilt of past sin.

Remember that Paul was a persecutor of the church. He mentions this in verse 6. He stood over the execution of Stephen the very first Christian martyr.

A highly psychologized version of Christianity would give Paul a free pass to be forlorn and listless. Would just say like oh we get it. You were that guy that put Stephen to death.

You got a lot of baggage you're carrying around with us. We're not going to expect much of you. But he says he's forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead.

[24:04] Now as Paul's stating that he's forgotten everything as as he's had a brain wipe on his encounter with Christ he got his brain zipped out.

Absolutely not. He's still a human man who had memories. We're going to have memories but I suggest that the prominent thought of the past was what Christ had done to deliver him from his sin. That as he considered his past when he calls himself the worst of sinners why? So that God could show his great mercy in Christ.

As he thought about his past what he remembers is what Christ did for him. How unworthy he is but what Christ has done. Which is why I'm suggesting that Paul had a new memory.

He knew that the past had no bearing on his future because Jesus had paid the penalty for sin and confirmed his redemption by being raised from the dead.

[25:11] Beloved, I wonder how many of you live in the past would suggest in some way that Jesus' death was not enough for your sin.

That he needs to come back down from heaven and get back up on the cross to complete that work. That you fail functionally to believe that when Jesus says it is finished, it really is finished.

Your past sin has been expunged as has your present and your future. Jesus died for you. He died for every sin that you have ever or will ever commit.

Praise be to God. When we think about the past, our minds ought to be set on what Jesus has done. And, thirdly, we should have a new mindset.

This is related, I understand. One maybe is the negative, the other the positive. Verses 15 and 16, he says, let those of us who are mature think this way.

[26:17] Which way is he talking about? Right? This forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead. And he says that this is a mark of Christian maturity.

The mature think this way. A functionally active belief in the gospel of Jesus Christ will evidence itself in the day to day of one who is growing in their understanding of all that the gospel means for them.

It affects every iota of our life. I just got a text message and flipped it away and lost my place in my notes. So give me a second. UPS just text me.

So thanks UPS. my package arrived. You guys will all be glad to hear that. Man, I really lost.

Oh, here we are. Okay, here we go. Good. Hey, back on track. Let me say that again because I lost my mindset. A functionally active belief in the gospel of Jesus Christ will evident itself in the day-to-day of one who is growing in their understanding of all that the gospel means for them.

[27:28] It'll inform everything, right? This ought to be our mindset. Our knee-jerk reaction to our sin as we press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus should be repentance and faith, right?

Forgetting and straining. Often with counselees, I use an example of running a race, right? Paul uses this kind of language. And we're running a race and sin in our life causes us to stumble and we fall, right?

We skin up our knees, look at the children sometimes, their noses, right? They don't catch themselves that way. We're just all shredded by the texture of the track.

And instead of getting up and continuing to run because the race has been assured, right? We will finish the race. We sit on the track and we cry.

Oh, woe is me. I fell down. Get up and run. That's what I say. Yes, you fell. Yes, you fell. Recognize that you fell. Repent and believe.

[28:33] Forget and strain forward. You may be familiar with this quote from Pastor John Piper, but I think it's so good at this point.

He says, I hear so many Christians murmuring about their imperfections and their failures and their addictions and their shortcomings, and I see so little war.

Murmur, murmur, murmur. Why am I this way? Make war. If you wonder how to make war go to the manual, don't just bellyache about your failures.

Make war. That's what Paul is talking about here. Pressing on, putting behind, and straining forward.

It should be the knee-jerk reaction. And a lot of people will ask me, but aren't we supposed to feel something when we sin? I'd say, yes, absolutely you should.

[29:29] Well, how much and for how long? I would say only as much as it takes to get you back to the cross of Christ. Let that sorrow drive you to the cross of Christ.

Forget. Remember what he has done and press on. How do we make war? By having this mindset. Paul wrote in Romans chapter 12 verse 2.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind. This ought to be the way we think. The mature will think in this way.

And Paul is so sure of the importance of this mindset that he encourages the immature that God will mature them. He's going to build you so that you'll think in this way.

To stay this course. And he says, only let us hold true to what we have attained. He's saying, but you have attained some maturity.

[30:28] So continue to walk in that. If we're going to do this well, fourthly, we need new mentors. Verses 17 through 19.

Paul says, brothers, join in imitating me and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.

God created us for fellowship. We are easily influenced and need good influences in our lives. Just think for a moment about how easily influenced you are.

A simple matter, I have a brother-in-law who's British. And I have no part of me, I mean, maybe somewhere in my, like, generations ago past was British, but if I spend a bit of time around him, I start to use words I don't use normally.

If you ever have me call you mate, it's probably because I've been hanging out with my brother-in-law and you can just go, yeah, okay, right? We pick up things from people.

[31:33] So if we're going to follow after Christ this way, if we're going to attain this resurrection from the dead, we're going to need good influence in our lives. Paul is not specific about the good example, but we can infer that the example you have in us is found in the pressing on toward the goal for the prize of the upper call of God in Christ Jesus.

Surround yourself by people doing that, right? Straining forward, right? Pressing for holiness, right? Looking to please the Lord.

God we can also infer that's the opposite of the bad example that he lists out in some detail here. People whose end is destruction. Their God is their belly, meaning they serve all of their appetites, and he doesn't just mean food appetites, but all of the lusts of the world, and they glory, they're proud in things that ought to be to their shame.

their minds are set on earthly things, right? They're concerned about the temporal, they're concerned about the now, instead of being concerned about the eternal.

You need to get yourself around people who are thinking heavenward, always thinking, how is this life best spent for that life, that forever life?

[32:55] And I can tell you now that if you live this way and you think in this way, you're going to be laying down your life, you're going to be suffering the loss of all things, you are going to be uncomfortable in this world for the sake of the next.

And Paul exhorts us to be cautious about these kind of people, right? Mind set on earthly things, right? We're to avoid them, but I want to note that he does it with heartbreak.

He's not just dismissive to them, but he does it with heartbreak. He says with tears they walk as enemies of the cross of Christ.

Fifth and lastly, we need and in Christ we have a new mediator. The last two verses of our text. But our citizenship, we're not those who are going to be destroyed.

Our end is not destruction. Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. We will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

[34:07] We have a resurrected Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is ascended to the right hand of God the Father where he rules over all things. Right? Paul mentions that here in verse 21, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

! Or as our catechism question this morning said, interceding for us. God the Father is pleased with us if we are in Christ.

Further, he has given us his good word and he has sent us his spirit. We have the word of Christ to lead us in the truth and empower us in holiness.

What a confidence we should have because Jesus is alive. One wonderful day he will return for the citizens of his kingdom and will transform our lowly bodies to be like his glorious body.

So let me ask you in closing this Easter Sunday do you have new motivation new memory new mindset new mentors and a new mediator?

[35:22] Do you have future hope in the resurrection of your body? Do you have hope in this life and the life to come? You can because Jesus is alive.

Let's pray together.