

# Coronavirus Online Bible Study

## *Week Five- Christlike- Philippians 3*

### **Introduction:**

Last week we discussed Paul's instructions to adopt a Christlike humility. This humility, Paul argued, allows us to shine like stars, points of light in a dark world, to witness to those around us. This week we will look at chapter 3, where Paul tells us to add to our inward humility and outward expression of JOY!

**Read Philippians 3:1-6.** What does it mean to rejoice? What are some things you "rejoice" over? How is rejoicing different from say, "being happy"?

Is joy a choice or an emotion? What makes choosing joy difficult?

What might steal our joy, according to verses 2-4? What people are Paul describing?

The early church began primarily as a Jewish movement. As Gentiles joined the church, an argument arose as to whether these Gentile believers must follow the Jewish law as well as having faith in Jesus. The "mutilators of the flesh" was a crass term Paul used to refer to those who insisted on physical circumcision for these Gentile converts. By insisting on circumcision, these "Judaizers" were putting a heavy burden on Gentiles that even the most committed Jews had been unable to do- keeping the entire Law of Moses in order to try to "earn" salvation.

What is the difference between "faultless" and perfect? Why is that distinction important?

**Read Philippians 3:7-11.** So you think Paul is saying in verses 4-7 that it is wrong to be proud of your heritage? Why does he consider his upbringing not to be an advantage in his faith?

Why does Paul consider these things "loss"?

**Read Luke 14:25-27.** How does this relate to what Paul says in Philippians 3:8?

Why does Paul make a distinction between "the flesh" and righteousness that is by faith?

What are some things that can steal our attention away from our relationship with Christ? Why can they be such big distractions?

Paul speaks of his desire to know Christ in verses 10-11. Can you think of the periods in your life when you came to know Christ most deeply? What was happening? Do those periods have anything in common?

What does it mean to “become like Christ in his death?” Is Paul saying we have to risk our lives to know Jesus?

Through His death, Christ submitted to the will of God. He chose His Father’s will over the comfortable life He could have demanded. As we studied last week, Christ did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the form of a servant. Paul understood that knowing God and becoming like Christ must involve accepting and submitting to His will and living by faith in Christ and His plan.

**Read Philippians 3:12-14.** What is the “it” Paul has not taken hold of yet in verse 13? (Hint, look at verses 10-11)

How have these verses given you comfort in the past?

What do you think Paul means by “forgetting what is behind”? Why can this be difficult for us?

How might Paul’s own advice in verses 12-14 have helped him during his imprisonment?

**Read Philippians 3:15-21.** What do you think Paul is saying in verses 15-16?

Verse 17- Who are some people who have been a godly example for you to follow during your lifetime? What did you learn from them?

Do you think Paul is referring to people inside or outside the church in verse 18? Why?

How should being a citizen of heaven affect our living in the day to day? Why does Paul think it important to remind us of where our citizenship lies?

What do you think we will experience when Christ returns? What will that be like?

## **Closing Thoughts:**

We are all growing toward greater spiritual maturity. In Philippians 3:15-16, Paul encourages us to adopt the same attitude of joy and determination he has developed during his years of ups and downs in ministry. But it is important to note that Paul's own faith was a journey from immaturity to maturity. Between the time of his conversion and his writing to the Philippian church, he learned to set aside his Jewish upbringing as the source of his strength, and to embrace the cross of Jesus. He began to see his suffering as a chance to become more Christlike, and to look forward to his own resurrection at Christ's return. He learned to "forget what is behind and strain toward what is ahead." Part of our goal as Christians should be to adopt such an outlook, but getting there is a process. And at the foundation of that outlook is the realization that our citizenship is in heaven, that this world is not our home. If "home is where the heart is", the Christian journey is one in which our heart moves toward heaven even as our body lives on earth.