

PHILIPPIANS 3:10-16
JOY IN KNOWING JESUS!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Philippians chapter 3 as we continue our in-depth study of this letter that Paul wrote to the church in Philippi.

As you remember, this letter is known as the *Epistle of Joy* and thus, our focus as we have been studying this letter is to focus on joy.

And joy should be a constant in our life because it is based in Christ and not what is happening around us. Yes, make no mistake about it, what happens in our lives affects us and God never called us to be stoics or emotionless.

We feel pain, hurt, and so on, but our joy remains in spite of these things because, like I have said, it is based in Jesus!

Let me share this with you and then I will expound on what this writer is saying. He wrote,

In this third chapter of this delightful letter written by Paul as a prisoner in Rome to his friends across the sea in Philippi, we are examining that remarkable reversal of values that came to the apostle during the course of the first five to seven years of his Christian experience, following that dramatic conversion on the Damascus road.

He tells us that all his previous manner of reckoning was completely reversed, and he came to a place where he counted loss what he once counted gain, and what he once counted gain he now counts loss.

Scientists are telling us today that there is in existence a world they call “*anti-matter*”, that not only is this world materially made up of carbons, electrons, protons and other particles, but there are anti-protons and anti-electrons opposite from the ones familiar to us, and that it is possible there exists a universe made up of anti-matter.

Now I confess when they talk that way I blow a fuse. I can’t follow them. It has to be a shattering experience to try to live in a world of anti-matter. At least it seems so to me.

But I think it is something like the radical effect that a true Christian faith has upon an individual. It is a total reversal of the values that we have learned since we were children.

In a sense we must completely change our whole manner of thinking and attitudes. This is what makes Christian growth somewhat difficult. We find struggle here, because it demands total reversal of values once held.

- <https://bit.ly/3XMCnzi>

How true that is! If our life has not changed since we came to Christ, something is wrong.

Maybe some of you are feeling, “*I was a pretty good person before I was saved. There was not a lot I needed to do. I didn’t drink. I didn’t smoke. And I didn’t go out with girls that did!*” Maybe you are feeling that way, maybe that is your line of thinking, or something like that. I am probably dating myself with a phrase like that, but you know what I mean. You were a good person according to the standards that you set.

We need to be careful here because that is how the Pharisees felt. These religious leaders saw themselves as good and the common people as bad.

Then, here comes Jesus and He tells them that they are not good! You see, the standard that God has set is not just outward actions, but what is going on in your heart! And the point He was making is that there are none who are good, not one. Well, except Jesus!

And think about when these pagan cities got saved, the radical changes that took place. It had to blow the minds of family and friends when they saw the changes in their family members or their friends.

Listen to how those who came to Christ in Ephesus had their lives transformed. This is radical and it was costly to them. In Acts 19:18-20 we are told, **“And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.”**

You see, they did not come to Christ and continued in their old lifestyle. They let go of the past and pressed on in that new life that they had in Christ!

And our lives should also be radically changed by the Lord. We have not attained all that God has for us, and Paul will speak on that in our study this morning.

And that is my prayer as we go through this study, that we would grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! That we are challenged to press on, to be conformed into the image of Christ. That when people look at our lives that they would see the love of Jesus manifested in them in spite of what others may do to us.

We have a new nature in Christ and thus, we need to walk accordingly.

I have called our study this morning – ***JOY IN KNOWING JESUS!***

That really is our first point in our study because to know Jesus will then change our lives radically and the world will see these changes in us, how we talk, what we do! At least they should!

I have broken down the verses that we will be looking at this morning into the following points and, as you will see, they build upon each other, and they are all based on the first point!

They are,

TO KNOW HIM – PHILIPPIANS 3:10-11

PRESS ON – PHILIPPIANS 3:12-14

WALK IN HIS STEPS – PHILIPPIANS 3:15-16

With that said, let's begin reading in Philippians chapter 3, beginning in verse 10 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word, and we look at this topic of – ***JOY IN KNOWING JESUS!***

VERSES 10-11

This first point is very simple, and it comes right from what Paul said here in Philippians 3:10 – ***TO KNOW HIM!***

Paul wanted to know Jesus more and more because Jesus was that important to him.

Here's the thing. Many people know of Jesus. They know about him.

When I was young, not a Christian, I went to a Roman Catholic church with my parents, and I knew that Jesus died on the cross and rose from the grave on the third day, but not much more than that. I knew of Him, but I didn't know Him!

There are millions of people in this world today that know about Jesus, but they don't know Him, they have not been born again!

Remember what James said to us in James 2:19, **“You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe - and tremble!”**

And just in case you miss the point, listen to how The Amplified Bible puts this verse. It reads, **“You believe that God is one; you do well. So do the demons believe and shudder [in terror and horror such as make a man's hair stand on end and contract the surface of his skin]!”**

James does not pull any punches here. He wants you to examine your faith and not just know about Jesus but receive Him into your life.

And to make his point he speaks about demons or those angels that rebelled against God with Lucifer or Satan. And the question here, that he seems to be answering is that if the demons believe that Jesus is Almighty God, are they saved?

Not at all. They knew Jesus because He created them, and they served Him until they rebelled with Satan.

They not only know of Him, but they also know that judgment for them is coming, and it terrifies them. They know about Jesus very well, but they are not saved!

Religious people know about Him but unless they're born again, they don't know Him in the sense of oneness and communion.

This phrase of Paul's, **“That I may know Him”** is one of the most important issues in the Christian life, if not the most important.

You first must come to that saving faith and the only way to be saved is to know Jesus is your Savior, that He died for your sins and rose from the grave the third day.

Peter clearly states that apart from Jesus, there is no salvation. He said in Acts 4:12, “**Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.**”

Now the big question, after we are saved, is this. “*What is involved in knowing Jesus in a deeper way?*”

And the answer that most of us would give would be, “*Go to church. Read the Bible. Do more things for God. Serve in the church.*” And the answers can go on and on.

And those are not necessarily bad or evil, but they are not the right way to answer this question.

It would have been great if Paul just gave us a list of things to do that would help us to know Jesus better, right!

But that would not help much. Sorry.

Then what are we to do?

When I started dating my wife, some forty-six years ago, I did not get to know her by doing things.

I got to know Julie by spending time with her, talking with her.

That is how we get to know Jesus better. Spending time with Him, talking with Him!

What happens many times is we try to reach up to God by our own efforts, by working our way closer to Him, and that is trying to approach Him through the Law.

What is the problem with that?

Your focus will not be upon Jesus, but it will be upon yourself as you try to reach some level of perfection or acceptance with God by your efforts. And I will let you in on a little secret – ***IT WILL NEVER HAPPEN!***

Again, to know Christ is to spend time with Him because the more you know Him, the more you will trust Him and the more you trust Him the more you will walk by faith and not by sight!

But Paul not only wants to know Christ, but also the – ***POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION?***

What is Paul talking about here?

Again, Paul knew that there was no power in the Law. Remember what Paul said in Philippians 3:7-9, **“But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.”**

Not only did Paul understand that there was no power in the Law, but he also knew that there was no power in the flesh, to overcome its desires. That is what Paul said in Romans 7:18-19, **“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.”**

So there was no power in the Law. There was no power in the flesh. Where is the power that we need to live a life for Jesus?

Paul tells us, **“The power of His resurrection.”**

And this power of the resurrection is seen as the Holy Spirit has been given to us. As the Spirit of God raised Jesus from the dead, this same power is there to help us to know Christ more and to live Christ more!

Let me explain it like this.

When we come to Christ, salvation, we are identified with His death and resurrection. We were dead in sin and as we identified with Him, we are raised in that new life we have in Christ.

And now we have that resurrection power to live a life that God wants us to live by the empowering of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We can defeat those temptations, those things that are trying to tempt us away from following the Lord as we put to death the flesh and surrender to the Holy Spirit.

As one writer put it, ***“Paul gladly exchanged his impotence for Christ’s resurrection power, and desired to experience its fullness.”*** Absolutely, and I think that is what we desire as well or should desire!

Then Paul speaks of **“the fellowship of His sufferings.”** Can’t we just skip that one?

But who wants to suffer? None of us do. And over the last several months, there have been some devastating things happening in the lives of those that I know. Suffering is there because sin is still in this world, and we still have to deal with that.

But what is the point of all this suffering?

Suffering draws us closer to God, we have to rest in Him, and we get to know Him more as we do!

Keep in mind Paul tried to know God through the Law and it did not work. In a sense, Paul's been there, done that and found out that it is empty, it is a dead end and thus, he wants to know Christ more intimately and as he does, he also knows there will be suffering.

Paul put it this way in Romans 8:17, **“and if children, then heirs - heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”**

And The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, **“And if we are [His] children, then we are [His] heirs also: heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ [sharing His inheritance with Him]; only we must share His suffering if we are to share His glory.”**

Why the suffering?

Sin, like I have said, is in this world and the effect of sin affects all of our lives!

Also, because this world is against God and it is hard for them to fight against God and thus, they fight against the people of God!

And we are seeing this happening more and more as the time of the Lord's return gets closer and closer!

They persecuted and put to death our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who was perfect, who helped people, healed people, delivered them from demon possession! And if our Lord suffered for doing good, we too will suffer and that suffering will help us to trust in the Lord, to know Him more as we draw close to Him!

And then Paul says in Philippians 3:11, **“if, by any means”** and that is kind of a strange expression.

What does he mean?

Please understand that Paul is not speaking of working your way into heaven, that he could attain heaven by being good. Also, he is not concerned about losing his salvation.

In fact, in Romans 8:38-39 Paul wrote, **“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

Paul is not doubting his salvation or his security, but, as Wuest wrote, *“It is a modest but assured hope.”*

Paul humbly knows that he is saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. It is the only means of our salvation, through Jesus as Jesus said in John 14:6, **“... ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”**

That is very clear to me. Not a lot of ways to interpret that. Jesus is the only way.

Now what Paul is saying here in Philippians, think of it like this. *“I may attain”* has the idea in the Greek of *“to arrive at, as at a goal.”*

What is interesting is that he links this to resurrection. Listen again to what he wrote, **“if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”**

This word for **“resurrection”** is a different word than what Paul used in Philippians 3:10. Here it speaks or means *“out-resurrection.”*

Yes, we will have a future resurrection of these physical bodies one day, at the time of the Rapture, but the idea here is living out your faith and it does go with what Paul was speaking of back in Philippians 3:10

The Holy Spirit is empowering us to live this resurrection life but then we must live it, walk in holiness!

Paul, in Ephesians 4:1-3 wrote, **“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”**

The Amplified Bible puts these verses like this, **“I THEREFORE, the prisoner for the Lord, appeal to and beg you to walk (lead a life) worthy of the [divine] calling to which you have been called [with behavior that is a credit to the summons to God’s service, Living as becomes you] with complete lowliness of mind (humility) and meekness (unselfishness, gentleness, mildness), with patience, bearing with one another and making allowances because you love one another. Be eager and strive earnestly to guard and keep the harmony and oneness of [and produced by] the Spirit in the binding power of peace.”**

Think of it like this. Paul desires to live the **“resurrection life”** here on earth! Another way to translate this word is ***“to stand up.”*** We are to stand up and live our Christian faith and not hide it or camouflage it with worldly living!

Paul is basically saying this. ***“My desire is to live my life in such a way that people will see Jesus in me as I stand up for Him, as I live this new life in Christ. I want to shine brightly for Him and let the world see Jesus! I no longer want that old life, that dead life to control my life like it did before I was saved. I want to live that resurrection life here and now as the Holy Spirit gives me the ability to do so!”***

Wuest explains it like this. He wrote, ***“He wants to know in an experiential way the power of Christ’s resurrection. That is, he wants to experience the same power that raised Christ from the dead surging through his own being, overcoming sin in his life and producing the Christian graces.”***

This is what Paul said of the new life in Christ in Galatians 2:20, **“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”**

The point here, once again, is – ***TO KNOW HIM!***

And then to let that relationship with Him grow and let others see Christ in you!

I know, it is not easy. We blow it. We mess up. It is so hard at times.

What can we do?

That is our next point – ***PRESS ON!***

VERSES 12-14

These verses are a great encouragement to me for when I think of Paul the apostle, when I read about him, I see a great man of God who has conquered all these things and yet, Paul, in humility and honesty says he still has a long way to go!

Keep in mind that Paul has been a Christian for some thirty years now, and yes, he did come a long way in those years. But he had not arrived yet, he knew that he had a long way to go!

And that can be very discouraging but yet, even in all of his shortcomings, he still presses on, he does not give up – what an encouragement that is to me and hopefully to you!

God is still working in us, and it began the moment we were saved, and it will continue on till we go to be with the Lord and that is called the sanctification process where God is molding and shaping our lives into His image!

Remember what Paul wrote in Philippians 1:6, **“being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”** Paul understood that God would not give up on him and He won’t give up on any of us!

But here is a problem and it is a big one.

Somewhere in the course of our Christianity we have a tendency to become complacent and we stop moving forward.

We need to keep moving or if we don’t, we will start going backward and that is never a good thing.

Let me ask you this question.

What is the largest room in the world?

I am sure you have many guesses, but the most important room in the whole world, the largest room in the whole world is – ***THE ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT!***

And none of us have completed the task, we are all growing and maturing, at least we should be! We should never stop growing, spiritually speaking!

But how many of you have been discouraged because you failed, you did not do what you wanted to do, you fell far short of the goal?

I am sure we all have been there.

And when that happens, who is there to beat us up?

The Devil loves it when we fail because he comes along and tries to distract us from seeking Jesus by bringing these past failures up.

“You say you love Jesus and look at what you said!”

“You say you love Jesus, and that gesture you gave to the person in the other car says otherwise!”

“You say you love Jesus, and what Internet site where you on?”

And the list can go on and it does!

What did Paul do about his past failures?

Notice what Paul says in Philippians 3:13, **“but one thing I do.”**

Now it is interesting because he lists three things not one.

Why does he do that?

Because Paul felt that these three things need to work together. There is not one without the others. Look at what he is telling us.

First, he tells us that he is **“forgetting those things which are behind.”**

Paul is saying that he is forgetting those things that were in the past, there is nothing he can do now to change what was done.

In fact, the Greek word for **“forgetting”** literally means, ***“to no longer care for or be influenced by.”***

And the idea here is that he was ***“constantly forgetting.”***

How much of our time is spent dwelling on the past and as we do it keeps us from moving forward!

Yes, we can learn from the past and we should learn from the past, but we should not live in the past.

Paul didn't and he is admonishing us not to as well.

Don't let the past influence your life that you can't move forward!

Now you may be thinking that Paul did not fail like you failed.

Are you kidding me. Of course he did and of course we do.

Listen to what Paul did before he was saved, how he thought he was serving God but instead, he was fighting against God.

In Acts 22:4-5 we are told, **“I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished.”**

Paul was a man on a mission, to destroy the faith or put away those who believed in Jesus. And he was brutal and as much as he thought he was serving God, he wasn't!

Paul was there when Stephen was martyred. He then went on his own personal crusade to stamp out the people of the Way or Christians.

In Galatians 1:13 Paul tells us of this time, **“For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it.”**

And when Paul got saved, he was on the road to Damascus with what we might call *“arrest warrants”* for Christians, with the approval of the High Priest, to take them into custody!

So Paul could have just focused so much on what he did and not move forward in what God wanted him to do. But he didn't do that, he pressed on!

Next, we see Paul tell us that he is **“reaching forward to those things which are ahead.”**

If you are living in the past, you will never be looking for what God wants you to do.

Someone has defined old age as *“a point in life when a person ceases to look forward and only looks backwards.”*

And I don't think that applies only to those who are elderly. We can live in the past and be stuck in the past and do nothing for the Lord!

Do you think that God is done with us because of our past?

If that were true none of us would do anything for the Lord. And it is interesting because the Devil loves to mess us up in this area.

Let me show you what I mean by pressing on, not focusing on the past but reaching forward.

Some of you may remember the 1981 film Chariots of Fire, a great movie and it gives us the story of Olympic runner Eric Liddell who won a bronze medal for the 200-meter and a gold for the 400-meter race as he ran for Scotland. After that he went to be a missionary.

Interestingly, back in the 1924 Olympics he refused to run his best event, the 100-meter dash because it was being held on a Sunday.

Because of that he was accused of being unpatriotic and legalistic.

But he stood his ground, he stood strong and would not give in and God honored that in his life.

In fact, he entered the 400-meter dash, which was not held on a Sunday, the Lord's Day, and even though it was not his best event he won a gold medal!

But one year before this event there was another race that played out like some Hollywood movie.

When the gun went off and the race started, Liddell tangled his feet with J. J. Gillies of England, and he went tumbling to the ground.

He sat there dazed for a moment, not knowing whether he could get up, when the official screamed, "***Get up and run!***"

So he jumped to his feet and took off after the pack, which was now a full twenty yards ahead of him.

In a quarter mile, that's a big distance to try to make up.

In his unorthodox style of running he took off after the pack. He pulled into fourth place ten yards behind the leader, J. J. Gillies.

With forty yards to go, he pulled into third place, then second.

And right at the tape he passed Gillies as he stuck out his chest and won the race!

He then collapsed on the track in total exhaustion.

Medical personal had to assist him off the track that day, but he finished the race and he won!

An article appearing the next day in The Scotsman newspaper said, *“The circumstances in which Liddell won the race made it a performance bordering on the miraculous. Veterans whose memories take them back thirty-five years and in some cases longer in the history of athletics were unanimous in the opinion that Liddell’s win in the quarter mile was the greatest track performance they had ever seen.”*

What a powerful lesson for us to learn and apply to our lives. It doesn't matter how many times you get knocked down, how many times you fail, get back up and set your eyes upon Jesus not only the author of your faith but also the finisher of your faith!

Now, look at these two points and see how they flow together - **“forgetting those things which are behind. . . . reaching forward to those things which are ahead.”**

And there is one more.

Paul's third point is this.

He tells us, **“I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”**

Think of the goal as the finish line of a race and here it represents the finish of life's race.

We are not talking about salvation here but the rewards we earn for running our race well as we appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ or the Bema Seat.

And as you can see, they all fit together and that is why Paul said, "**but one thing I do**" and gives us three points.

Look at this and I think it will make sense to you.

He said, "**forgetting those things which are behind. . . . reaching forward to those things which are ahead. . . . I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.**"

Again, it is so important that we apply these things to our lives.

But the problem for some is they let their past get in the way of what God wants to do here and now, they just can't let it go.

Paul could have dwelt on the past, how he persecuted Christians, consented to their death, but what good would that do?

And I think that is the point, it doesn't do any good to dwell on the past, it is over, live for today!

In fact, if we do dwell on the past, it will not help us, but it will hurt us.

Let me show you what I mean with this story by well-known commentator and author Eric Sevarid. He said that the best lesson he ever learned was the principle of the *“next mile.”*

He recalled how he learned the principle:

“During World War II, I and several others had to parachute from a crippled Army transport plane into the mountainous jungle on the Burma-India boarder. It was several weeks before an armed relief expedition could reach us, and then we began a painful, plodding march out to civilized India. We were faced by a 140-mile trek, over mountains in August heat and monsoon rains.

In the first hour of the march I rammed a boot nail deep into one foot; by evening I had bleeding blisters the size of 50-cent pieces on both feet. Could I hobble 140 miles? Could the others, some in worse shape than I, complete such a distance?

We were convinced we could not. But we could hobble to that ridge, we could make the next friendly village for the night. And that, of course, was all we had to do . . .”

Eric Sevarid used the “next mile” principle many other times during his career, whether the task was writing a book or writing scripts for radio and television.

- Bits and Pieces, February, 1990, pp. 11-12

You see, instead of looking back and trying to live in the past, they kept their eyes forward, moving on, not looking to the future, but taking it one step at a time. And by doing that they were able to make that 140-mile trek!

Thus, Paul presses on for what Jesus has for his life. And Paul is calling for us to run the race well, be wise, do your best, don't give up or drop out and if you stumble, get back up and continue on!

Spurgeon gives us this perspective in regard to what God is doing in our lives. He wrote, *“But while the work of Christ for us is perfect, and it were presumption to think of adding to it, the work of the Holy Spirit in us is not perfect, it is continually carried on from day to day, and will need to be continued throughout the whole of our lives.”*

May we be able to say as Paul said at the end of his life, **“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”** II Timothy 4:6-8.

We must press on and look at the goals that are before us, ultimately being with the Lord.

I like the way that Warren Wiersbe sums this up for us. He wrote,

Do not say, *“Why were the former days better than these?”*

You do not move ahead by constantly looking in a rear-view mirror.

The past is a rudder to guide you, not an anchor to drag you.

We must learn from the past but not live in the past.

- Warren W. Wiersbe

Exactly! We can learn much from the past but if we try to live in the past, we will end up going nowhere! In fact, that is where we will live, the past!

Also, the problem comes when a person no longer has any goals ahead of them and what ends up happening is that they are forced to live off their past accomplishments and victories.

What can we do about that?

We must – ***PRESS ON!***

And as we – ***KNOW HIM!***

As we –***PRESS ON!***

Then we can – ***WALK IN HIS STEPS!***

VERSES 15-16

Now, because of all that Paul has just said, listen again to what he goes on to say in Philippians 3:15-16, **“Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.”**

I know, I just read that and why did I read it again?

Because it is so important!

It speaks of maturing, of walking a walk that is worthy of the high calling by which we have been called.

Why do we see so many Christians, why do we so often lower the bar of what God desires in our life?

Look at all we have in Christ, God’s Word to us, but this is not just a bunch of information for others to live by. This information, the Word of God is for us.

Every time we pick up a Bible, every time we listen to a teaching on the radio or internet, every time we come to church and hear the Word of God being taught, we should be open to what the Lord has for us because He is speaking to us.

We should approach this by saying, ***“Lord, what do you have for me? Help me to be open to what you are sharing with me! And then Lord, help me to apply these things to my life so that I may continue to grow in You!”***

You see, those who are really mature will have this mind. They will be open to what the Lord has for them and then they will walk accordingly.

But Paul also speaks of those that are not walking accordingly or not living up to the high calling by which we have been called. Paul trusted that God would show them how important it is for them to listen and then obey. He left them in the hands of God!

You see, Paul knows that those who are mature will understand this, what he is saying.

And for the rest, he is confident that the Lord will show them these things by which they will grow.

And Paul is admonishing them not only to grow in the Lord but also, with the knowledge they already have, that they will apply it to their lives, they will walk in the things of the Lord having put on the mind of Christ.

I am not sure how often we think about that, putting on the mind of Christ, the importance of it.

Let me share this with you and you will see what we have at our disposal! We are told,

French scientists have succeeded in causing chickens to sound like quail.

Nancy Ross-Flannigan, writing for the Detroit Free Press, reports that researchers took tissue from parts of the Japanese quail brain thought to control the bird’s call and implanted it in the brains of five chicken embryos.

The experiment worked. Researchers say the hatched chicks sounded like quail rather than chickens.

But now the real miracle. God has *“implanted”* the mind of Christ in those who have accepted His Son as their Savior.

The Spirit of God has taken up residence in us (1 Cor. 2:12).

In some mysterious way we now have a capacity for divine wisdom that no Ph.D. degree or natural experience could ever provide.

Having the mind of Christ enables us to see life increasingly from God’s perspective.

- Sermons Illustrated May/June 1990

Kind of a strange story, what is my point?

Let me ask you this.

Why are so many Christians fearful of what is happening in the world?

Why are so many Christians fearful of who the next president of the United States will be?

Why are so many Christians fearful of what is happening with the economy?

Why are so many Christians fearful?

Because they have not put on the mind of Christ. They have let the world influence them and what the world is showing them causes them to be fearful.

That should be what the world, the unsaved are like as they see these things happening, not Christians!

Let me ask you this.

Is God in control?

Absolutely! This is for certain. Things are not going out of control, but they are falling into place as God has already told us.

What do I mean by that?

Listen to what we are told in Isaiah 44:6-8, **“Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: ‘I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God. And who can proclaim as I do? Then let him declare it and set it in order for Me, Since I appointed the ancient people. And the things that are coming and shall come, Let them show these to them. Do not fear, nor be afraid; Have I not told you from that time, and declared it? You are My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? Indeed there is no other Rock; I know not one.’”**

First of all, Almighty God, God the Father and God the Son, the Eternal God can tell us what the future holds and when He does, He is 100% accurate.

The Lord said that He will tell us **“the things that are coming and shall come.”**

What is the purpose of telling us what the future holds?

So we will not be afraid. And this is so important, especially in the days we are living in where we see Christians getting angry, afraid, worried and yet God is telling us, **“Do not fear, nor be afraid.”**

And here is the key to all of this. God is saying, ***“Because I have told you all that is coming, because I have shown you these things, you are My witnesses, or you are to warn people of what is coming and share with them the things of God. You are to share Jesus with them!”***

Keep your eyes upon Jesus and He will direct your steps.

Listen again to what Philippians 3:16 says, **“Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.”**

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this. It says, “**Only let us hold true to what we have already attained and walk and order our lives by that.**”

I like that.

Think about that for a minute. You see, what Paul is saying is that for God’s people, for Christians, the greatest need is to live up to what we already have in Christ!

Again, don’t live below the exalted position we have in Christ. Live up to what we have already attained.

And don’t stop, but press on, keep growing and as you do live what you are learning in Christ!

Paul said that he had not attained this and thus, he was pressing on. And if Paul did not attain this, do we think we are any better than Paul?

Of course not. Thus, we must press on!

And like I have said, when Paul says, “**let us be of the same mind**” I believe that he is speaking of the mind of Christ.

We saw that in Philippians 2:5 where he wrote, “**Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.**”

In other words, put on the mind of Christ, live as He would live and then you will be walking according to the high calling by which you have been called!

Look at what we have learned this morning in our study here in Philippians.

First, we are – ***TO KNOW HIM!***

We are to develop that relationship with the Lord, spend time with Him, get to know Him so we can trust Him!

And if we are honest with ourselves, we fall far short of what we want in our relationship with the Lord. Thus, like Paul, we must – ***PRESS ON!***

Then, as we know Him and keep moving forward, not letting the past get in our way, but looking towards that goal, the finish line, knowing we have the mind of Christ, then we are to – ***WALK IN HIS STEPS!***

This is not a formula, because I don't believe in formulas for our relationship with God. It is just a way to live if we want to grow. It should be the passion of our lives!

As I bring this study to a close, let me share this with you and you will see that, like Paul, we need to “**. . . press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.**”

We are told,

The snow covered the ground, and three young boys were playing in it.

A man said to them, “***Would you like to try to race, with the promise of a prize for the winner?***”

The boys agreed, and the man told them that his race was to be different.

“***I will go to the other side of the field,***” he said, “***and when I give you the signal, you will start to run. The one whose footsteps are the straightest in the snow will be the winner.***”

As the race commenced, the first boy began looking at his feet to see if his steps were straight.

The second lad kept looking at his companions to see what they were doing; but the third boy just ran on with his eyes fixed on the man on the other side of the field.

The third boy was the winner, for his footsteps were straight in the snow.

He had kept his eyes on the goal ahead of him.

A long time ago, another man using similar words taught the same principle.

It was Paul who said, ***“Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus”*** (Phil 3:13, 14).

- Treasury of Bible Illustrations

May we learn the lessons that God has for us – ***TO KNOW HIM!***

To have a realistic view of yourself and – ***PRESS ON!***

To learn from the past, don't live in the past – ***PRESS ON!***

To walk according to the high calling by which we have been called – ***WALK IN HIS STEPS!***

Keep your eyes on the goal – ***JESUS CHRIST!***

And as we do, we will be able to say as Paul said at the end of his life because none of those things moved him from the course that God had set for him.

Remember what Paul told Timothy, **“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”** II Timothy 4:6-8.

At the foot of one of the Swiss Alps is a marker honoring a man who fell to his death attempting the ascent. The marker gives his name and this brief epitaph: ***“He died climbing.”***

The epitaph of every Christian should be that they died climbing the upward path toward the prize of Christlikeness.