

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

FEB 6TH - 7TH, 2021 // BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS

RESUME (PHILIPPIANS 3:1-6)

REJOICE IN THE LORD

This is a recurring theme in Philippians: rejoice! Paul makes clear, though, that we cannot truly rejoice without God. But when we do, it helps protect us from worldly influence.

- In this context, the influence was from people Paul called "dogs." They were literally the "bad works people" who were distorting what it means to follow God.

NO "CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH"

Paul is a Jew, writing to Jewish and non-Jewish Christians. Some Jews put their identity into the wrong "works" for what it meant to be the people of God (circumcision).

- **What marks us as the true people of God are those who sincerely obey the Father through His Spirit because of Jesus' work. We do not trust ourselves!**

JEWISH OR CHRISTIAN?

This is not a matter of Judaism vs. Christianity. Judaism, the people of God, were never meant to be a works based religion. The world is constantly attacking God's Kingdom and His followers - go, do it yourself!

- **It's infiltrated Christianity as well. I go to church, I serve, I give...therefore I am good! Yet, we desperately need God!**

THE RESUME

Paul lists his resume, and it is impressive. It's darn near perfect! That's what we do too. We want people to know how good we are and all that we have done. It's the way of the world.

- **The Kingdom of Heaven is about God's work through us. God produces love, joy, peace, justice, beauty, forgiveness, and grace. We can't put these things in a frame.**

SUFFER (PHILIPPIANS 3:7-11)

"...CONSIDER THEM AS DUNG"

What the world values does not matter to God. Paul gets it. Religious advantage, status, materials, comforts - it's all "dung!"

- **We carry our accomplishments around, and yet God's power, love, and purpose puts them in place. Our efforts cannot save our souls in this life, or the next. This is absurd to the world around us.**

"...KNOWING CHRIST JESUS MY LORD..."

Paul says we cannot focus our work on the wrong things. It's about faith in the Messiah, Jesus. But what is "faith"? Here is what faith is not: it's not about praying a prayer, getting your insurance policy for Heaven, and sitting idle. That's "relocation" theology. We are "citizens of Heaven" now (1:27).

- **God is about restoration! If we truly know God, Heaven is filtering in!**

"...GAIN CHRIST AND BE FOUND IN HIM"

Paul makes clear what faith is. It's about being "found" in Jesus. **Do you know Jesus? "Our soul is restless, until it rests in thee."**

- **What do you find your identity in? Is it your work, your looks, your net worth, your grades, your religion? To be found in Jesus is to know He loves you, no matter what you do. His love changes us and moves us!**

THE FAITH OF SUFFERING

To know Jesus through faith means we live as Jesus lived - suffering as Jesus suffered, "being conformed to his death." That's a higher calling than checking the religious box.

- **To suffer as Christ means we sacrifice time to disciple others. It means we love our enemies, sacrifice money to help the poor, and serve one another. Faith is a sacrifice.**

"...THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION..."

This sacrificial faith is what Heaven is all about. But this is only possible through God's power. It's the same power that instantly created life. And it's the same power that defeated death on a cross!

- **Do you believe in the power of this Gospel? If we believe, we will be resurrected one day. But we can already have changed lives. His power will purify us and help us even now!**

PERFECTION (PHILIPPIANS 3:12-16)

"NOT THAT I...AM ALREADY PERFECT..."

Paul sets a high bar: sharing in the sufferings of Jesus. Has anyone attained the life of Jesus yet? Paul didn't. But it didn't stop him. Paul was striving for the life of Jesus. In fact, Jesus said to be "perfect" as our Father is perfect.

- **This is called the pursuit of holiness, which means we are whole, fully human, free of stress, shame, lies, fear, and addictions.**

"...TAKEN HOLD OF BY CHRIST JESUS"

In creation God made us pure like Him. The fall of humanity and sin distorted that. It's only in Jesus that we can be restored back to God.

- **Have you been taken hold of by Him? Have you been captivated with Jesus of Nazareth? Do you truly love and trust Jesus? We cannot conform God to our will, we must be swept up into His.**

THE STRUGGLE IS REAL

We live in a world with significant limitations. The gravity of our sins, failures, and our incessant need to be recognized is heavy.

- **But Paul appeals for us to see "God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus" instead. What are you focused on? What is your goal and pursuit in life? Is it on the things of Heaven or of Earth?**

REALISTIC EXPECTATION

The life of a Jesus follower is a high calling. And Paul realizes everyone is in different places in Philippi.

That's true for us too. But we must "live up to whatever truth we have attained."

- **If you realize there is sin, confess it. If God is revealing to you to disciple someone or to serve, do it. Do you struggle with belief? Live up to whatever God is working within you.**

HEAVEN & EARTH (PHILIPPIANS 3:17-21)

EXAMPLES OF FAITH

The good thing about Jesus communities is that we are not alone! Paul tells us to "pay careful attention" to those who are living as mature, obedient followers of Jesus.

- **You can tell people like that! It's almost like they live in another world. Find those people and learn as much as you can! Ask them to disciple you.**

"THEY ARE FOCUSED ON EARTHLY THINGS..."

We need good community and people to look to because we can quickly get swept in worldly focus and perspective. It's the opposite of the Kingdom life of the cross.

- **The earthly life is impulsive. It needs to have what it wants right now! It is materialistic, focused on what I have and don't have. It's a life for me and my happiness, void of others.**

"...OUR CITIZENSHIP IS IN HEAVEN..."

We are meant for so much more than the material world. So, we should start living like that right now. The author Dallas Willard says it like this: "Eternity is now in session."

- **Jesus didn't just die and rise again for Heaven some day. He came to help us have purity, patience, kindness, and goodness now. Are you experiencing these things?**

"...WE EAGERLY WAIT FOR A SAVIOR..."

Jesus will come again in His fullness. He will come and put sin and death to rest once and for all. **We must be prepared for that day.**

- **When Jesus comes, He will fully restore us. There will be no more brokenness. But the world to come will make no sense to us if we aren't already living in it now! Are we experiencing God's goodness right now?**

WHO HOLDS WHO?

- "In the beginning God created man in His own image, and man has been trying to repay the favor ever since." -Voltaire
- Have our lives been taken hold by Jesus?
- Do we know Jesus? Do we trust Jesus?
- Do we believe in Jesus?
- We cannot move forward if we don't jump into the arms of Jesus and trust Him.

HEAVEN AND HELL

- How we live now has an impact on our eternity. This life matters. Are we sacrificing time and energy for others?
- Are you living in Heaven or Hell? Some of you are living Hell on earth, a constant cycle of pain, lies, and discontent. You don't have to live there.
- We need to look to those who are mature.

BEING PREPARED FOR HIS RETURN

- Are we living in a way that will prepare us for eternity? Will Jesus recognize us by the way we are living? (Mt 7:23)
- We work and worry about temporary things that mean very little in eternity. Is that us?
- The Kingdom of Heaven is real. We can sense it, experience it; we know it when we see it. Are we citizens of Heaven right now?