

# (Through the Bible) Philippians 3-4

by Chuck Smith

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*Paul teaches that true joy and peace come from rejoicing in the Lord, and that faith in Christ is more important than works.*

**Duration:** 1:24:33

**Scripture:** Acts 9:3-6, Philippians 3:8, Philippians 4:4-5, Philippians 4:8-10

**Topics:** "Moral Purity", "Christian Discipline"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses how the media, particularly television and movies, are leading the nation astray by promoting impure, unholy, and immoral thoughts. He emphasizes the importance of being mindful of what we expose our minds to, especially before going to sleep, as it can have a lasting impact. The preacher encourages the congregation to focus on things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, as stated in Philippians 4:8. He also urges them to press forward in their faith, using the Greek word 'agonizo' which means to strive and work through pain, just as athletes do in training for the Olympics.

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## Transcript

So we turn now in our Bibles to Philippians chapter 3. Again, remember the background of this epistle. Paul is chained to a Roman soldier in Rome, in prison, writing to the Philippians. The keynote of the epistle is rejoice, and he said, Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.

You know, oftentimes it is extremely difficult to rejoice in circumstances. In fact, I think sometimes it's impossible to rejoice in circumstances. You know, I just did a dumb thing.

I ran through a red light and hit somebody and I'm being sued for a million dollars. It's hard to rejoice in circumstances. But you can always rejoice in the Lord because He's above circumstances.

So the exhortation in the Scripture is always that of rejoicing in the Lord. And Paul writes, To write the same things to you in deed is not grievous. In other words, here I am.

I'm chained in prison, but I don't find it hard to write this to you. I'm rejoicing here in the Lord. I'm sure he wasn't rejoicing in the circumstances themselves.

They were rather miserable. But that does not stop you from rejoicing in the Lord. There's always cause to rejoice in the Lord.

But for you, it is safe. Beware of dogs. Now immediately after telling them to rejoice in the Lord, he's warning them about the false teachers.

Paul had certain people that seemed to follow him wherever he went, trying to pervert that which he taught of the grace of God. Especially the Jewish legalizers who sought to bring the people back to a legal relationship with God. Putting them under the law.

Demanding that they be circumcised and they keep the law of Moses in order to be saved. Which Paul called the perversion of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And it is interesting that these people usually referred to the Gentiles as dogs.

That was a common name by which the Jews referred to the Gentiles. The Gentile dogs. It was not a reference to a kindly family pet, but it was a reference to those mean wild dogs that roamed Israel.

Barking and snapping at everybody and belonging to nobody. And they were a sort of hated animal. And thus the name dog, the Jews began to apply to the Gentiles.

It is interesting that Paul turns it around and uses it of those teachers that would seek to put the believers back under the law. Beware of dogs. Beware of evil workers.

Beware of the concision. The word concision comes from a Greek word which means mutilators. Paul is talking about their demands that the Gentiles be circumcised to be saved.

And then he uses a contrasting Greek word and it is a play on Greek words. If you read it in Greek, you can pick up on the play on words. Beware of the concision for we are of the circumcision which worship God in the Spirit.

Paul was constantly emphasizing that the physical rites had no value except there be a corresponding spiritual experience. That the circumcision of the flesh accounted for nothing. What God was interested in is that my heart was circumcised.

That I had a heart after the Spirit and not after the flesh. And though I may have a fleshly rite, if my heart was after the things of the flesh, then what happened to me physically has no bearing upon my relationship with God at all. The same can be said of any of the other rites that we have within the church.

The rite of water baptism is really not a physical rite but a spiritual experience. It's not the physical experience that says it's the spiritual, the death to the old nature and the old man in my heart. The reckoning of myself to be dead and living that new life in the resurrected Lord.

And so Paul says, Beware of those who would mutilate your body for we are of those who are circumcised in the Spirit. We worship God in the Spirit. Jesus said, God is the Spirit.

They that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth. We worship God in the Spirit. We rejoice in Christ Jesus.

And that is in the glorious liberty that we have in Christ Jesus. That relationship that we can now have with God apart from the law. And we have no confidence in the flesh.

Now Paul said in his Roman epistle, I know in me that is in my flesh there dwells no good thing. I have no confidence in the flesh. Now Paul said, If anyone might have something to boast in the flesh, I am the one

who would.

Circumcised the eighth day of the stock of Israel. The tribe of Benjamin. A Hebrew of the Hebrews.

As touching the law of Pharisee. Concerning zeal, persecuting the church. Touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

Hey, this is a pretty good pedigree. I mean, if you can be saved by works. If you can be saved by your own efforts.

If you can be saved by keeping the law, then Paul said, Hey, I'm ahead of the pack. I'm more than anybody else. I had everything going for me as far as righteousness from the law.

You remember Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, chapter 5 of Matthew said, Except your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees. You shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven. Now, Paul was a classic example of what Jesus was referring to.

As far as the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, Paul had it. He had done everything that he was supposed to do according to the law to be righteous. In fact, he had gone beyond.

He was a Pharisee. He persecuted the church as far as his zeal. And according to the righteousness that is in the law, he was blameless.

But still, that is not enough to bring a man in entrance into the kingdom of heaven. Now, here they were going around and trying to tell the Gentile believers that you had to keep the law to be righteous. Paul said, No, I came out of that.

I had it made as far as the law is concerned. But then this monumental statement. But what things were gained to me those I counted loss for Christ.

All of this background that put me in a high standing as far as the law is concerned, I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless. And I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.

Paul the Apostle was on his way to Damascus to persecute the church. He had papers from the high priest that empowered him to throw in prison those who believed in Jesus Christ. And as he headed out towards Damascus, he was going out with threatenings of murder against the believers.

But while he was on his way, just before arriving in Damascus, about noontime, there came a light from heaven brighter than the noonday sun. Paul fell on the ground. And there the Lord spoke to him and said, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he answered, Who art thou, Lord, that I may serve thee? And he said, I am Jesus.

It's been hard for you to kick against the pricks. And there Paul was converted. He met Christ on the Damascus road.

And suddenly, upon meeting Christ, all that he counted as important to him up to that point in his life, all of his religious credits, all of the religious background, he said, loss for Christ. Because this is going to bring him an estrangement from his cronies, cronies back in Jerusalem that he's been going around with. Paul is writing this epistle to the Philippians some 30 years after the Damascus road experience.

He's referring to it. The things which were gained to me, I counted loss for Christ 30 years ago on the road to Damascus. But then Paul updates his experience.

And he said, yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. In other words, I experienced it 30 years ago and I had a turnaround in my life and all of the past legalism and legal relationship with God and all of those endeavors in my own flesh, the works of my flesh, I counted loss. Now I do count them 30 years later.

I still count them loss. A lot of people testify of an experience that they had in Christ years ago. Oh, I had such a glorious experience.

The Lord met me in such a powerful way. And I just dedicated my life completely to the Lord. I was so moved, I was so touched by the Spirit of God upon my life.

But unfortunately, since then, a lot of those things that they counted loss at that point, they've picked back up so that they're encumbered again. You see, past experience is only valid if it is translated into the present. If the past experience has not been translated into the present, then it really has no value at all.

There's really no value to saying I counted those things loss for Christ 30 years ago, if in the meantime I've picked them back up and I'm encumbered with them again. Always, we must be able to translate the past experience into the present relationship if it is to be a valid experience at all. Otherwise, the experience is invalidated.

I really am not so interested in what happened to you 30 years ago, 20 years ago, 10 years ago. I'm interested in what is your relationship tonight with the Lord. That's what's important.

Experiences are good. Thank God for the experiences. But they're not valid unless they are translated into the immediate present relationship.

And I do count them but loss. It's still going on. The past is translated into the present.

I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord. I love that phrase. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.

I think that we have to be the most blessed and privileged people in the world. You know, there are many people in the world tonight who have never had the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, our Lord. People lived and died without ever having heard of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Not only do we have the excellency and knowledge of Jesus Christ, but we have the privilege of gathering together and studying the Word of God together. What some people wouldn't give for the opportunity of gathering with us. He said, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things.

Indeed, Paul did. He was totally, completely ostracized by those who were once his compatriots. Those whom he once shared with.

When he received Jesus Christ, as far as they were concerned, he was dead. He no longer existed. But he said, those things which were so important to me, those things for which I lived, I do count them but refuse that I may win Christ and be found in Him.

Not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. Now, Paul had excelled in the righteousness in the law. He said he was blameless.

But he said he cast that over for the knowledge of Jesus Christ. He counts all of the works of the past just wasted effort, refused. My desire is to know Him and be found in Him.

Not having my own righteousness, my works through the law, but now the righteousness which is of God by faith. That righteousness which is imputed to those who believe. That righteousness that Abraham had when God imputed his faith for righteousness.

Now, I can endeavor to be righteous before God by my own works and efforts. I must, first of all, set the standard. What constitutes righteousness? What is right and what is wrong? And having determined then what is right and what is wrong, I may then seek to always do that which is right.

Work hard at doing that which is right. And at best, I can develop a self-righteousness. The effect of it usually on the individual who has attained such a thing.

I keep the rules. I never do anything wrong. I always do what's good.

I'm a doobie, you know. Just living by these righteous standards. The effect upon the individual is usually pride and the developing of a judgmental attitude.

As the Pharisee who went in before the Lord said, Father, I thank you that I'm not as other men. I'm not an extortioner and the other things. God, I thank you I'm so good.

That pride and self-righteousness. But then worse than that, this judgmental spirit because suddenly, you see, I'm on a little spiritual pinnacle and I can begin now to judge everybody else who doesn't live by the same standards of holiness by which I live. How can they say they're a child of God? How can they say, you know, here I am in my little pompous righteous throne judging everybody else who isn't living by my standards.

It can be a very dangerous thing. On the other hand, I can recognize that I have a problem with sin, with myself, with my flesh. I can be honest with myself when I've been upset because that is against my rules.

I can just never be upset. And so I am upset. I have to lie to myself and say, well, I really wasn't upset.

You know, I was just indignant. And you can become a phony because, you know, you set your own standards. You live by your own rules.

But when I take the righteousness, which is by Christ, it's an honest life. I can say, hey, I'm not perfect, but I believe in Jesus Christ with all my heart. He's my Savior.

He's my Lord. And God then imputes to me or accounts to me righteousness. On my account, God writes, righteous.

Now, the problem of being righteous by my efforts and by my works, I may be doing great. I may have lived all of my life up to this point by the rules. Never violated.

Sailing along in good shape and there is across my name righteous. But tomorrow, some nut pulls in front of me on the freeway and then pokes and traps me. And I may shake my fist and honk my horn and say, get off the road, you fool.

You know, and all of my good record down the tube and the righteousness he raised blew it. Oh, what a shame. Here my entire life, I've never done anything wrong.

Been going by the rules up till now. You see, there'd be no security in that kind of righteousness at all. At any moment, I could lose it, but not the righteousness which God has accounted to me through my faith in Jesus Christ.

Because I may blow my horn and shake my fist, but the Spirit will say, hey, don't you remember you got a fish emblem on the back of your car? What are you going to do when you pass the guy? And I may pull over beside the freeway and decide not to pass him so that I won't be a bad witness, you know. And bow my head and say, God, I'm sorry. That isn't a real representative of you.

Forgive me, Lord. And you see, the angel doesn't have to erase the righteous and then rewrite it or whatever. It just stays there.

It's the righteousness through faith in Christ. My faith in Jesus doesn't waver. My actions, they may.

But not my faith in Him. And the righteousness is accounted to me by my faith in Him. And so, it's an established righteousness.

No wonder Paul opted for the new righteousness. Though he had, you know, done pretty good up to this point. Don't know what's going to happen tomorrow.

So, hey, I'll jump this ship and get on this one and I'll gladly throw overboard the old life with the struggle and the effort in my flesh in order to live this new life after the Spirit. Believing and trusting in Jesus Christ to do for me what I really can't do for myself. And to be found in Him.

Not having my own righteousness, which is of the law. But the righteousness which is of God through faith. Probably the best illustration I've heard of this particular passage is the story of the young girl who came from very poor circumstances but was diligent and worked hard to work their way through college.

And now she was in her senior year. They were going to have the senior prom. And she was so excited over the fact that she had been able to labor and work and make her way through college and was going to be graduating.

So she decided that she would make for herself a new dress for the senior prom. Now because she had spent all of her money on tuition and just getting by on her books and everything else, she really didn't have much money. She couldn't buy a dress.

But she really didn't have much money to buy very good material. But she went down to the dime store and picked out the best that she could afford. Bought a simplicity pattern.

And laid the thing out, carefully cut it out. But she really had never sewn anything before. And so, you know, the trial and error method, the redoing of a lot of the seams and all.

And the hem wasn't really straight. But it was a good effort. She gave it her best.

It was surely the best that she could do. And so she put it on and she walked out in the dorm to where the other girls were and she said, look girls, this is my new dress for the prom. I made it myself.

And they were kind to her. They said, oh that's nice. But they did notice the imperfections in it.

And did feel rather sorry for her. But they recognized that it was the best that she could do. About that time, Lady Bountiful walked in the door.

And she saw this young girl modeling her dress and she said, would you mind going with me? And the young girl went outside and there was a limousine chauffeured. And they went down to I. Magnin's and the valets or the chauffeur took the car off. But they went in and so the models started coming in with all of these beautiful dresses.

Showing them off and doing their little stances and all. And a model came in that had a dress that was absolutely gorgeous. She just sort of caught her breath when she saw it.

It was just such a glorious gown. Lady Bountiful being very astute noticed that she gasped at that one. Called the model over that they might look at it more closely and feel the texture of the material.

And obviously she was very impressed with it. But as the model was turning around her eye caught the ticket with a price tag. \$4,295.

And she thought, oh my, I didn't dream anything could cost that much. But Lady Bountiful noticing her interest in it said to the clerk, wrap it up and have it sent to the car. When she got back to the dorm she went into her room and she carefully unwrapped this dress.

Put it on. It fit perfectly. Now she walks back out where all of the girls are waiting.

And she said, look girls. And as they gasped in amazement at the glory and the beauty of the dress. She said, this is something that I could never have purchased for myself.

It's something that I could never have made for myself. But it was given to me by Lady Bountiful. So Paul, he had done his best to clothe himself in righteousness by works.

But then he came in to that glorious knowledge of Jesus Christ. And no longer, he said, to be found in my own righteousness which is of the law. My own making.

My own work. But I'll gladly exchange that for the glorious righteousness which God has accounted to me through my faith in Jesus Christ. The righteousness which is of Christ through faith.

Something that I could never purchase for myself. Something that I could never do for myself. With all of my efforts, I could never come up to that.

And yet that is what God has imparted to me through faith. My faith that He has given to me in Jesus Christ. Paul goes on.

That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection. And at this point we all say, yeah, yeah, yeah. Power, I want power.

I'd like to know Him and the power of His resurrection. Give me the power, you know. And we're so power hungry.

But Paul didn't stop there, did he? And the fellowship of his sufferings. Wait a minute, Paul. I want to get off at the last stop, you know.

I don't know about this suffering bit. I like the power. But I don't like the suffering.

Don't you know that Christians don't have to suffer? Fellowship of his sufferings. Our flesh always rebels against suffering. The disciples found it difficult to handle when Jesus started talking about the suffering that He was to experience.

And Peter cried out, Lord, be that far from Thee. And Jesus said, get thee behind Me, Satan, you offend Me. It was the natural cry of man.

Spare yourself from suffering. But Paul is willing to follow Jesus to the cross. I want to know Him.

I want to know Him completely. Yes, the power of the resurrection. But you know, you can never know the power of the resurrection until you first of all know the cross.

Jesus wasn't resurrected until He first went to the cross. The resurrected life always follows the crucified life. The power of the resurrection follows the fellowship of the suffering and the cross.

And so yes, I want to know the power of the resurrection, but if I'm to experience that, I've got to first of all experience the fellowship of the suffering, the death on the cross, the death to my old self, my old nature, being made conformable unto His death, if by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead. But how can you attain the resurrection of the dead unless you first of all died? You see, Jesus could not experience the power of the resurrection until the cross. The cross was essential and necessary for Him to experience the power of the resurrection.

So it is true with us. I am crucified with Christ. Now I can experience the power of the resurrected life.

And many people have never experienced the power of the resurrected life because they have shied away from the fellowship of the suffering and of the crucified with Christ life. I want to hang on to the flesh. I don't want to see it nailed to the cross.

I want to hold on to the things of the flesh. But you'll never know the life of the resurrected Christ until you've experienced the fellowship of the sufferings. Not, or if by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead.

Not as though I'd already attained. Either we're already perfect. It's sort of sad that so many people seem to feel that they've attained or they've achieved in their spiritual walk.

And they sort of sit on little pedestals. Little ivory towers. I've attained.

I've achieved. Here I am, you know. Come and I'll teach you.

Sit at my feet and learn. But Paul the apostle said, Look, I don't consider that I have attained. I don't look at myself as being perfect.

The work of the Lord is not yet complete in me. But I follow after. I'm pursuing in order that I might apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

Now, Paul recognized something that's very important for all of us to recognize who have been apprehended by Jesus Christ. When the Lord apprehended us and you can all look back in your own life to that point where the Lord apprehended you. Where He said, I've chosen you and ordained you that you should be My disciple.

And we turn to follow Jesus Christ. Now, when the Lord apprehended us, He had in His mind a plan and a purpose for each of our lives. The Lord knew exactly what He intended for you to do.

He had a work for you to fulfill. Paul said, I have not yet apprehended that for which I was apprehended. The Lord apprehended me, but when He did, He had a purpose in mind.

I've not yet accomplished that purpose. Now, the fact that we are sitting here tonight, we can all say the same thing. I've not yet apprehended that for which I was apprehended.

The reason why we can all say it tonight is because we're all here. Why did the Lord apprehend you? So that you could share with Him the eternal glories of His Kingdom. And so when He is finished with me here, this robe of flesh, I'll drop and rise to seize the everlasting prize and shout while passing through the air, farewell, farewell, sweet hour of prayer.

And one day when I'm sitting, looking up in Jesus' face, just overwhelmed by His glory and love, I'll turn to the fellow next to me and I'll say, I finally have apprehended that for which I was apprehended. This is what the Lord intended for me. To be with Him in His Kingdom, to share with Him His glory.

Father, I would that those who you have given to me to be with me here would also share with me in the Kingdom. That's why God apprehended you. He has a glorious plan and a purpose for your future.

He has a plan for your life now. And we should be as Jesus who said, I must be about my Father's business. Anything I do for myself is a waste of time and effort.

I'm forestalling the plan of God. So what do I do? I forget those things which are behind. A lot of people make the mistake of trying to live in the past.

And with a lot of people, there's just a lot of bad experiences in the past. And the problem is that they're constantly going back and going over those bad experiences. And they're not really going ahead in life at all because they're so involved in the past.

They really did me wrong. I can't get over that. I can't believe what they did to me.

I just can't rise above it. And living in the past and being destroyed in the past, they can't go ahead because they're looking backward. Living in the past, there's always that danger of discouragement which shuts off initiative for the future.

You know, the Lord may inspire you to some good work that He wants you to do. Many times, the worst thing you can do is share with your friends what the Lord's laid upon your heart to do. Because so many times they say, well, you really can't do that.

You see, someone else already tried that and it just doesn't work. And so they go back to the past and they pick up the failures of the past and they're discouraged to try anything in the future. And so looking back to the past, oftentimes we look at our failures and we're discouraged from trying to go on.

Hey, I've tried it before. I've tried it for so long. It just doesn't work.

I just can't do it. You know, if I could, I would have done it a long time ago. And looking back, I'm discouraged from trying to go ahead.

Or on the other hand, the person looks back and glories in their victories of the past and they are resting on their accolades. You know, it's what I used to be. What I used to do.

I hold the record, you know. And my name is on the record books and all. And they're always looking at their past.

They're doing nothing now. They're stagnating now. They go to the bars and drink light beer and talk about the touchdowns they used to make, you know.

Living in the past. The past glories. Television would cause you to think that that's all retired baseball and football players do.

They just hang around the bars drinking light beer, you know. Talking about the past. And it's sad when a person is resting in the past.

Not pressing ahead. The past has been glorious. It's been exciting to see what God has done.

But you know, I'm more excited about what God is going to do. So forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth to those things which are before. We haven't seen anything yet.

Like the songs that mercy drops around us are falling, but for the showers we plead. And rather than resting in the past what God has done, let's look forward to what God wants to do. We haven't yet scratched the surface of the work that needs to be done in the hearts and lives of people in Orange County, in Southern California, across the United States.

We've only begun to see the work of God. We've only begun to see the glory of God poured out. Let's not just sit back and rest.

Let's press forward to what God has for us in the future. Reaching forth to those things which are before. I press.

And the word in the Greek is agonizo. They say that in training for the Olympics, you've got to go till it hurts and you have to work yourself through the pain. I mean, you've got to give it every effort working through pain, beyond the pain threshold.

You run until you ache and you think you can't go anymore, but you keep going. You think you're going to drop, but you keep going. And there comes that second wind, and then it seems like you can go forever.

But it's working through it. But it's agonizing when you're pressing towards the mark. I agonizo towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God.

Paul said, don't you realize that they that run in a race run all, only one receives the prize. So run that you may obtain. There are a lot of people running the race just to say, well, I ran in the race.

Oh, where did you place? Oh, I didn't finish it, but I ran in it. Paul said, one receives the prize, now you run to obtain. In other words, give it all you've got.

Press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us, therefore, as many who would be complete, be thus minded. Let this be in your mind.

Let this be the same rule for your life. Forgetting the things which are behind, reaching forth to those things which are before, pressing towards that mark. Be thus minded.

And if anything, you be otherwise minded, God will reveal this even unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule and let us mind the same thing. Let this be your mind.

Let's walk by these rules. And so the rule of the Christian life is forgetting those things which are behind and pressing for those things which are before, or reaching for those things which are before, pressing towards the mark. Brethren, be followers together of me.

So let this be your mind. Let this be your attitude. Follow me.

And mark them which walk so as you have us for your example. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and I now tell you even weeping, that they are really enemies of the cross of Christ. You know, there are a lot of people who talk a lot about Jesus Christ, but are enemies of the cross of Christ.

That is, they want still to live after the flesh so bad that the idea of being crucified with Christ, the death of the old life, the death of the old man, the death of the flesh life, is irritating to them. They don't want to hear it. They're enemies of that message.

They want to tell you that you ought to be prosperous. You ought to be successful. You ought to be living in luxury.

You're God's child. You ought to be indulging your flesh. Whatever you desire, just ask God.

Insist on God. Command God. Because you can drive a Cadillac.

And you can live on Lido Island. And you can have these things of your flesh, you know. And it's an interesting period in church history where those who are indulging their flesh look upon it as spiritual superiority.

You know, if you only had enough faith. You could be jetting across the United States also in your own Learjet, you know. So, it's rather tragic because these people are opposed to the life of sacrifice, self-denial.

And yet, that's the first step that Jesus said was necessary to be a disciple of His. You've got to deny yourself and take up your cross and follow Him. And Paul said, follow me.

You have me as your example. The old life, you know, I counted loss. I want to know Him.

I want to know the power of the resurrection, but yet, I want to know the fellowship of the sufferings and the cross. So, those things which were once gained, those things which were once so important to me, I counted loss and I forget those things which are behind because I'm pressing forth for those things which are before. Now, follow me as an example.

Live by this rule because there are those who don't live by this rule. There are those who are living after their flesh. They are enemies to the cross of Christ.

Not to Christ Himself, but to that aspect of suffering with Him whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame because their minds are always on earthly things. They are out there. There are many of them.

In front of people, they can act very holy and sanctified and excited and exhilarated in the things of the Lord. But when they get away from the stage, they can have filthy mouths. They can tell dirty jokes.

They are living a two-faced life. They exist. They are there.

Paul warns that they are there. They were there in Paul's day. They are there today.

They really mind earthly things. Their mind isn't after the Spirit and after the things of the Spirit. They are more concerned and interested in the types of cars that they drive and the things of the flesh and the earthly things than they are the things of the Spirit.

Paul said, Our citizenship is in heaven from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body or our body of humiliation that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself. Our citizenship, hey, let's not get, Paul said, too involved in the world. Let your every contact with the world be just as light as possible.

Our citizenship isn't here. Abraham and those saints of the Old Testament, the Scripture said, confessed that they were just strangers and pilgrims on this earth. But they were looking for the city which hath foundation, whose Maker and Builder is God.

They were looking for the eternal kingdom of God. They weren't looking for their place. And so they roamed the earth as outcasts, not possessing of the earth.

Jesus roamed the earth as an outcast. Didn't seek to possess anything of the earth. Why? Because He was interested in the heavenly kingdom.

Our citizenship is in heaven from whence we look for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who when He comes, He's going to change our bodies that they might be fashioned like His own glorious image. Beloved, now are we the sons of God. It doesn't yet appear what we're going to be, but we know when He appears, we're going to be like Him for we shall see Him as He is.

I'll show you a mystery. We're not going to all sleep, but we're all going to be changed in a moment in a twinkling of an eye. For this corruption must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality and then we'll be brought to pass the saying, O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? When Jesus Christ comes again, we will each experience a metamorphosis.

This robe of flesh I'll drop and rise to reap the everlasting prize. The new body, the building of God not made with hands, the eternal house that God has created for my spirit. And so this body will be changed and I'll receive a new body like His, fashioned like His glorious image.

According to that power of the Spirit that raised Him from the dead. Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for. What beautiful words by Paul to the church.

Expressing his heart, just burying his heart. Dearly beloved, I long for you. My brothers, who I dearly love and I long for.

You are my joy and you are my crown. Stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. The heart of the Apostle.

He's burying his heart now. His love for those that he ministered to and those who ministered to him. Now, there were a couple of women in Philippi who were having an argument, a fight.

That's not becoming the church. And so Paul said, I beseech Yodia. The S isn't there.

It's just the S would make it a masculine name. But in the Greek, unfortunately women, it is a feminine name, Yodia. And I beseech Syntyche that they be of the same mind in the Lord.

Now, let's not argue. Let's not fight. Let's not create division within the body.

Let's be of the same mind in the Lord. And I entreat thee also, true yoke fellow. Now, we don't know who Paul is referring to here.

There have been a lot of guesses. Probably all of them wrong. But the yoke fellow would be one who had labored together.

Maybe he was writing to the Philippian jailer who had been converted. There are some, I think it was Tertullian, one of the early church fathers, that he was writing here to his wife. But that hardly seems possible.

Help those women which labored with me in the gospel. With Clement also. And with other of my fellow laborers whose names are in the book of life.

When Paul went to Philippi, he first shared the gospel by the river where a group of ladies had gathered together for prayer. Among them, Lydia, you remember, the seller of purple. And having shared with the women, the following week they told their friends.

And a big crowd of people gathered to hear Paul share the gospel of Jesus Christ. Because many of the women believed and were saved and baptized. And so the work of God really began with women.

And they had a very important part in the ministry in the church in Philippi. And so, help those women who labored with me in the gospel. With Clement also.

My fellow laborers whose names are in the book of life. In Luke's gospel chapter 10, there is the report of the disciples who had been sent out by Jesus. Two by two.

The seventy of them. And they came back and they said, Lord, it was fantastic. A lot of people were healed.

People that were blind, their eyes were open. And Lord, even the devils were subject unto us. And Jesus said to them, don't rejoice in these things, but rejoice rather that your name is written in heaven.

Hey, that's the most important thing. There's nothing more important than that to me that my name is written in heaven. Not in what God has done through my life.

That's not so important as that my name be written in heaven. That's what's really important to me. God has a book of life.

It's exciting to realize that my name is there in His book of life. We read in Revelation chapter 20 at the great white throne judgment of God. And the books were open and the people were judged out of the things that were written in the book.

And death and hell gave up their dead and they were judged. And whosoever's name was not found written in the book of life was cast into Gehenna. And this is the second death.

But there again, the mention of the book of life. It is interesting to me that God has this book in heaven. The book of life and the names of those who are heirs of the heavenly kingdom ordained of God to share.

And He's inscribed their names in the book of life. Now, when did God write my name in the book of life? When did He write your name in the book of life? You say, well, I was saved on October 2, 1968. So I guess God wrote my name in the book of life October 2, 1968.

No. We read in the book of Revelation that our names were written in the book of life before the foundation of the world. How could He do that? Because He's God.

And He's smarter than you are. Because He is omniscient. He knows all things.

And if God ever... Well, because He knows all things, He can't learn anything. It's impossible for God to learn anything. So, if God ever is to know who is going to be saved, He has always known who is going to be saved.

And having always known those that were going to be saved, He wrote their names in the book of life before the foundation of the earth. Aren't you glad He knew you and wrote your name there before He ever laid the foundations of the earth? Whose names were written in the book of life from the foundations of the earth. And so, those fellow laborers, Paul said, whose names are written in the book of life.

Something that Jesus mentions, something that Paul mentions, something that John mentions in the book of Revelation. Now, rejoice in the Lord always. And again, I say rejoice.

Again, notice the rejoicing is in the Lord. There's always cause for rejoicing in the Lord. I can rejoice because He wrote my name in His book of life before the foundation of the world.

Oh, thank you, Lord. I can rejoice in the Lord. Rejoice in the Lord always.

And again, I say rejoice. A sad, sour Christian is no real witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Let your moderation be known unto all men.

The Lord is at hand. That is, live moderately. Don't live extravagantly.

There's no place in the Christian life for extravagant living. Live moderately. Why? Because the Lord's at hand.

Don't get too involved in the things of the world. The Lord's coming. Be careful or anxious for nothing.

Or don't worry about anything. But in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. The answer for worry is prayer.

Prayer and commitment. Those things that concern me, those things that are prone to cause me to worry, are the very things I need to be praying about. And once I pray about them, I need to just trust God to take

care of them.

I need to know that once I commit them to God, they're in His hands and He will work them out for His glory. Now, it may not be for my pleasure. It may not be like I want it to be.

But I thank God I'm not in control. I thank God that He is in control of the circumstances that surround me. If I were in control of my life, I could make the worst mess out of my life thinking that I was just doing what was good.

But you know, if you just let a kid go, they'll eat ice cream sundaes and nothing else. And so I would order my life, you know. Make it sweet.

Make it delectable. Put hot fudge and whipped cream on top and toasted almonds, you know. I want a bed of roses, Lord.

I want to take it easy. But it doesn't always work out that way. Many times there are hardships, there are difficulties.

There are things that I don't understand, but my faith is being tested and my faith is being developed because I'm learning to trust in God even when I can't see the way. And though it doesn't fall the way I would like it to fall, I still trust the Lord and I learn that He has a better plan. Yes, it was tough.

Yes, I did hurt. Yes, there was suffering. But oh, the lessons that I learned, I wouldn't trade for anything because I grew immensely and my walk and relationship with God has been enhanced by the whole thing.

And I count that which I gained in my relationship with Him far more than the struggle that I went through. We used to hear down in the South that song, Farther along we'll know all about it. Farther along we'll understand why.

Cheer up, my brother. Live in the sunshine. We'll understand it all by and by.

It was written during the Depression years, I think. Hard times down in the South. Song of encouragement.

They that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. It's not going to be easy, but the Lord is going to be there and the Lord will give you strength and the Lord will help you. So, the worries, the concerns, the anxieties, pray about them.

Give them over to the Lord. Cast all your cares on Him because He cares for you. And so, with prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, three aspects of prayer.

Prayer itself is a very broad term that describes communion with God. Prayer is not a monologue. It's a dialogue.

And it's important that we wait for God to speak to us as well as to speak to God. So many people consider prayer a monologue. I want to go in and talk to God.

And I do all the talking. And when I'm finished talking, I get up and leave. I never wait for God to respond or to answer.

Through the years, I've come to the conclusion that it's more important that God talk to me than I talk to God. I am convinced that what God has to say to me is far more important than what I have to say to God.

And I've sought to develop that listening side of prayer.

The communion. Prayer is communion with God. Listening for Him to speak to my heart.

Laying my heart out before Him. Waiting upon Him. Worshiping Him.

Loving Him. All a part of prayer. Another part of prayer is supplication.

My request. Where I present to God those needs of my life. Those needs in the lives of those around me.

The supplications are personal, but they can also go into intercession. So there's request in a narrow sense for my own needs, and then in a broader sense for the needs of those around me. The intercessory prayer.

And then there is that thanksgiving aspect of prayer. Now as we look at the Lord's Prayer as a model. Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

You see it begins with the acknowledgement of God and the greatness and the glory of God. The name of God. Hallowed be that name.

Reverend be that name. Petitions in a broad sense. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth even as it is in heaven.

Petitions in a narrow sense. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation.

Deliver us from evil. Praise, glory, thanksgiving for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. So it begins with worship.

It ends with worship. Sandwiched in between are petitions and intercession. So we find prayer.

Supplications, thanksgiving. Let your request be made known unto God. And the peace of God, the result of this, will be the peace of God which passes human understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

You'll experience such peace. Hey, what are you going to do? Well, I've prayed about it. Yeah, but what are you going to do about it? Well, I've already done it.

I've prayed. Yeah, but you can't just pray. You've got to do more than that.

No, God's going to take care of it. I have peace. It's in God's hands.

I've turned it over to Him. I'm not struggling with it anymore. I'm not wrestling with the issues anymore.

I've turned them over to God. And now I'm going to rest in Him. I'm going to have an experience, that peace that passes human understanding, passes your own understanding.

You can't understand how you can feel such peace in the midst of such turmoil. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. That pretty well eliminates television, doesn't it? Of all of the

mental pollution that is going out night after night over the major networks, our whole nation is being polluted by the television industry and by the movie industry.

I mean, it's leading the nation right down the tubes. Why? Because it's having people think on things that are impure, unholy, filthy, unrighteous, immoral. And those are not the things we need to be thinking on.

Sort of tragic that a lot of people watch TV just before they go to sleep. Because you plant that junk in your mind just before you drop off. You know, I have found that what I plant in my mind the last thing at night before I go to sleep is something that sticks with me.

I learned as a child that I can memorize any poem by reading it over three times before I went to sleep. In the morning, I could get up and recite it. Poems of several pages.

All I had to do was read them over three times before I went to sleep. In the morning, I could recite them. Because it seems like during the night what you plant just before you go to sleep has a way of your mind continuing to work on it.

In many areas across the United States, we've begun our Word for the Day broadcast on many stations now at 10 o'clock at night. And a lot of people have gotten in the habit of setting their clocks and all their radios to, you know, from 10 to 10.30 and then, you know, the thing flips off and I put them to sleep every night. But what a wonderful thing, the last thing at night, to be planting in your mind that which is pure, that which is true, that which is honest, that which is just, that which is lovely, that which is of virtue and good report.

Think on these things. Interesting how we like to think on other things, isn't it? The hurts, the disappointments, the nasty thing that He said to me. Here's a good model to follow.

I think that somewhere around the house, we ought to put up true, honest, just, pure, that our minds, we gear them towards these things. And those things which you have both learned and received and heard and seen in me. Paul the Apostle, when he was talking with the elders at Ephesus, he said, I was daily with you, teaching you and showing you.

It was show and tell with Paul. His life was the example of that which he was preaching and so should it always be. It isn't just the proclaiming of the truth, it is the demonstration of the truth.

And so Paul tells them, those things which you have learned and received and heard and you have seen in me. I set the example before you. Do them and the God of peace shall be with you.

But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly and now at the last, your care of me has flourished again, wherein you were also careful, but you lacked opportunity. In other words, you were anxious to send me some help, but you lacked opportunity. Epaphroditus, you remember, had come to Rome with an offering from the church in Philippi for Paul.

And so their care of him has flourished again. They sent him a very generous offering. They had desired to do it before now, but of course he had been on his way from Caesarea to Rome.

He had been on that ship that was wrecked and spent a lot of time. They weren't able to catch up with him, but now finally that he's sitting there in prison in Rome, they're able to get to him again and they send this offering. And so he thanks them that this care for him has flourished again.

Not that I speak in respect of want. It's not that I really am, you know, desperately in need. It isn't that I have tremendous needs while I'm here, for I have learned in whatsoever state I am to be content.

Oh, what a tremendous lesson we need to learn. Because always the state that we're in might not be the most pleasant state to be in. Paul was in prison when he wrote this.

Chained 24 hours a day to a different Roman guard as they would make their changes. And yet content. For I've learned whatever state I am in to be content.

And I know how to be abased and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I'm instructed both to be full and to be hungry. Both to abound and to suffer need.

It doesn't matter to me. I can live with it. I can live without it.

I've learned to be content with it. I've learned to be content without it. Whatever state God sees to put me, I'm content because my life is in God's hands.

He's in control of those things that surround me. He wrote, For godliness with contentment is great riches. I've learned how to be content.

For I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me. There's the secret. I can abound.

I can be poor. I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me. In the 15th chapter of the Gospel of John as Jesus is talking about his relationship to his disciples.

He said unto them, I am the vine, you're the branches. My father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that bears fruit, he washes it that it might bring forth more fruit.

Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me and let my words abide in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, neither more can ye except ye abide in me.

For without me you can do nothing. Do you believe that? I didn't for a long time. The Lord had to prove that to me.

I thought there was something I could do worthwhile in my flesh. And I tried so long to offer to God the sacrifice of my flesh. But one day after years of struggle, I came to the truth of the statement of Christ and realized the truth of it.

Apart from Him, I could do nothing. But thank God in the same day I also learned the truth that I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. And so rather than being all wiped out because I can't do anything in myself, I rejoice because of what I can do in Him.

I can do all things through Christ. Those are two verses that I count extremely important in my own experience. Vitally important.

To learn those two verses is vital to Christian growth. Apart from me, you can do nothing, Jesus said. But Paul said, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Notwithstanding, you've done well in that you communicated to my needs. Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, and Philippi was in the area of

Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving but you only. When I left you, you were the only church.

Now there was the church of Thessalonica that Paul established, the church of Brea. They didn't do anything for him. The only church that really sought to help Paul and support that ministry was the church of Philippi.

For even in Thessalonica, when I was there you sent to take care of my needs. Not because I desire a gift that I desire fruit that it may abound to your account. I love that.

Paul is thanking them for what they sent. Not because I desire a gift. I desire that fruit might abound to your account.

Now God has a very interesting bookkeeping system. And in God's bookkeeping system, your investments that you make in the kingdom of God bring fruit to your account. Jesus said don't lay up for yourself treasures on earth where moth and rust can corrupt and decay and thieves can break through and steal.

But lay up for yourself treasures in heaven where these things cannot happen. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. God accounts to the person who supports the missionary the fruit that comes from the missionary's service.

How can they hear without a preacher? How can they preach except they be sent? So, those that send share equally in the fruit of the ministry of those who go. That is why in supporting a ministry, I want to be very careful what ministry I support. I want to make sure that it is an effective ministry doing a good work for God.

Because there's a lot of charlatans out there that are padding their own pockets. And not really doing a real service for God. We were in Garoka, New Guinea.

A beautiful place. Sort of an idyllic place to live. Weather is perfect year round and just up in the highlands of New Guinea just beautiful, beautiful streams, beautiful forest.

Beautiful place to live. And as they were taking us through there, they said there's just a lot of paper missionaries here. And I said paper missionaries, what do you mean? And he said there are a lot of people who have retired here in Garoka who get their support by writing letters to people in the United States, in Australia, in England.

Sharing with them their ministry here among the New Guinea people. And what they do is they get in their Land Rovers and they go out to the villages and they pass out candy to the children. And they'll take pictures of the children reaching out for candy.

And then they will send these pictures and letters back to the people and say, you know, the children are reaching out for the New Testaments that we're passing out in the villages and all. And look at how, you know, all of the children and all, what a tremendous response and God's doing a glorious work and all. And people are supporting them.

Yet they're just retired. They don't do anything but go out to the village once a month to take pictures of kids getting candy. Unfortunately, those people do exist.

Frauds. Charlatans. Don't have to answer to God.

The World Council of Churches uses a portion of their funds to support terrorist groups in Africa. Supporting the PLO and their terrorism program. A lot of missionaries were killed in Zimbabwe by the terrorists.

Missionary children by the dollars given in the churches that have a part in the National Council of Churches and World Council of Churches. I wouldn't give a dime to any church that's affiliated with the World Council of Churches knowing that a portion of that dime would be going to support the World Council of Churches. I don't want to be giving money to terrorists in Africa who are murdering missionaries and their families.

Nor would I want to be supporting Angela Davis's defense which received a generous contribution from the National Council of Churches. Careful where you invest. Paul said that fruit might have bound to your account but there's some kind of fruit that I really don't want to my account.

And thus I don't want to invest in that. I want to know that there is a valid legitimate work being done and that it is a fruit bearing work that fruit might have bound. I want to support that kind of work.

And so Paul said, not that I desire a gift. I desire that fruit might have bound to your account. But I have everything.

I have all. I abound. Got plenty.

What a beautiful thing to say. Even though you're broke. I have all.

I abound. Why? Because I have Jesus. That's enough.

I'm full. Having received from Epaphroditus the things that you sent. An odor of sweet smell.

Probably some cologne I guess. A sacrifice acceptable and well pleasing unto God. But my God shall supply all of your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Isn't that a glorious promise? Take hold of it tonight. My God shall supply all of your need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Now who can marry you to that kind of riches? If God spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, how much more then shall He not freely give us all things? Now unto God and our Father be glory forever and ever.

Amen. Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you.

All of the saints salute you. Chiefly those that are of Caesar's household. As Paul was chained to the Roman guard, those were Caesar's guards and so many of Caesar's household send their greetings through Paul who had received Christ because of Paul's imprisonment there.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. Beautiful, beautiful epistle to the Philippians.

And now the glorious epistle to the Colossians. Next week the first two chapters. The preeminence of Jesus Christ.

Oh, this one just lifts you into glory as we behold Jesus Christ our Lord and we see the preeminence that God has given unto Him. The preeminence of Christ. The book of Colossians.

One that will enrich us so completely as we study it together. And now may God cause you to abound in love and in your walk in the Spirit. And may indeed you find the promise to be true as God supplies all of your need.

Spiritual, financial, physical, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus our Lord. God bless and keep you and give you a beautiful week. In Jesus' name.

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