

PHILIPPIANS LESSON – 6
THE JOY OF WALKING IN FAITH
PHILIPPIANS 3: 12 – 24

***KEY VERSE: PHILIPPIANS 3: 12 – 14**

A. INTRODUCTION

***PHILIPPIANS 3: 10 – 14 PAULS POWERFUL STATEMENT**

***PHILIPPIANS 3: 20 – 21 PAUL ENDS THIS LESSON THE SAME WAY**

***THIS STUDY IS WRAPPED IN THE RESURRECTION, THE TRANSFORMING GLORY OF GOD EMBRACES EVERYTHING WE STUDY IN THIS SECTION.**

***QUESTION: WHAT LIES BETWEEN THESE TWO GREAT VISIONS OF RESURRECTION GLORY?**

a. PAULS ANSWER IS CLEAR: STRAIN FORWARD! PRESS ON!

***PHILIPPIANS 3: 12 – 13**

b. TWO GREAT SPIRITUAL CHALLENGES, RELATE WELL TO THE GREAT MILITARY AND SPORTING HERITAGE OF THE GREEKS.

c. IN 490 B.C., THE PERSIANS STOOD ON THE PLAINS OF MARATHON, GREECE, JUST OUTSIDE OF ATHENS. THEIR GOAL WAS TO DESTROY WESTERN FREEDOM AND IMPOSE A CRUEL DICTATORSHIP OVER ALL EUROPE. THEY WERE SUPREMELY CONFIDENT OF THEIR MISSION, FOR THE PERSIANS OUTNUMBERED THE GREEKS BY ATLEAST 2 – 1. BUT THE GREEKS MADE WHAT APPEAR TO BE A SUICIDAL ATTACK. LED BY THE ATENIANS, THEY PRESSED ON, DIRECTLY INTO THE CENTER OF THE PERSIAN FORCES AND INSTILLED PANIC IN THE ENEMY. IN SHORT ORDER, OVER 6,000 PERSIANS LAY DEAD ON THE BATTLEFIELD WITH LESS THAN 200 SLAIN ON THE GREEK SIDE. A FEW PERSIAN SHIPS SLIPPED AWAY AND PLANNED A DIRECT ATTACK ON THE CITY OF ATHENS, BUT THE GREEKS WERE REALLY FOR THEM. A SINGLE GREEK SOLDIER BY THE NAME PHIDIPPIDES RAN NONSTOP ON A MARATHON TO ATHENS, A TOTAL DISTANCE OF 26 MILES. HIS GOAL WAS TO REACH THE CITY IN TIME TO DELIVER A TWO – PART MESSAGE:

***VICTORY IN THE RECENT PAST**

***PRESS ON AND FIGHT TO THE FINISH**

a. HE OUTRAN THE APPROACHING PERSIAN SHIPS, AND SUCCESSFULLY DELIVERED HIS MESSAGE. FREEDOM FROM OPPRESSION AND BONDAGE CARRIED THE DAY.

b. YET, HAVING FOUGHT ON THE BATTLEFIELD EARLIER THAT DAY, THE THREE – HOUR SPRINT HAD LEFT PHIDIPPIDES EXHAUSTED. HE DIED A SHORT TIME AFTER DELIVERING THE MOMENTOUS MESSAGE. HIS RACE FOR FREEDOM HAD BECOME LEGENDARY AND BIRTHED THE MARATHON RACE OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES, A SPORTING TRADITION THAT ENDURES TO MODERN TIMES. THE PROUD GREEK PHILIPPINAS WOULD HAVE KNOWN THIS STORY WELL.

c. THAT IS WHY PAUL DRAWS UPON THE INSPIRING ACCOUNT OF THE MARATHON IN PHILIPPIANS 3: 12 – 21.

***HE EXHORTS THE SAINTS TO PRESS ON TO THE GOAL LINE OF FREEDOM IN CHRIST!**

d. PAUL WAS A GREAT SPORTS FAN, HE OFTEN USED THE IMAGERY OF ATHLETIC COMPETITION TO TEACH SPIRITUAL LESSONS.

***PHILIPPIANS 3: 12 – 21**

***I CORINTHIANS 9: 25 – 27**

***PAUL STATES:**

e. EVERYONE WHO COMPETES IN THE GAMES GOES INTO STRICT TRAINING. THEY DO IT TO GET A CROWN THAT WILL NOT LAST, WE DO IT TO GET A CROWN THAT WILL LAST FOREVER. THEREFORE I DO NOT RUN LIKE SOMEONE RUNNING AIMLESSLY: I DON'T FIGHT LIKE A BOXER BEATING THE AIR. NO, I STRIKE A BLOW TO MY BODY AND MAKE IT MY SLAVE SO THAT AFTER I HAVE PREACHED TO OTHERS, I MYSELF WILL NOT BE DISQUALIFIED FOR THE PRIZE.

f. IN THIS INSTANCE, PAUL ACCESSES THE WORD OF RUNNING AND BOXING. THE COMMON ELEMENT THAT JOINS BOTH OF THESE SPORTS IS DETERMINED DISCIPLINE "TO GET A CROWN".

***1 CORINTHIANS 9: 23**

***PHILIPPIANS 3: 14**

g. THIS IS THE RACE OF DISCIPLESHIP! IT IS A JOY – FILLED MARATHON IN THE SPIRIT THAT ENDS IN GLORY.

h. OUR PRAYER, AS YOU ARE “DRAWN INTO” OR “INDUCTED” INTO PHILIPPIANS 3: 12 – 21 THAT GOD WILL GIVE YOU THE WISDOM AND STRENGTH TO RUN A GOOD RACE FOR FREEDOM IN CHRIST.

B. DISCOVER

a. WE DISCOVER THAT PAUL EMPLOYS AN “ATHLETIC MOTIF” TO SPUR THE PHILIPPIANS ON DOWN THE ROAD TO MATURE DISCIPLES IN CHRIST.

b. IN READING THESE PASSAGES OF THE BIBLE WE NEED GRASP. IN GREEK, WORD IS (KATECHO) TO HOLD ON FIRMLY.

***QUESTION: WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE GOAL MENTIONED IN PHILIPPIANS 3: 12?**

***QUESTION: IF CHRIST HAS ALREADY TAKEN HOLD OF PAUL FOR THE GOAL, DOES PAUL HAVE TO STRIVE TO TAKE HOLD OF IT? PHILIPPIANS 3: 12**

c. PAUL IS WEAVING AN INTRICATE NETWORK OF IDEAS IN PHILIPPIANS – GODS FREE GIFT MUST BE RECEIVED AND CULTIVATED, BUT IT IS BY GRACE THAT WE CAN COMPLETE THE “RACE” AT ALL.

***QUESTION: WHO MIGHT BE THE TROUBLEMAKERS BE IN PHILIPPIANS 3: 18 – 19?**

***QUESTION: IF PAUL IS TALKING ABOUT OUR “RACE COURSE” TO HEAVEN, THEN WHAT ARE SOME IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF RUNNING A GOOD RACE ON OUR WAY TO THE “FINISH LINE”?**

C. DISCERN

a. AS PAUL TAUGHT US ABOUT THE “MIND OF CHRIST”. THAT IS YOU ARE BECOMING FAMILIAR WITH THE “SHAPE” OF HOW HE THINKS ABOUT GOD AND THE CHURCH.

b. FROM PHILIPPIANS 1: 1 TO PHILIPPIANS 3: 21, NOTICE ALL THE PATTERNS – REPETITIONS, - CONTRAST, AN SO ON, LOOK OUT FOR SIMILAR ITEMS.

***PAUL IS AN INTEGRATED THINKER AND HE BUILDS ON WHAT HE HAS WRITTEN BEFORE.**

***JOHN 16: 13**

***PREPARE YOUR HEART IN PRAYER TO RECEIVE THE ETERNAL TRUTH OF GOD IN CHRIST.**

***2 KINGS 2: 11 – 14**

c. ELISHA WAS SAD WHEN HIS MENTOR WAS TAKEN BY GOD TO HEAVEN – BUT FOR ELIJAH, HE WAS GOING HOME. HIS CITIZENSHIP HAD NEVER BEEN IN THIS WORLD; HE WAS BORN IN HEAVEN.

d. THE SAME HOLDS TRUE FOR THE APOSTLE PAUL, HE HAS TURNED IN HIS PASSPORT FOR THIS WORLD, AND TAKEN UP THE HIGHER RESIDENCY WITH GOD.

e. WE NOW NEED, THRU THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND YOU CAN LOOSEN YOUR GRIP ON THIS WORLD AND LOOK HOMEWARD TO YOUR TRUE CITIZENSHIP WHICH IS IN HEAVEN.

***PHILIPPIANS 3: 20**

***PHILIPPIANS 3: 12**

***NOTICE THE DOUBLE “ALREADY” IN PHILIPPIANS 3: 12**

1. PAUL MUST BALANCE WHAT GOD HAS ALREADY DONE FOR US IN CHRIST WITH WHAT HE HAS NOT DONE ALREADY DONE FOR US.

2. THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED PRESS – ON IN 3: 12 & 14 IS A STRONG ONE. IT CAN MEAN “HUNT FOR” OR “CHASE AFTER”.

3. THE WORD “GOAL” IN 3: 14 IS BUILT UPON THE SAME ROOT WORD AS “NATURE” IN 3: 15.

***PHILIPPIANS 3: 12 – 14 PHILIPPIANS 3: 16 PHILIPPIANS 3: 17 -18**

4. HERE ARE MOVEMENT, CHASE AFTER – WALK ONE FOOT AFTER ANOTHER AS ON AN EXTENDED JOURNEY. ALL OF THESE MOTION WORDS HAVE POWERFUL IMPLICATION FOR DISCIPLESHIP AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION.

5. GOOD MENTORING: PHILIPPIANS 2: 19 – 30 PHILIPPIANS 3: 17 BAD EXAMPLES: PHILIPPIANS 1: 15 – 17 – 3: 18 – 19

6. FOLLOWING: 3: 17 K.J.V IS FROM THE WORD SUMMIMETIC AND LITERALLY MEANS “COPY TOGETHER” OR MIMIC WITH.

7. THE FORMATION LANGUAGE IN PHILIPPIANS 3: 21 IS BUILT ON THE SAME WORD USED TO DESCRIBE THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST MARK 9: 2. THE FORM LANGUAGE IS ALSO USED

IN PHILIPPIANS 2: 5 – 11.

***THESE POINTS JUST SCRATCH THE SURFACE OF ALL THAT IS CONTAINED IN PHILIPPIANS 3: 12 – 21.**

D. PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER

***QUESTION: WHO ARE THE GOOD EXAMPLES OF CHRISTIAN MENTORS IN PHILIPPIANS 2: 19 – 30 AND 3: 18 – 19?**

***QUESTION: WHO ARE THE BAD EXAMPLES IN PHILIPPIANS 1: 15 – 17?**

***QUESTION: WHAT TYPE OF ATHLETIC IMAGERY DOES PAUL USE IN PHILIPPIANS 3: 12 – 13?**

***QUESTION: WHAT DO YOU FEEL IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CITIZENSHIP LANGUAGE IN PHILIPPIANS 3:19?**

E. DEVOTE

***PAUL HAS PLACED SOME FORMIDABLE SPIRITUAL CHALLENGES BEFORE US, BUT THEY ARE BEAUTIFUL.**

1. WE ARE TO TURN AWAY FROM THE PAST AND TURN TO THE FUTURE IN CHRIST.

2. WE ARE TO BE AGGRESSIVELY PURSUING AFTER THE HIGH CALLING OF CHRIST.

3. PAUL COMMENDS US TO WALK STEP – BY STEP AND TO WALK ALONG, LIKE ON A JOURNEY.

4. WE ARE TO COPY AND MIMIC THE STERLING EXAMPLE OF PAUL AND HIS COWORKERS.

5. WE ARE TO LOOSEN OUR GRIP ON THIS WORLD AND FULLY REGISTER OUR CITIZENSHIP IN HEAVEN.

a. IF WE WALK IN THE FLESH, NONE OF THIS IS POSSIBLE.

***ROMANS 8: 1 – 5 – WALK IN THE SPIRIT**

***MATTHEW 19: 26 ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE, WITH GODS HELP**

***MARK 10: 27**

2 CORINTHIANS 1: 8 – 9

a. PAUL IS NO POLLYANNA, HE IS NOT A PERSON WHO IS SO SUPERFICIALLY POSITIVE THAT HE IGNORES THE DIFFICULTIES AND SUFFERING OF THIS LIFE. NO, HE IS FULLY AWARE OF THE HARD TIMES, BUT REFUSES TO BE DEFINED BY THEM. HE HAS A HIGHER CALLING: ONE THAT IS POWERED BY THE RESURRECTION AND GLORY. PRAY NOW THAT YOU CAN LET GO OF THE SETBACKS IN YOUR LIFE AND TURN TO THE LIFE – GIVING POWER OF THE SPIRIT THAT LEADS TO WHAT THE APOSTLE DESCRIBES AS ETERNAL “WEIGHT OF” GLORY.

***2 CORINTHIANS 4: 17**

***QUESTION: IN STUDYING PHILIPPIANS 3: 12 – 21; WHAT DOES GOD WANT YOU TO DO.**

***QUESTION: PHILIPPIANS 3: 12 – 14 PAUL USES AN ATHLETES IMAGE TO DESCRIBE THE QUALITY OF HIS LIFE IN CHRIST. WHAT SPORT WOULD DESCRIBE YOUR LIFE IN CHRIST NOW?**

***QUESTION: PHILIPPIANS 3: 17 PAUL PRESENTS HIMSELF AS A GOOD CHRISTIAN MODEL FOR THE PHILIPPIANS TO COPY. WHAT DO YOU SEE IN YOURSELF THAT WOULD INVITE OTHERS TO COPY?**

***QUESTION: ON A SCALE OF 1 – 10 IN THE LEVEL OF INVESTMENT:**

1. WHAT DEGREE ARE YOU A CITIZEN OF THIS WORLD? _____

2. WHAT DEGREE ARE YOU A CITIZEN OF HEAVEN? _____

***PHILIPPIANS 3: 19**

***QUESTION: WHAT ARE SOME AREAS THAT YOU FEEL NEED TO BE TRANSFORMED FOR THE BETTER? PHILIPPIANS 3: 21**

F. DISCIPLE

***PHILIPPIANS 3: 12 – 21 “DISCIPLESHIP MANUAL”.**

1. PAUL DEALS WITH THE PAST!

2. PRESENT ACTION IS CLEARLY DEFINES

3. FUTURE DESTINY IS GLORIOUSLY REVEALED

***THOUGHTS**

1. WE ARE IN A MARATHON RACE, NOT A SPRINT

2. WHERE IS OUR STARTING BLOCK?

3. TIME TO SEE GODS "GOAL LINE"

4. START MOVING IN THAT DIRECTION IN CHRIST

***THINGS TO COMMIT TO:**

1. FORGETTING ANYTHING THAT SEEKS TO SLOW DOWN OUR SPIRITUAL PROGRESS TOWARD THE HIGH CALLING OF CHRIST.

2. HUNTING FOR A NEW LEVEL OF SPIRITUAL EXISTENCE IN CHRIST

3. OBSERVING SOMEONE THAT YOU REALLY ADMIRE IN THE LORD AND SIMPLY COPYING WHAT THEY DO

4. REASSESS MY HOLD ON THIS WORLD, ESPECIALLY AS IT RELATES TO MY CITIZENSHIP IN HEAVEN

a. YOU CAN BE A MENTOR TO A BROTHER / SISTER / YOUTH IN THE LORD.

***DON'T SELL YOURSELF SHORT!**

***YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A PERFECT EXAMPLE TO BE A GOOD EXAMPLE.**

b. AS YOU BECOME DISCIPLED BY THE LORD, YOU WILL BE WELL – POSITIONAL TO DISCIPLE OTHERS IN THE LORD.

c. AS YOU ARE FORMED BY THE SPIRIT AND ARE USED BY GOD TO TRANSFORM OTHERS IN THE SPIRIT, YOU WILL MAKE EXTRAORDINARY PROGRESS ALONG YOUR PATH TO JOY!

**NEXT WEEK
PHILIPPIANS 4: 1 – 9**

THE JOY OF GODLY TRUST, PURITY, AND PEACE!