

LIFE DURING LOCKDOWN #9
“Running the Christian Marathon”
Philippians 3:10-21

Throughout church history there have been groups that advocated spiritual perfection in some form is attainable in this life. Paul wasn't one of them. In this passage, Paul states his life's passion is to know Christ, but he makes it clear that he won't have perfect knowledge of Jesus until the resurrection occurs. However, Paul continues to press on in this life to deepen his relationship with Jesus and to mature as his disciple. He gives us a glimpse into his no nonsense walk with the Lord and his passionate pursuit of Jesus Christ, which we should try to emulate.

#1. SANCTIFICATION REQUIRES DEEPENING OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST, vv. 10-11

- A. To know Christ experientially (not just head knowledge), v. 10
- B. To know the power of his resurrection, v. 10 (Rom 6:1-5, Eph 2:6, Col 3:1)
- C. To know the fellowship of his sufferings, v. 10 (Phil 1:29)
- D. To be conformed to his death, v. 10 (2 Cor 4:7-17, 12:12, Col 1:24)
- E. To attain to the resurrection from the dead, v. 11

#2. SANCTIFICATION IS LIKE RUNNING A MARATHON, vv. 12-13a

- A. Paul sees sanctification through a sports metaphor, vv. 12-13
- B. Paul has not attained exhaustive knowledge of Christ, v. 12
- C. Paul has not become perfect, vv. 12-13a
- D. Paul takes hold of Christ, v. 12
- E. Christ took hold of Paul when he was converted, v. 12

#3. SANCTIFICATION REQUIRES NOT LIVING IN THE PAST IN ORDER TO MOVE FORWARD IN KNOWING CHRIST, vv. 13b-14

- A. Paul doesn't live in the past celebrating his victories, v. 13b
- B. Paul doesn't live in the past regretting his defeats, v. 13b
- C. Paul lives in the moment to gain more of Christ, v. 13b
- D. Paul's is like a runner coming to the finish line, v. 14
- E. Paul anticipates the prize of total knowledge of Christ, v. 14
- F. Paul is called heavenward in Christ, v. 14

#4. SANCTIFICATION REQUIRES LIVING UP TO THE STANDARD WE HAVE ATTAINED, vv. 15-16

- A. Mature Christians realize they aren't perfect, v. 15
- B. Mature Christians will reflect on theology, v. 15
- C. Mature Christians let God show them the way, v. 15
- D. Mature Christians walk in the light they have attained, v. 16

#5. SANCTIFICATION REQUIRES THE EXAMPLE OF POSITIVE ROLE MODELS & AVOIDING NEGATIVE ONES, vv. 17-19

- A. Positive: Be imitators of Paul, & his team, v. 17
- B. Negative: Paul weeps over the destiny of the false teachers, v. 18
- C. Negative: They are enemies of the cross, v. 18
- D. Negative: Their end is destruction, v. 19
- E. Negative: Their god is their belly, v. 19
- F. Negative: Their glory is their shame, v. 19
- G. Negative: Their mind is set on earthly things, v. 19

#6. SANCTIFICATION IS COMPLETED AT THE COMING OF CHRIST, vv. 20-21

- A. Citizenship in heaven is finalized at the 2nd coming, v. 20
 - B. Christians wait for the Savior to return, v. 20
 - C. Christ will change our bodies from humiliation to glory, v. 21
 - D. Christ will subject all things to himself, v. 21
 - E. Christ will bring us to perfection—no more sin, v. 21 (Phil 1:6)
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TODAY'S SCRIPTURE
Philippians 3:10-21

I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,¹¹ and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.¹² Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.¹³ Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.¹⁵ All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you.¹⁶ Only let us live up to what we have already attained.¹⁷ Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take

note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. ¹⁸For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. ²⁰But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

Philippians 1:29-30: For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, ³⁰since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

Ephesians 2:4-6: But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-- it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,

Romans 6:3-5: Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. ⁵If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

2 Corinthians 4:10-12: We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. ¹²So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

#1. Discuss how the resurrection is both a present reality and a future event for the Christian.

#2. What does it mean to know the fellowship of Christ's suffering? (v. 10, Phil 1:29)

#3. What does Paul mean by becoming like Jesus in his death and somehow to attain to the resurrection? (vv. 10-11, 2 Cor 4:10-12)

#4. In what way(s) is growing in Christ like a marathon race?

#5. For what did Christ take hold of Paul when he became a Christian? How does this apply to every believer? (vv. 12-13, Acts 9:15-16)

#6. Why is it important in the believer's sanctification to avoid living in the past? (v. 13)

#7. What is the goal and the prize that Paul anticipates winning? (v. 14)

#8. In v. 15 Paul says mature believers should have a correct view of sanctification. What are some errors that have been taught regarding spiritual perfection?

#9. Discuss the description Paul sets forth of the false teachers. (vv. 18-19)

#10. Paul contrasts the false teachers with true believers who are citizens of heaven. Discuss the description Paul sets forth of citizens of heaven. (vv. 20-21)

#11. What is your takeaway from this teaching?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tuesday Bible Study at 6:30: a discussion of the previous sermon.

Wednesday prayer and study at 6:30. (access both by clicking the zoom link)

Fellowship Gathering at Garbolina Park: Saturday, October 24th, at 9am. We will be celebrating Elaina and Taylor's marriage while we visit with the church family.

Thank you for financially supporting the ministry of Hillcrest Church. You can give online or mail your check to the church.

- Give to the general fund (our operating expenses)
- Give to the elder's fund (to assist those in financial need)
- Give to the Great Commission fund (for the missionaries of the CMA)

If you need spiritual counseling during these crazy times don't hesitate to contact any of the elders:

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