

The letter to the Philippians is letter of tremendous encouragement and joy. Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit writes this letter to thank the church in Philippi for their support and to instruct them on the issue of unity. As we walk "step by step" through this letter I am confident that God will bless our time, study and discussion.

Philippians 3

V1 Paul now states what he has been longing to remind the Philippians of which is, *to rejoice in the Lord!* Paul then gives them instruction on how to truly rejoice in the Lord; even while in jail!

V2,3 Paul is addressing Jewish teachers who were adding on to the Gospel. (See also Acts 15:1-29) God's warning through Paul- is to *Beware* of false teachers who sound good, but what they are teaching is not good. Circumcision: Is a cutting away of the flesh, as an Old Testament outward sign of a covenant relationship. (New Testament Circumcision references: Romans 2:25-29, 4:9-12, Colossian 2:11-14)

V4-6 Paul now proceeds to disprove the false teachers. He is not boasting about who he is, he is merely comparing based upon their logic of righteousness which comes from human effort. If righteousness comes by human effort then according to their way of viewing people Paul would be the most qualified.

V7 Paul's summary is all that he inherited, all that he was taught, and all that he thought was righteous prior to knowing Jesus was of no value!

V8-11 Paul now realizes that the main thing is what God has done, not what Paul can do. Now the main thing is knowing *Christ Jesus my Lord*.

V9 There is no greater liberty and joy than to know that you are right with God because of God. Not our works, nor our bloodline, but by Him and Him alone!

V10 Paul desired to grow closer to Jesus; to know the power of His resurrection, to have the fellowship of suffering, and being conformed to his death by laying aside his own will to fully know God's.

Open Discussion: Verse 10

Discuss how we *know Him and the power of His resurrection* _____

and the fellowship of his sufferings, _____

being conformed to His death. _____

V11 I believe Paul is referring to resurrection life in this life. He knew of the life to come (1:21-23) yet he longed to be more surrendered, more submitted, more of a servant like Jesus. The reality is that the closer we get to Jesus the more clearly we see our need of more of Him. It is kind of simple, the more light the easier it is to see the impurities. Paul did not recoil at the knowledge of his sin, he desired more of Jesus and less of self.

V12-14 What a wonderful mindset: Honesty, determination, forward-looking, knowing the true source of where his strength came from.

Honesty: “*not that I have already attained..*” The truth was not depressing to Paul rather it motivated him to know God more.

Determination: “*I press on...*” (2 Corinthians 11:23-33) Gives us a glimpse of what Paul went through while serving. This ‘drive’ was fueled by the reality that is revealed in (2 Corinthians 5:14,15.)

Forward-looking: “*reaching forward to those things which are ahead..*” Building from the past while looking forward to the future. Many Christians get caught in the past and can’t progress toward the goal.

Goal-Oriented: “*I press toward the goal...*” Not task driven or imbalanced. Paul was able to fix his eyes on a target and move towards it. It is clear from the context of this letter that Paul knew that his strength was in God alone. (4:13, 3:10, 1:6)

V15,16 Paul realized that he was not competing nor comparing himself against other believers. Each of us must walk in the knowledge we have been given, with the desire to know more (2 Peter 3:18).

V17 See 1Timothy 4:12-15.

V18,19 Paul had seen many walk away from simplicity that is in Christ. Clearly this tugged at his heart yet he had to ‘call it like it is’ concerning false teaching and selfish motives. What would Paul have to say about many Christian conversations today?

V20-21 In contrast to an earthy perspective we are to remember who we are in Christ. This place is not home and we should long for His return, heaven, and our new heavenly bodies. (2 Co.5:1-11)

My Memory Verse for this week: _____