

An Exposition of Philippians

Lesson #11 3:15-21

Preceding Context: In lesson #10 we saw that we are “in Christ”, made possible by the work of Christ dying on the cross to pay for our sins as a substitutionary blood sacrifice in full payment of our sin debt to the Father. The lesson then focused on the consequences of such a salvation, namely that we are now slaves to Christ, not free men of the world. Here we were introduced to that old doctrine of “Mortification” of our flesh in this life. We learned that the appropriate and entirely normal function of the Christian is to actively “press on” to attain that for which Christ Jesus laid hold of me in bringing me into the family of God. There are glorious, spiritual riches that we now possess who are “in Christ”. Our lives need to deny our old flesh and seek the glory of God and of Christ as we live out this life.

Sanctification requires diligent work, but such work must be empowered by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us.

Scripture Text NASU	Commentary
<p>3:15 <i>Let us therefore, as many as are <u>perfect</u>, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you;</i></p>	<p>Key Words: <i>perfect</i> – to be mature in your faith and in your life. (See Lesson #02, vs. 6)</p> <p>Exposition: Those of us who are mature in the faith are to have an attitude that reflects vs. 14 - <i>I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.</i> In the death of Jesus the Christ, we who are effectually called by God to salvation, are called upward to a great and glorious reward. We are to be mature in our faith, not little children. We are to be shaping our attitude to accept difficulties with joy and to maintain an attitude of joy in God’s perfect plans for us. If we are not there yet, we are to submit to those plans and God will reveal a new attitude in our own soul.</p>
<p>Cross Reference(s): 1 Cor 2:6-10 <i>Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; ⁷but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory; ⁸the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; ⁹but just as it is written, "THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND WHICH HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM." Isa 64:4 ¹⁰For^(TV "But") to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.</i></p>	
<p>16 <i>however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained.</i></p>	<p>Key Words: None</p> <p>Exposition: Because we are to be mature in the faith, because we are to have a different attitude, one revealed to us by God in His Word and by His Holy Spirit, nevertheless, we are to live by the power of grace that brought us to God in the first place. This new “standard” of our life is taught in Scripture and illuminated to us by the indwelling Holy Spirit of God.</p>
<p>Cross Reference(s): Col 2:6-7 <i>Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, ⁷having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with^(TV - in it with) gratitude.</i></p>	
<p>17 <i>Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the <u>pattern</u> you have in us.</i></p>	<p>Key Words: <i>pattern</i> <i>τυπον</i> <i>τυπον</i> (Str. 2532) 15x noun meaning a pattern, a model, an example from the idea of making an impression with a mold or a tool.</p> <p>Exposition: Paul here establishes himself as a pattern to follow in order to move towards Christ-likeness in one’s pursuit of sanctification. He exhorts these Philippian saints to follow his example, and to look to those saints who follow Paul’s pattern to walk according to that pattern.</p>
<p>Cross Reference(s):</p>	

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Php 4:8-9 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. ⁹The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

18 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ,

Key Words: *enemies* εχθρους echthrous (Str. 2190) 32x a noun meaning one opposed to another by actions such as hatred, persecution, and/or bodily harm.

Exposition: Paul has warned the Philippians numerous times about the **danger of false teachers** with great passion and concern. These false teachers are enemies of the cross. Enemies of the cross suggests that their teaching had in some significant way compromised the nature of Christ's suffering for our sin. Even today there are numerous evangelical leaders (theologians, pastors, professors, etc.) who deny the "substitutionary blood atonement" accomplished by Christ on the cross.

Cross Reference(s):

2 Cor 11:12-15 But what I am doing I will continue to do, so that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting. ¹³For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

Key Words: None

Exposition: These same false teachers are headed to hell. They may appear godly, but their true nature is their appetite for earthly things and earthly wisdom. Their present glory in the church is in fact their very shamefulness.

Cross Reference(s):

Rom 8:5-8 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, ⁷because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, ⁸and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

Key Words: citizenship πολιτευμα politeuma (Str. 4175) 1x belonging to a commonwealth, a privilege of being a citizen

Exposition: As opposed to the false teachers, our grounding belief system is based on a spiritual understanding of a transcendent world beyond earthly things. We eagerly wait (place our certain hope) in the return of our Savior, Priest, and King, Jesus the Christ. We are not of this world. We are in fact striving to be dead to it.

Cross Reference(s):

Col 3:1-11 Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. ³For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. ⁵Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. ⁶For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, ⁷and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. ⁹Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, ¹⁰and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him — ¹¹a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.

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21 who will *transform* the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

Key Words: *transform* μετασχηματισει *metaschematisei* (Str. 3345) 5x meaning to remodel, to transfigure, to transform oneself.

Exposition: Jesus Christ is the one who will transform our humble body to conform with His glorious body. The power to do this is based on the same power and authority that He has, which is more than sufficient to subject all things to Himself. He is the King of all Kings, the Lord of all Lords. He is the sovereign God of eternity past and eternity future. His provision to bring glory to His brothers and sisters is far more than sufficient to accomplish all and every one of His preferences!

Cross Reference(s):

1 Cor 15:20-28 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. ²¹For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. ²²For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. ²³But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, ²⁴then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. ²⁶The last enemy that will be abolished is death. ²⁷For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET.^{Ps 8:6} But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted^(the Father) who put all things in subjection to Him. ²⁸When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.

Some Important Quotes

Regarding vs. 18 & 19 above:

Love - for the truth and for souls - demands such a response to dangerous falsehoods (to withhold both hospitality and honor from teachers who deny essential matters of the Christian faith - 2 Jn 10-11). To the postmodern mind that may seem like no love at all, but it embodies the best, deepest love for Christ. May we learn what it means to ground our love in the truth, and may we not succumb to the pressure of our age to spurn or subjugate Christ's truth under a false and foggy notion of love.

Phil Johnson; *TableTalk of 3/15*; p. 65

Natural man cannot have a principle of the beauty and the amiableness of holiness simply because he has no idea of its existence. The natural man cannot see because "he has not the ideas in the mind," that is, any awareness of the beauty and loveliness of God. The disclosure of the moral beauties of God is a matter of a "divine and supernatural light" revealed in the innermost recesses of the soul. It enraptures, ravishes with desire, and floods the soul with true delight. The lost individual is not in this desperate condition because he/she is without sufficient faculties of reason and will. No, it is because, in the state of adversity to God and His beauty, he/she responds with vileness and contempt. Humanity is without true mental awareness of the true God. People do not have a knowledge of God as He truly is, so they simply cannot embrace what, to them at least, is nonexistent! **John D. Hannah;** from *The Coming Evangelical Crisis*; p. 160

God is not glorified when His ministers decide which parts of His truth are appropriate and which parts are not. The gospel cannot be chopped up into bits and pieces with the parts that offend the natural man taken out. That is no longer a gospel that saves, for the natural man must be offended for God uses that offense to bring him to his knees before the cross and the throne. The church is damaged for it ends up filled with driftwood, with rebellious religious hypocrites who have salved their consciences enough to hang around but have not been convinced enough to be converted.

James R. White; *Pulpit Crimes*; p. 67