

Philippians – Week 7 – Life Recounted – Bible Study Helps

Sermon Summary: This sermon explores the Apostle Paul's transformation and spiritual journey as described in Philippians 3. It emphasizes the importance of valuing Christ above all earthly accomplishments, pursuing a deeper relationship with Him, and living with a heavenly perspective. The sermon encourages believers to forget past failures, press forward in faith, and prioritize knowing Christ intimately.

Key Points:

- Paul's past religious achievements were counted as loss compared to knowing Christ
- True value is found in knowing Christ, experiencing His resurrection power, and sharing in His sufferings
- Believers should forget what is behind and press on toward the goal of Christlikeness
- Christians should live with a heavenly mindset, anticipating Christ's return
- Confidence should be placed in Christ, not in personal accomplishments or religious performance

Scripture Reference:

- Philippians 3:1-21

Stories:

- An anecdote about a small child asking for full attention by saying "Give me your face," illustrating how God wants our complete focus
- Reference to Moses choosing to suffer with God's people rather than enjoy the treasures of Egypt
- Mention of Joshua and Caleb's faith in pressing forward to the Promised Land despite others' doubts
- Abraham living in tents while looking forward to a heavenly city

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Discipleship and Small Group Guide: Life Recounted

Opening Prayer

Key Scripture: Philippians 3:1-21

Discussion Questions:

1. What stood out to you most from the sermon? Why?
2. The apostle Paul talks about counting his past achievements as loss for the sake of Christ. What are some things in your life that you've had to "count as loss" to follow Jesus?
3. How do you practically pursue knowing Christ more deeply in your daily life?
4. The sermon mentioned the importance of "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before" (Phil 3:13). What are some past experiences or mistakes that you struggle to let go of? How might holding onto these hinder your spiritual growth?
5. How does having a heavenly mindset change the way we live our lives on earth?

Key Takeaways:

1. Our relationship with Christ is more valuable than any worldly achievement or status.
2. We should continually pursue knowing Christ more deeply, not resting on past spiritual experiences.
3. Moving forward in our faith requires letting go of past failures and focusing on Christ.
4. Our ultimate hope is in Christ's return and our future glorification.

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Practical Applications:

1. Take time this week to evaluate your priorities. Are there any areas where you're placing too much value on worldly things instead of Christ?
2. Practice "forgetting those things which are behind" by writing down a past failure or regret, praying and giving it over to God, and letting it go as you discard it.
3. Set a specific goal to deepen your relationship with Christ this week (e.g., extra prayer time, memorizing Scripture, serving others).
4. Share with the group one way you can be more "heavenly minded" in your daily life this coming week.

Closing Prayer

Encourage group members to pray for each other in pursuing Christ and letting go of past hindrances.

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Discipleship Questions

How has your understanding of what truly matters in life changed since becoming a Christian, and in what ways have you 'counted all things but loss' for Christ?

Paul speaks of wanting to know Christ more deeply and experience the 'power of His resurrection.' What practical steps can we take to deepen our relationship with Christ and tap into His power in our daily lives?

How do you balance the tension between striving for spiritual growth and recognizing that you haven't 'already attained' perfection, as Paul describes?

In what areas of your life do you find it most challenging to 'forget those things which are behind' and 'press toward the mark,' and how can you overcome those obstacles?

Paul warns about false teachers and those who have 'confidence in the flesh.' How can we discern between genuine spiritual guidance and misleading religious practices or teachings in today's world?

How does the concept of experiencing 'the fellowship of His sufferings' impact your perspective on trials and difficulties in your Christian walk?

Paul speaks of being 'heavenly minded.' How can we cultivate a heavenly perspective while still effectively engaging with our earthly responsibilities and relationships?

In what ways might you be putting confidence in your own 'religious heritage, achievements, or self-righteousness' rather than fully trusting in Christ's work?

How does the anticipation of Christ's return and our future resurrection bodies influence your priorities and decision-making in the present?

Paul emphasizes the importance of pursuing Christ-likeness as a lifelong journey. How can we encourage and support one another in this pursuit within our church community?

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A 5-day Bible reading plan and devotional guide

Day 1: Treasuring Christ Above All

Reading: Philippians 3:7-11

Devotional: Paul's words in Philippians 3 challenge us to reevaluate what we truly value in life. He counted all his impressive religious credentials as loss compared to knowing Christ. Today, reflect on what you consider most valuable in your life. Are there things you're holding onto that might be hindering your relationship with Jesus? Ask God to help you treasure Christ above all else, seeing everything else as secondary. Consider how you might know Christ in a more personal way today - through prayer, studying His Word, or serving others for Him. Remember, the goal isn't just intellectual knowledge, but a deep, personal relationship with our Savior.

Day 2: The Power of Christ's Resurrection

Reading: Romans 8:11-17

Devotional: Paul desired to know the power of Christ's resurrection. This same power that raised Jesus from the dead now lives in every believer through the Holy Spirit. Often, we live defeated Christian lives, forgetting the incredible power available to us. Today, meditate on areas where you feel powerless - perhaps in overcoming sin, facing trials, or sharing your faith. Ask God to help you tap into His resurrection power. Remember, you're not relying on your own strength, but on the mighty power of God. How might your life look different if you truly lived in the reality of Christ's resurrection power each day?

Day 3: Fellowship in Christ's Sufferings

Reading: 1 Peter 4:12-19

Devotional: It may seem strange that Paul desired to share in Christ's sufferings, but he understood that identifying with Christ meant experiencing both His glory and His suffering. As followers of Jesus, we're called to take up our cross daily. This doesn't mean seeking out suffering, but being willing to endure hardship for Christ's sake. Reflect on times when following Jesus has been difficult. How did those experiences draw you closer to Him? Ask God for the strength to remain faithful in trials, knowing that sharing in Christ's sufferings also means sharing in His comfort and ultimately His glory.

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Day 4: Pressing Forward in Faith

Reading: Hebrews 12:1-3

Devotional: Paul's exhortation to forget what is behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead is a powerful reminder for our spiritual journey. It's easy to get bogged down by past failures, regrets, or even past successes. But God calls us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. Today, identify anything from your past that's holding you back spiritually. Surrender it to God, asking Him to help you let it go. Then, consider what pressing forward looks like in your life right now. What spiritual goals is God calling you to pursue? Take a step today towards those goals, trusting in God's grace to sustain you.

Day 5: Heavenly Citizenship

Reading: Colossians 3:1-4

Devotional: Paul reminds us that our true citizenship is in heaven, and we eagerly await our Savior from there. This heavenly perspective should radically alter how we live our earthly lives. When we're heavenly minded, we become less attached to worldly things and more focused on eternal values. Today, examine your priorities and daily choices. Do they reflect your identity as a citizen of heaven? Ask God to help you live with eternity in view. This doesn't mean neglecting your earthly responsibilities, but rather fulfilling them with heavenly purpose. How might your interactions with others, your work ethic, or your use of resources change if you consistently remembered your heavenly citizenship?