

Phil.3:12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

3:13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,

3:14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

3:15 Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.

3:16 Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.

3:17 Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.

3:18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:

3:19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.

3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

3:21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

From today's sermon.

In last week's sermon, Paul said, “For I consider all things as loss because of the great value of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. In the last week, Paul said, “For the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord is of such great value that I consider all things as a loss. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection, and to be partakers of his sufferings, and to become one with his death, that I may somehow attain to the resurrection from the dead.

And in today's passage he also says this.

He was a wanderer before he met Christ, but now he lives by the power of Christ and His resurrection. But as today's passage says, he lived mightily as a servant of Christ and manifested many of God's works, but he “does not say that he has already obtained them or that he has already become perfect, but that he is only pursuing to catch up.” He does so “because he is caught up in Christ Jesus.

He says that it is only when he is caught up in Christ and held firmly in the Lord's hand that he goes on, and that it is absurd for him to think that he himself has attained perfection. Is discipline meaningless then? He says, “Only that we have attained. And so, as we walk, looking up to our heavenly home, we look forward to the day when, with His coming, “He will change

our lowly body into the same form as His own glorious body.

Good morning, everyone.

The mornings and evenings have become much cooler. I hope all is well with you.

In another two months, we will be offering Christmas services, and I have a feeling that this year will go by with a whimper. I pray that each day of this good fall season will be healthy and fruitful.

Now we are at the end of the third chapter of the book of Philippians, and only one chapter remains after that.

In last week's passage, we read Paul's retrospective of his former self.

3:3 For we are the circumcision, who worship in the spirit of God, boasting in Christ Jesus and not in the flesh.

3:4 For if any man ask of the flesh, I have none to ask of the flesh: but if any man ask of the Spirit, he shall receive the gift of the Spirit. If any man saith that he dependeth on the flesh, I depend more on it.

3:5 I am a man circumcised on the eighth day, a man of the nation of Israel, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew among Hebrews, a Pharisee according to the law,

3:6 a persecutor of the church in respect of zeal, and a man without fault as to the righteousness of the law.

3:7 But these things which were profitable to me I have come to regard as loss because of Christ.

3:8 I have gone further, and count all things as loss because of the great value of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. I have lost everything because of Christ, but I consider them as dirt. 3:9 For I am not justified by the law, but by the knowledge of Christ Jesus,

3:9 That I may receive not my righteousness which is by the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God which is by faith; that I may find myself in Christ.

The immense value of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. How wonderful is the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord! This changed his life. He did not consider any loss to be a loss. Rather, what he once considered a gain or a good thing, he now considers a loss because of Christ.

He has come to see himself in Christ, “not having a righteousness of his own through the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness of God which is by faith, so that

he may find himself in Christ. I used to be selfish. I was selfish in my understanding of the law. And I was wandering. I kept seeking, but I had nothing in my hand. But now I have “found myself in Christ. Here is Paul's assurance, his joy, his assurance, his joy, his peace.

3:10 For I have known Christ and the power of his resurrection, and have partaken of his sufferings, and have become one with his death,

3:11 For I would that I might somehow attain unto the resurrection from the dead.

The power of resurrection is at work in Christ. Paul was in prison, and perhaps a dark cloud hung over his future. He was conscious of death. But he was more aware of the power of the resurrection.

3:12 I do not say that I have already obtained it, or that I have already become perfect, but only that I am pursuing it to catch it. I do so because I am caught up in Christ Jesus.

And looking back over the sum total of his life, he still says, “I do not say that I have already obtained it, or that I have already become perfect, but I am pursuing after it only to catch it. These are truly meaningful words. As I quoted those words earlier, he was seeking “not his own righteousness by the law, but the righteousness which is through faith in Christ. He was convinced that he was justified by his good works and could find no fault in them, but he was shown to be very wrong. He found himself in Christ. He wanted to be partaker of His sufferings, to become one with His death, and to somehow attain the resurrection from the dead. He says that he knows Christ and the power of His resurrection.

3:12 Not that I say that I have already obtained it, or that I have already become perfect, but only that I am pursuing it to catch it. I do so because I am caught up in Christ Jesus.

I am not perfect, I am not caught up in trying to be caught up, but I am in the pursuit of being caught up in trying to be caught up. How do you all feel about such a way of being? Do you think that if you cannot see the goal, there is no point in doing it? Do you think that if you cannot reach the goal, everything is futile and uncertain? But at the end of verse 12, it says, “But if you do not see the goal, what is the point of doing it?

But at the end of verse 12, it says, “For I am caught up together with Christ Jesus, that I might lay hold of him.

It is not that we are trying to catch ourselves, but that God is catching us, and Jesus is catching

us, even if we cannot catch ourselves, and we are trying to catch ourselves.

Jesus holds us in His hands and protects us. We may be so far away, so far away that we cannot see the white line at the finish line, but if Jesus is with us, if He is helping us, if He is holding us fast, then we can follow that journey and go. If Jesus is with us, if He helps us, if He holds us fast, then we can follow that journey.

3:13 Brethren. I do not think that I have already caught him. I am only striving for this one thing. 3:14 Forgetting what is behind, and stretching out my body toward what is ahead, I am working on this one thing only,

3:14 Running toward the goal, striving to obtain the prize of God who calls us up in Christ Jesus.

There were many things behind Paul. There were times when he pursued righteousness and boasted of himself in the fall. He would have been proud of the prosperity of his ministry. But now his goal had changed to Jesus Christ Himself. He forgets what is behind, and while stretching his body toward what is ahead, he runs with his eyes on his goal, striving to obtain the prize of God who calls him above in Christ Jesus.

Christ Jesus is his goal. He is a divine being who seems to be far ahead of us as a destination to reach. But when we go forward with him as our goal, we will eventually be raised to the point, where we will receive our prize. Eventually there will be a reward waiting for us in heaven for seeing Jesus and not leaving him.

3:15 Therefore, all the whole people among us should think that way. But if you think differently, God will show you that also.

3:16 But we should go on according to what we have attained.

The whole person among us, the one who has fully grown and matured, should think that way: "I do not say that I have already obtained it, or that I have already become perfect, but only that I am pursuing to catch it. We should just "go on according to what we have attained. Even though we may walk imperfectly, groping our way forward as if we have not yet gained, have not yet reached, or are incomplete, we are comforted by the fact that there is also a place where we have attained. We can say that we don't know yet, that we haven't gained anything yet, that we don't understand yet, and yet we also have reached a point where we have reached. Even though the path of a gentle spiral staircase may seem monotonous, and the path may

seem to go around and around the same places, repeating the same things over and over again with no progress, when we realize that the scenery outside is completely different from the world below, we do not say that we have already attained it or that we have already become perfect. The Bible tells us that there is a life that we have attained in the days of our life with Jesus, caught up in Him. The Bible tells us to go on in that experience and in the teaching of thanksgiving and grace. We may feel the same all the time, but we are never the same. We are growing. We are growing because Christ holds us captive.

3:17 Brethren. Please be imitators of me. And look to those who walk according to our example, who are being made examples to you.

Today's passage begins with the words "seize" and "pursue. Then came the word "think," followed by the word "walk," or go on with life. We are caught up in the love and protection of Christ. With that in mind and with that in our hearts, we desire to walk through life and define our own actions, keeping our eyes on Christ and on those who are imitating Him.

3:18 I say this because there are many who walk in opposition to the cross of Christ. I have often spoken of them to you, and now I speak again with tears.

3:19 Their end is destruction. Their god is their belly, their glory is their shame, their thoughts are earthly things.

What does it mean to live without following Christ? It is a way of life that disregards the atoning cross of Christ, the forgiveness of sins, does not acknowledge one's own sins, and lives a self-centered life with one's own thoughts as one's own God. It is a worldly, ephemeral, self-centered way of life. It is a way of life that has no regard for God or neighbor. It is a way of life that pursues one's own desires. It is a way of life that leads to ruin and destruction. Paul tearfully tells us not to return to such a way of life. Paul tearfully tells us not to return to such a life, for it is a life of denying Christ and making Him our enemy.

3:20 But our nationality is in heaven. From there we look forward to the coming of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

3:21 He will change our lowly body into the same form as his glorious body by the working of his power, which is able to subdue all things unto himself.

It is not all about our lifetime here on earth. Our citizenship is in heaven, where we have our nationality and our place, and from there we look forward to the Lord's coming for us.

Our lowly body. Even in the midst of our shameful and disgraceful baseness, even in the midst of our shabbiness, which we seek, long for, pursue, but fail to reach, and sometimes even regress, repeating the same thing over and over again, He will eventually transform it into the same form as His own glorious body in heaven. We are encouraged by the fact that we have been given that time when God will transform us into His glorious body in heaven, and we say, "Be imitators of me. And look to those who walk according to our example, who are being made examples to you." Let us forget the latter things, and while stretching out our bodies toward the former things, let us run toward our goal, striving to obtain the prize of God who calls us above in Christ Jesus. Let us go forward and live our lives, striving to obtain the prize of God who calls us above in Christ Jesus.

Prayer; Heavenly Father, thank you for today's worship. God, even though we are imperfect, He is always leading us in Your hands without changing or abandoning us. Please continue to catch us, continue to lead us in the power of resurrection, and at the time of the Lord's coming, transform our imperfect state into the same form as His glorious body, and let us live in peace as those who have the nationality of heaven forever. Please lead all sufferers into God's salvation and peace. Bless our families and the people in our community. Use us. We pray in the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.