



# Philippians

Living in the Joy of Knowing Christ!

**The Joy of Knowing Our Savior!**

**Philippians 3:17-21**

Message #12 of 16 – S999

**Sermon given on June 5, 2022**



Sunday Morning Service

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# The Joy of Knowing Our Savior!

## *Philippians 3:17-21*

### Opening Comments

- Turn to **Philippians 3**
- Today, we continue our series through the book of **Philippians – Living in the Joy of Knowing Christ!**
- We read, study, and obey the Bible because it is the lamp that lights our way in the darkness around us
- It is the only source of true joy, peace, and hope
- Now was the right time for us all to go through Paul's letter to the Philippians
- I know it has ministered to my soul and I pray that it has yours also
- Let's pray and then look at a few verses
- **Pray**

### Teaching

- **The Joy of Knowing Our Savior!**
- In this text Paul is going to give us an example to follow – a warning to watch out for – and a hope to cling to
- First – **An Example to Follow**
- **Philippians 3:17**
- Paul's one desire was to know Christ perfectly (Phil. 3:8-12).
- Paul is calling all who read these words to a lifelong pursuit of knowing Christ better.
- He confessed that he had not achieved that level of perfection
- That call peaked with his declaration of single-minded purpose

### **Philippians 3:13-14**

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

- Paul's call is an ever upward journey toward Christlikeness, toward God, and toward heaven.
- Paul was not one to seek the attention of others for personal gain or recognition.

- And yet, here he is pushing himself out to the front and calling others to follow his example.
- Only the inspiration of the Holy Spirit would compel a man like Paul to do that.
- But then he also says, look for other people who are doing the same things he is and imitate them
- It is often easier to improve at something when we have a good model to follow
- **Second – A Warning to Watch Out for**
- **Philippians 3:18**
- First, Paul calls them to walk in a manner that is worthy of the gospel that saved them.
- Then he warns them to watch out for those who are not.
- This is a warning about people who claim to be Christians but are not pursuing knowing Christ but are instead leading people away from Christ.
- Apostate Christians have been around the church from its very beginning.
- We must always be on guard against them.
- Notice Paul’s reaction to the ‘enemies of the cross of Christ’ – not anger or frustration, but weeping.
- It should make us sad that someone is not in a right relationship to God, especially those who claim to be Christians.
- Paul’s tears may also be because he knows the damage such people can do in the church.
- They are headed toward destruction and ruin, and they are taking people with them.
- Paul has some harsh things to say about these apostate Christians
- **Philippians 3:19**
- ‘whose end is destruction’ – This could mean that they are lost.
- They may have acted like Christians but had never surrendered their life to Christ in true repentance.
- Their eternal destiny is the infinite never-ending destruction of hell.
- It might also refer to apostate Christians.

- They are walking in a way that is contrary to the word of God.
- An example of this would be an openly gay Christian.
- They might make it to heaven, but they will leave a wake of destruction throughout their life.
- ‘their god is their belly’ – The belly is literally interpreted as ‘stomach’ but also is symbolic of the center of desire, physical passions, and earthly pleasures.
- Rather than turning to God for satisfaction, they allow their ‘belly’ to guide and direct them.
- There is no higher power than their own desires.
- This is the primary motivation behind the pro-abortion movement.
- Many of them acknowledge that the baby is a living being but its right to life is trumped by their desire to be free to do what they want.
- They claim that bodily autonomy gives them the unquestionable right to do whatever they want with their body and that no one has a right to force them to do anything with their body without their express permission.
- ‘glory is their shame’ – the things they are glorying in are things they ought to be ashamed of.

**Shame: a painful emotion caused by consciousness of guilt, shortcoming, or impropriety; a condition of humiliating disgrace or disrepute.**

- June 2022 – National Dairy Month (1937) Pride Week – people parading and celebrating what they ought to be ashamed of.
- Why aren’t they ashamed? Because their god is their belly!
- Their desires or feelings rule their lives and determine the course of their lives.
- They set their mind on earthly things – they don’t give any thought to God or eternity.
- Only now and what they want now matters.
- This helps to explain how transgenderism can even exist.
- To be transgender one must deny the reality of gender and biology and create a delusion out of desires and feelings.
- Because their minds are set on earthly things, that is all they can think about.
- They are carnally minded **Romans 8:5-8**

**For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.**

- It is inconceivable to them to think about heavenly things because they have no basis for thinking any other way than the way they do.
- Humans were created to worship God
- If you reject God, must still worship –worship the god of their belly
- Only the Spirit of God can breathe life into them – pray for that
- Paul goes on to explain why we can live in this wrong way, earthly world but have a heavenly attitude.
- **Third - A Hope to Cling to**
- **Philippians 3:20**
- Paul called them to a relentless pursuit of ‘the upward call of God in Christ Jesus’ and then encouraged them to find good examples of people who were doing that and imitate them and then warned them to watch out for those who were not doing it.
- Paul then describes the basis on which we can do that.
- ‘our citizenship is in heaven’ – In **Philippians 1:27** Paul used a word with the same root when he exhorted them to live worthy of the gospel.

**Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel...**

- The word ‘conduct’ is literally ‘to live as a citizen’.
- Philippi was a Roman colony. They depended upon Caesar to take care of them and to rescue them if they got into trouble.
- Paul is saying that while they were living in Philippi, they were citizens of heaven.
- Paul would say to us, even though we are citizens of the United States, we are also citizens of heaven
- The question we have to ask ourselves is, ‘Which one has the highest place in our heart?’
- The Bible tells us to stand fast in this crazy world
- That is only possible if your citizenship in heaven is your highest obligation

- Jesus died on the cross to make it possible for you to be a citizen of heaven
- What has President Biden or the government done for you?
- ‘we also eagerly wait for the Savior...’ –
- How eager are we in our waiting? My grandkids, Aurora and Harvey heard their cousins Liam and Lilianna were coming to visit.
- Every fifteen or twenty minutes one of them would come out and ask if there were here yet.
- They were eagerly awaiting their cousins.
- Do you wake up every morning and hope that today is the day Jesus comes back? You should!
- Or are you looking forward to something or someone in this world more than that
- Do you secretly hope Jesus won’t come back today so that you can \_\_\_\_\_?
- No matter how good your life is – eternity with Jesus in heaven is infinitely better – Do you believe that? Do you live like you believe that?
- This next verse can help you to do that
- **Philippians 3:21**
- ‘transform’ – The bodies we are given in this life are not designed for eternity or heaven.
- They can only exist in this world.
- This is one of the ‘exceedingly great and precious promises’ (2 Pet. 1:3-4) of our faith.
- Maybe it is a function of age, but this is more appealing every day
- Turn to **1 Corinthians 15**
- ‘conformed to His glorious body’
- This is the fulfillment of **Romans 8:29**  
**For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.**
- And **1 Corinthians 15:49**  
**And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.**
- Our current physical body is subject to sin, disease, injury, and death.

- When Jesus comes back for us, He will give us a body like the body He has now – one that will last forever and is able to exist in God’s presence in heaven
- Paul talked about that
- **1 Corinthians 15:51-54**
- Jesus will do that for all of us who call upon His name by faith
- This world we are living in is messed up
- People are parading around celebrating what they ought to be ashamed of
- There are forces at work who are trying to pollute and corrupt the minds of children by indoctrinating them into perverse sexual ideologies
- Babies are not safe in their mother’s wombs
- Many are struggling to define something as simple as what a woman is
- And those who have the audacity to say that such things are wrong are called bigots, racists, and hate-mongers
- As the world goes crazy, we need to pause and remind ourselves – our citizenship is in heaven and Jesus is coming back to get us
- And armed with that truth we stand in this crazy world as examples of truth and godly perseverance
- We live lives that shine the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ out into the darkness
- And every day we wake up and hope that today is the day Jesus comes back
- And every day, we press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus
- Every day letting go a little more of what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead
- Maybe today is the day! I hope so!
- And if not, it is another day to live for Jesus!
- **Pray**