

Living Into The Future – Teaching Notes

(Philippians 3:7-16; 8/15/10)

Introduction: A key idea in today's lesson is that Paul counts his past loss and his future dedicated to growing closer to the Lord. Prayerfully, we will be challenged to look past those things that are behind us and focus on drawing closer to the Lord.

Body:

Read Philippians 3:7-9

I. Counting the Cost. Paul talks to the Philippians believers about how all that he has is loss and dung, except for that which relates to him drawing closer to Christ. Paul was very religious before he accepted Christ. He has suffered since he has met Christ. But He is yet focused on Christ.

Applications –

- **Perspective.** Notice in vss. 7-8 that Paul considered everything except Jesus to be loss. Not only is this true of things like cash, cars, credentials, and contacts, but it is also true of religion. No matter how accomplished we are in church work and famous among church people, without Christ it is all loss. *Let's make sure that we keep things in perspective.* We ought to be wise and profitable stewards of the things of this world that God puts in our trust. We should be in positions of influence in the Lord's church. However, without Christ, we have nothing that will help us with eternal life. Without Christ, we have nothing that will help us at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

- **Knowing Jesus as Savior and Lord.** Notice in vs. 8 that Paul was focused on winning Christ. Included in Paul's "winning Christ" are the ideas of accepting Christ as Savior and Lord. *Let's make sure we are focused on Jesus being our Savior and Lord.* When Christ is our Savior by faith, we don't have to fear death anymore. We truly have a much better place to go. When Christ is our Lord, we don't have to know everything. We simply have to obey the Lord's instructions and trust Him for the results. For example, we can simply strive to love everyone and trust God to handle what people do with our love. We can simply give our tithes and trust God to make up the short fall, in our income. The Lord is responsible for those who trust and obey Him.

Read Philippians 3:10-12

II. Setting the Goals. Paul expresses his concern with knowing more of Christ. He wants to get even closer to Him. He feels as if he has been called for such a purpose.

Applications –

- **Closer relationship with Jesus.** Notice in vs. 10 that Paul wanted to know Jesus, the power of the resurrection, and the fellowship of suffering with Jesus. In other words, Paul wanted a close relationship with Jesus. He was aware that such closeness may well include suffering. However, it also included resurrection. *Let's work on developing a closer relationship/fellowship with Christ.* We should know on the front end that suffering is likely. However, if we stay close to Christ, not only will we suffer like He did, but we will be resurrected as He was. The decision to deny and dedicate ourselves to divine directions will prove to be of foundational importance, as we strive to live by this application.

- **God's expectations of those He has called.** Notice in vs. 12 that Paul was aware that God has plans for his life. Paul was apprehended/obtained so that he could apprehend/obtain a closer walk with Jesus. It is also true that God has saved us, so that we can be closer to God. *Let's strive to live up to God's expectations for calling us.* Every believer is called by God to be a disciple and to do a great work for the Lord. We should focus on being a strong disciple, finding the great work that God has for us to do, and then do it with all that we have. The great work may not be that of preaching or singing. God may be calling you to help drive the van, work with the media equipment, work with the children and youth, or any number of things. In addition to what God is calling us to do in the church family/body, God is calling us to make a positive contribution in our communities.

Read Philippians 3:13-16

III. Pressing Forward. Paul talks about forgetting the things that are behind him. He is focused on pressing towards the mark and prize that God has set before him. He urges a like mindedness among his readers.

Applications –

- **Pressing for God's mark.** Notice in vss. 13-14 that Paul was aware that he was not where he should be. Consequently, he resolved to forget what was behind him and to press towards God's mark, so he could receive God's prize. None of us are all that God is calling us to be. With this realization should come our resolve to forget the good and bad of yesterday that may impede or slow down our forward progress. Furthermore, we should press with great vigor towards what God is calling us to do. There is a prize and great blessings for obeying God's will for our lives. *Let's work on pressing for the blessed mark/expectation that God has set for us.* For example, we should be pressing to be studying, serving, and giving disciples. Those who are married should be pressing to be loving husbands or submissive wives. We should all be pressing to be bright lights and useful salt in our communities and with the less fortunate.

- **Same mindedness.** Notice in vss. 15-16 that Paul urges his readers to have the same mindset that he has been elaborating upon. It is hard enough to live out the idea of being the body of Christ when we all have the same mindset. It is unnecessarily difficult to be the body of Christ, when we don't share the same mindset. *Let's work on having the same mind to grow in the Lord.* Everyone going through the same teaching sessions and committing to living by what is being taught is a strong step in the right direction. The reason for Membership Orientation, Discipleship Orientation, and Leadership Orientation classes should be obvious.

Conclusion: Let us work on looking past those things that are behind us and focusing on drawing closer to the Lord. God has much for those who obey His will.