

New Morning Magical

Chasing the prize

Today we return to the Apostle Paul's letter to the Philippians, beginning again in Chapter 3, and we're in verse 12:

12 Not that I already obtained, or am already perfected. Yet I am pursuing, if I may be grasping also that for which I was grasped also by Christ Jesus.

13 Brethren, not as yet am I reckoning myself to have grasped, yet one thing -- forgetting, indeed, those things which are behind, yet stretching out to those in front --

14 toward the goal am I pursuing for the prize of God's calling above in Christ Jesus.

"I haven't arrived yet," Paul says in verse 12, *"but I'm leaving behind what IS behind and reaching out in front. I'm chasing after the prize that the Father has called me toward in Christ."* If anyone knew what the prize was, it was Paul. He understood it and pursued it like no other, so you and I can read his words today and realize that we are doing the same thing. We too know that we haven't arrived; it's all too obvious sometimes, isn't it? The most important lesson for us here is to leave the past behind and press on forward with Christ until He returns.

15 Whoever, then, are mature, may be disposed to this, and if in anything you are differently disposed, this also shall God reveal to you.

Jump to verse 17:

17 Become imitators together of me, brethren, and be noting those who are walking thus, according as you have us for a model,

This is a bold instruction, isn't it? But Paul knew that his walk was beyond reproach. It was important to be a standard by which members of the ecclesia could measure themselves, and just as importantly, by which the ecclesia could measure others. The next section explains more about why Paul was so concerned.

18 for many are walking, of whom I often told you, yet now am lamenting also as I tell it, who are enemies of the cross of Christ,

19 whose consummation is destruction, whose god is their bowels, and whose glory is in their shame, who to the terrestrial are disposed.

You and I see as many “*enemies of the cross of Christ*” as Paul did in his day. They have one common denominator now as then: they are “*disposed*” toward “*the terrestrial*,” toward the Earthly, which is to say, they are disposed to flesh.

20 For our realm is inherent in the heavens, ***[if you wonder why you don't feel like you fit on this Earth today, this is why]*** out of which we are awaiting a Saviour also, the Lord, Jesus Christ,

21 Who will transfigure the body of our humiliation, to conform it to the body of His glory, in accord with the operation which enables Him even to subject all to Himself.

Verse 21 is a great description of our current bodies “*of our humiliation*,” and of the ones coming, “*of His glory*.”

Chapter 4

4 Be rejoicing in the Lord always! Again, I will declare, be rejoicing!

“*Always*” means exactly what you think it does. If you find yourself in some other state, such as complaining or unhappy, remember this: “*Be rejoicing in the Lord always*.” Not sometimes, mind you, ALWAYS!

5 Let your lenience be known to all men: the Lord is near.

6 Do not worry about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God,

“*Cut everyone some slack*,” Paul says in verse 5, because “*the Lord is near*.” The beginning of verse 6 makes me think of the song, “Don’t worry, be happy.” By all means, ask the Father for what you want, but do it prayerfully and – here’s the biggie – with thanksgiving. You’ll find that giving genuine thanks for what you’re requesting of the Father makes it nearly impossible to ask for anything frivolous or ask for anything flippantly.

Now, if we’ve done all that, here’s what comes next:

7 and the peace of God, that is superior to every frame of mind, shall be garrisoning your hearts and your apprehensions in Christ Jesus.

The word, “*garrisoning*,” means protecting with a military force. Obviously, this reference in verse 7 is figurative, but it communicates the staunch, unwavering nature of the Father’s peace

over our hearts and minds. It really is “*superior to every frame of mind.*” We recommend it highly!

8 For the rest, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is grave, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is agreeable, whatever is renowned -- if there is any virtue, and if any applause, be taking these into account.

9 What you learned also, and accepted and hear and perceived in me, these be putting into practice, and the God of peace will be with you.

Paul gives us a very succinct list of qualities to take “*into account,*” as he says. What he doesn’t say in verse 8 is to leave the opposite of these well enough alone. Then, in verse 9, Paul makes himself the example to follow again, and for good reason, as we’ll soon see. Paul’s conclusion to verse 8 is the climax to his instruction, as if to say, “*If you put into practice what I told you and taught you, then the God of peace will be with you.*” This is a man who, humble though he may appear, knows his position before God and the ecclesia.

10 Now I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that at length, for once your disposition toward me blossomed, to which you were disposed also, yet you lacked occasion.

11 Not that I am hinting at a want, for **I learned to be content in that in which I am.**

12 I am aware what it is to be humbled as well as aware what it is to be superabounding. In everything and among all am I initiated, to be satisfied as well as to be hungering, to be superabounding as well as to be in want.

13 **For all am I strong in Him Who is invigorating me -- Christ!**

Not many since Paul – maybe none – could confess to this state of contentment born of huge swings of fortune, financially and physically. Paul earned every award that Christ may bestow upon him in the day of the Lord.

19 Now my God shall be filling your every need in accord with His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

20 Now to our God and Father be glory for the eons of the eons! Amen!

21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. Greeting you are the brethren with me.

22 Greeting you are all the saints, yet especially those of Caesar's house.

23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit! Amen!

And that’s where we’ll stop today. Join us again tomorrow for another Morning Magical.

Until then,

May Yahweh bless you and keep you;
May Yahweh light up His face toward you
and be gracious to you;
May Yahweh lift His face to you
and appoint peace for you.

AMEN