

Philippians 3

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Tape # 8178
Pastor Chuck Smith

Let's turn now to Philippians, chapter three.

Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. Again remember that Paul is writing from his prison cell in Rome, but his exhortation is to rejoice in the Lord! It is interesting that we can't always rejoice in our circumstances. Sometimes our circumstances are such that it brings great pain, stress, or sorrow. And when we consider our circumstances, we could actually be very sorrowful. But when we think of the Lord and all that the Lord has done for us, then there is always cause for rejoicing. It's so important that we not focus on ourselves or on our problems. But that we focus on the Lord, who is greater than any problem than we might ever face! And if you will learn to keep your focus on the Lord, then you will find that you can always rejoice in the Lord. And so this is what Paul is saying, look, this is what it's about—rejoice in the Lord! It's sort of a summary of what I've been saying to you, finally, this sort of summarizes it! Just rejoice in the Lord!

To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, Now the things that Paul is writing to them are things that Paul had taught them when he was there. But now he is writing some of these same things to them.

It's sort of like Peter when he wrote his second letter, he said that he was writing to them things that they already knew, but he wanted to put them in remembrance of these things. Knowing he said, that I'm soon going to be leaving this body, this tent, this tabernacle, I wanted to write them to you, though you already know them, so even after I am dead you might have them as a continual reminder.

There are certain things that we need to be continually reminded of. We are so prone to lose sight of the basics. So they felt it was important to put them in words, to put them in writing, so that when they go back and read it again, they will be reminded, oh yes, the Lord is on the throne! The Lord is going to take care of it! The Lord will watch over us! The Lord will keep us! And these are the things that we need to be constantly reminded about—God reigns! God rules! God's in control!

There was a dear, elderly saint who had a tremendous gift of exhortation. And we would often have her share her gift with the church. She was in her nineties, but she would get up there and she would say, the Lord is on the throne! And you know, many times, at that stage of our ministry, we were going through great hardships. Often I would go over to talk to her because she was such an encouragement. But basically every time I would go over to talk to her and sort of, you know, tell her the problems that were going on, she would say, well Charles, the Lord is on the throne. Oh yes! Thank you, I needed to be reminded of that! The Lord is on the throne! He is ruling! He hasn't abdicated the throne. The Lord is on the throne. And that was really her message. It was a message of encouragement to be reminded, the Lord is on the throne! I don't have to worry. I don't have to fear. He is in control.

So to write the same things to you, it's indeed to me not grievous, I don't mind writing it, *but for you it is safe.* It's important. It's safe.

²*Beware of dogs,* Now in Isaiah 56:10, speaking of the false prophets, he call them dumb dogs. And so Paul is probably picking this up from Isaiah, beware of the false prophets. Beware of dogs.

The Greek word for dogs is *kuon*. It means a hound. It was a scavenger type of dog that roamed in packs through the Holy Land. They were more like coyotes, who just are scavengers. They roam through the land. They are a nuisance. They are a menace. They are mean. They attack animals and people. They attack in packs. They terrorize. So beware of these who are constantly attacking the gospel, or constantly attacking those who are seeking to minister the gospel. There are people today who are like these wild, scavenger, dogs. They are always on the attack.

You remember that Jesus said, don't give that which is holy unto the dogs. Now, with the Jews, this word *kuon* became a derisive word. It referred to this wild, scavenger dog, that would go in packs. They called

Gentiles, dogs. In fact they often put the words together and usually did. They said, well the Gentile dogs. They looked upon the Gentiles as wild scavengers. It was a derisive term for the Gentiles.

Thus when the woman of Samaria came to Jesus or the Syro-Phoenician woman came to Jesus (Matthew 15:21-31), and she was seeking help from the Lord for her daughter, Jesus said to her, it isn't right to take the children's bread and give it to the dogs. Now there are people who are shocked that Jesus would make a reference to this Gentile woman as a dog. But it is interesting that the word that Jesus used was not the word, *kuon*, which is the derisive word.

But Jesus used another Greek word, *kunarion*, which is a little puppy. Now in contrast to the wild, scavenger dog, the children had little puppies that are much like the little puppies that children have today, only in those days the little puppies usually had a free run of the house. Often times the children would take their bread and toss it to the little puppy that was sitting there at the table. So when Jesus said it isn't right to take the children's bread and give it to the little puppies, it was far different from this derisive thing of giving it to the dogs. The woman picked up on that. She responded, well that's true Lord, but the little puppies, they eat the crumbs that fall from the Master's table. And Jesus said, oh, woman great is your faith. Be it done unto you even as you desire. And her daughter was healed.

So it was not to be confused when Paul said beware of dogs, he is using this term for the wild scavenger type dogs. They are the false prophets that Paul is making reference to. Those that would seek to put you under a legal relationship with God by bringing you under the law and by demanding you to go through the ritual of circumcision and all.

So beware of dogs, *beware of evil workers, beware of the concision*. The word, concision, is a word that means to cut and to mutilate. Paul is making reference to those who were arguing and declaring that Gentiles had to be circumcised in order to be saved. And Paul calls them mutilators, those who would mutilate your flesh—recision.

For he goes on to say, ³*For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit*, And as Paul taught the Romans, the true circumcision is of the heart and not of the flesh. It's a matter of the spirit rather than a fleshly thing. Now Paul here is making a play on words in the Greek. It doesn't really translate out fully in the English. But it is a play on words in Greek.

He said beware of the *katatome*, for we are the *peritome*. And so the *tome* is to cut, those that would cut in mutilating and those that would cut in circumcision. But it's a play on words.

It's like saying, we are of those who are of the construction, not of those who are of destruction. A play on words in the English. I'm here to, not to, be of a destruction but to be of construction. And so we are not of the mutilators, the concision, but we are the circumcision. It does come out in English, but not as clearly as it does in the Greek.

We are those who worship God in the Spirit. Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, that God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Now being of the circumcision that worship God in spirit, he said three things. That is that we worship God in spirit.

and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. ⁴*Though I might also have confidence in the flesh.* We worship God in the spirit. We rejoice in Jesus Christ in what he has done for us because we have absolutely no confidence in our flesh.

In Romans chapter two on the subject of circumcision and the relationship of the believer to this Jewish ritual, Paul said, for circumcision verily profits if you keep the law. But if you are a breaker of the law your circumcision is made uncircumcision; therefore if the uncircumcision, that is the Gentiles, keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not the uncircumcision, which is by nature if it fulfills the law, judge you, who by the letter and the circumcision, you transgress the law? For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly. Neither is the circumcision, which is outward in the flesh (that is the true circumcision). But he is a Jew which is one inwardly and circumcision is that of the heart and in the spirit and not in the letter whose praise is not of men but of God.

The same is true of water baptism. It is a ritual, even as circumcision was a necessary ritual to be proselytized into the Jewish faith, so was baptism a ritual by which a person was brought into the body of

Christ. But being a ritual, the outward aspect wasn't important. It was what was in the heart that is important. Water baptism in and of itself cannot save you. You are saved by your faith in Jesus Christ, not by being baptized in water.

It is a tragedy today that there are many people who are trusting in the fact that they were once baptized in water, to have the feeling, well, I'm all right! I'm saved. I was baptized in water when I was an infant. I have the pictures of the water being sprinkled on me. So they feel no necessity of receiving Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, of being born again, because they are trusting in the fact that they were baptized when they were an infant and that they claim was their salvation. They were saved by this ritual of baptism. But there are many, many people who were baptized who are not saved. They haven't been born again. They are not followers or disciples of Jesus Christ. And thus their trust in the fact that they were baptized, is an empty trust.

Even so many who were Jews, and had gone through the rite of circumcision, they were trusting in the fact that they were circumcised when they were eight days old to insure their salvation. And they did not have a real relationship with God. They were not keeping the law of God. But they were just trusting in the fact that, well, I'm circumcised.

It's the same situation with those who today are trusting in baptism for their salvation. The rite itself, doesn't save you. You are saved by faith in Jesus Christ. It is an inward work of God's Spirit in you life. And that's what counts! If it hasn't happened inside, you can be baptized a hundred times, and not be saved. You can go through the rituals of baptism over and over again, but it will never save you. You are saved by your faith in Jesus Christ.

So we are those who worship God in the Spirit, we rejoice in Jesus Christ. And we have no confidence in fleshly rituals or in our flesh. Though Paul said, I might also have confidence in the flesh. I mean if anybody could have confidence in the flesh, it would be me!

If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:

Then he begins to tell of his accomplishments in the flesh or his position in the flesh. I was ⁵*Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, (both of my parents were Israelites) of the tribe of Benjamin, (I was from the tribe of Benjamin.)*

And I was *an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee*; I was of those fellows who strained at a gnat and swallowed a camel! I was one of those fellows who said their prayers regularly. I was one of those fellows who was judging everyone else who weren't living up to our standards and our interpretations of the law. I was a Pharisee.

⁶*Concerning zeal, persecuting the church*; Paul said, I was persecuting the church. Paul was testifying to the Jews. He said I testify to them, they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. So, Paul was in that boat. He knew what that was about. He had a tremendous zeal for God. They thought that the church was against God and the church had to be destroyed. Paul was one of the leaders in the endeavor to destroy the church because of his religious zeal.

And then *touching the righteousness which is in the law, (I was) blameless*. As far as Paul was concerned, as a zealous Pharisee, he kept the law, as they interpreted the law, flawlessly.

You remember one day when the rich young ruler came and fell at Jesus' feet and said, good Master, what good thing must I do to inherit eternal life? Jesus said, keep the commandments. He said, which ones? Jesus quoted him the second six, those that had to do with his relationship with his fellow man. He said, Lord, I've done all of these from the time I was a youth. But, what lack I yet? Now here is Paul. He is saying, look, I kept the law as far as that righteousness that is in the law, I was blameless.

⁷*But what things were gain to me*, You see this is what Paul was, a proud Pharisee. He had that Pharisaical kind of pride that looked down on everybody else. We're above the rest of you. We are holier than you are. They looked down on others. God, I thank You, I'm not like other men! I'm not an extortioner. I'm not an adulterer. I thank you, God, especially I'm not like publican over there—that rotten sinner. And that's the attitude they had, that they were above and superior to everyone else in a spiritual sense. They had tremendous spiritual pride, self-righteousness. And that of course always leads to judging others, looking down on others. And so there was Paul.

And those things, which were gain to me, I once, these were the things that I was counting on. *those I counted loss for Christ.* ⁸*Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord:* One day as Paul, a zealous Pharisee, had received from the high priest orders to go to Damascus and to imprison certain Jews who had embraced Christ as the Messiah, Jesus as the Messiah, Paul was authorized by the high priest to imprison them and bring them back bound to Jerusalem.

As he was on his way to Damascus, he had a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. And those things which were once gain to him, at that moment he counted loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

As Paul was lying there on the ground, the Lord spoke to him and said, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? It's been hard for you to kick against the goads.

Paul said, who are You, Lord, that I might serve You? And the Lord answered, I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. And Paul said, what do You want me to do, Lord?

There in that moment, he came to the excellency of the knowledge that Jesus Christ was the Messiah, that He was the Lord. And Paul immediately counted loss this whole righteous kind of establishment that he had built up in the legalism of the law—out the door! And now to have a living relationship with God through Jesus Christ, which was more important than all of that walking being of the past. I counted it loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus as the Messiah.

Yea doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of the Messiah, Jesus, Paul said, my Lord! What would you have me to do, Lord? He is my Lord!

for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, Paul was at one time was looked up to and admired in the Jewish community especially among the Pharisees because of his tremendous zeal and his tremendous knowledge of the Word of God. He was a tremendous student. He was looked up to and was held in high esteem. But he said I suffered the loss of all things because having come to the knowledge of Jesus Christ and having embraced Jesus as his Lord, it put him now in conflict with the old crowd.

He said for whom I have suffered the loss of all things *and do count them but dung*, (refuse, waste) *that I may win Christ*, All of the past was wasted. I count them but loss. I counted them at that moment. I dumped the whole past of legalistic righteousness and I embraced the righteousness of Jesus Christ through faith that I might win Christ!

⁹*And be found (Paul said) in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ (the Messiah), the righteousness which is of God by faith:* Now, let's go back. Paul said, those things that were gain to me, I counted loss for Christ, or for the Messiah. Yea doubtless and I count all things but loss.

Paul was writing this Philippians letter or letter to the Philippians, some thirty years after his conversion. That experience on the road to Damascus is now thirty years past. But as he is writing to the Philippians, he declares, thirty years ago, when I came to an encounter with Jesus the Messiah, all of those things which were once gain to me I count as loss. But then he went on to say, and I do count them but loss. In other words, the past experience on the Damascus road was translated into his present relationship.

And that is so important because past experiences are not valid unless they are translated into the present experience. There are many people who talk about how God once moved in their lives and they are always talking in the past tense. Oh, the great blessings. There are those even here who talk about, oh, the tent days, oh remember you know! Oh wonderful, we were this and we were that. Hey, wait a minute. If your relationship with the Lord is not better and more glorious than it was when you came barefooted and long haired into the tent, then the tent experiences aren't valid. You can't look back on that which happened to you thirty years ago or twenty-five year ago as a valid experience, unless it is translated into the present moment. There is only validity to past experiences when they become a present experience. Those things, which were gain to me, I count as loss. And I do count them thirty years later, as refuse. So the past is translated into the present and thus it bears validity.

So be careful if you have to always speak of your glorious spiritual experiences in the past tense. It's important that we speak of our experiences in the present tense. Not so much of what the Lord did for you twenty-five years ago, what's the Lord doing for you today? It's not so much of the joy and the blessing that

you knew twenty years ago, but what do you know today of the joy and the blessing? Not of the sense of God's presence and power in your life fifteen years ago, but what about today? Are you experiencing the presence and the power of God within your life? You can't live in the past. You can't live in the past experiences. They've got to be transmitted and translated into the present in order for them to be valid.

So Paul says my desire is to be found in Him. Not having my own righteousness, that which I once was seeking to attain through the law. That is the righteousness of the law, the righteousness that self-righteousness that came by keeping the law, but the righteousness now, which is through the faith of the Messiah, the righteousness, which is of God by faith. The imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ! For God made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God through Him.

The beautiful thing today is that God accounts you righteous by your faith in Jesus Christ! But the righteousness that God imputes to you is the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Now you can't improve on that! And it is amazing how many times people are trying to improve on the righteousness that God has imparted to them. And we actually get out little rules and regulations and laws. We want to go back under a system of laws in order to improve on the righteousness of Jesus Christ. So if I just do this and do this and don't do this and don't do that, then I am going to be more righteous. No! You can't improve on what God has imputed to you—the righteousness of Jesus Christ through your faith and trust in Him! It's complete. You are complete in Him!

Paul said, oh foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you that you should so soon leave the truth, having begun in the Spirit, are you now going to be made perfect in the flesh? It can't be! We've got to continue in the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, living in the Spirit.

You say, oh, that means I can do anything I want. No, no, no! You don't understand at all! Is Jesus Christ, Lord? If He is Lord, then you are doing things He wants you to do! You are looking to Him constantly for guidance and for direction. If he is your Lord, you're not going to do things that He has said that you are not to do. And so it isn't just a free ticket to live in lasciviousness. But it is a commitment to live a life that pleases Him. And that becomes the chief desire and goal, is to please Him, my Lord.

So Paul's desire was to be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness which is through faith of the Messiah, the righteousness of God through faith.

¹⁰*That I may know him*, This is the *gnosko*, know, that I might know Him by personal experience, that I might experience His presence and His power in my life, His working in me.

That I might know Him *and the power of his resurrection*, Oh yes! God, I want that power! Oh, how I want to know the power of the resurrection of Jesus in my life! We're all excited with the thought of the power of Jesus!

But Paul didn't stop there. He said, *and the fellowship of his sufferings*, Oh, wait a minute! No, I don't know, I'm not sure! I want to know the power. Don't talk to me about the suffering. I want power, man.

But Paul said the fellowship of His sufferings, *being made conformable unto his death*; Oh, wait a minute! I want to be fully identified with Him! Yes I want the power of the resurrection, but am I willing to also have the fellowship of the sufferings? Am I willing to give my life for Him, conformable unto death, giving my life for Jesus Christ?

¹¹*If by any means* (Paul said. And that is by the means of giving my life or whatever.) *I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead*. The word, attain, there is that I might come to the resurrection of the dead. That is my longing. This is my desire. Paul said in chapter one, I find myself in a strait between two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. And now he speaks of this desire to come to the resurrection of the dead. I'm wanting to come to this glorious experience of the resurrection of the dead.

¹²*Not as though I had already attained*, I haven't yet arrived, Paul said.
either were already perfect: I haven't come to that full maturity.

but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. By the Messiah, Jesus. Paul looks back upon the experience on the road to Damascus as the Lord having apprehended him. Paul was going in one direction, full steam. The Lord stopped him and turned him around. And he went now in another direction, full steam. Paul was a full-steam person. He was all in it, whether it was, you know, in the zealotry for the law or the zealotry to follow and serve Jesus Christ,

he was all there!

Paul is saying, when the Lord apprehended me, He had a purpose and a plan for my life. I've not yet or accomplished or fulfilled that purpose and that plan.

The Lord, when He apprehended you, had a plan and a purpose for apprehending you. He has a plan and a purpose for your life. And it should be the chief goal of our lives to accomplish those purposes for which the Lord apprehended us. Why did the Lord save you? He had a plan, a work for you to do. He apprehended each one of you for a purpose.

Paul said, ¹³*Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended:* I have not yet apprehended that for which I was apprehended by the Messiah, Jesus. All of us can say that. We have not yet apprehended that for which we were apprehended. If we had, the Lord would take us home. The moment I have apprehended that for which I was apprehended the Lord is going to take me home. He doesn't want me to stay in this foul, corrupt world any longer than necessary. He has so much for me of the glory of His kingdom. And He is anxious that I be there and enjoy that, but there is a purpose and plan still to be fulfilled.

So I am hurrying to try and fulfill that purpose and plan so I can be with the Lord, to apprehend that for which I was apprehended. And the moment we do, the Lord is going to receive us home and say, well done, good and faithful servant, you apprehended that for which I have apprehended you! That should be the thought and the goal of our hearts and our lives, accomplishing the purposes for which God apprehended us.

but this one thing I do, (And then he lists three.) *forgetting those things which are behind,* That is, not trying to live in the past experiences, not living in the past as a Pharisee in those wasted years. Forgetting those things, which are behind as those past experiences in the service of the Lord, not counting on them, not looking back constantly on what happened in the past, forgetting those things which are behind. It's awfully difficult to go forward when you are looking backward. And there are many people who are in that condition today. But looking backward, they never really progress forward.

So forgetting those things which are behind, *and reaching forth unto those things which are before,* Looking ahead, what does God have in mind for me in the year to come?

I told Kay somehow our timing is off, because this is the greatest New Year's sermon you could ever preach. And we are coming, of course, next Sunday will be the New Year's Sunday. We should have been in the third chapter next Sunday to really be totally in, you know, in sync with the holidays. But what a tremendous New Year's sermon, forgetting those things, which are behind and reaching forth to the things which are before.

God's got some exciting things in store for us in this New Year. God has some glorious plans for us and for the church. The things that God wants to do in this coming year in the continual expanding of the ministry and of the work of God's Spirit. Just exciting things and reaching forth to those things, which are before—looking ahead in anticipation of what God is going to do for us in this coming year!

¹⁴*I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* I'm pushing ahead! It's sort of like a runner who is running the mile or the two-mile race, or the five-mile or whatever, the marathon, you sort of save enough energy for that final, what they call, the final kick? When you are on that last lap and now when you can see the finish line ahead of you, stretched across the track, you now give it that final kick. You put it into overdrive and you give it everything you've got. We are getting close to the finish line. I'm pressing towards the mark, the tape, for the prize of the high calling of God, which is in Christ Jesus, this upper calling. I'm pressing toward that time when I have completed the course and the Lord takes me to His reward.

Paul, writing his second letter to Timothy, when evidently Nero had brought him back and pronounced a sentence of death upon him, Paul said I'm about to be offered, but I have fought the good fight. I have finished the course. He was pressing toward the mark.

Now he declares, I have finished the course. I have kept the faith. Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, a righteous judge, shall give to me and not to me only but to all of those who love His appearing. Go to receive the prize, this high calling of God in Christ Jesus!

¹⁵*Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, (Spiritually mature—grown up) be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.* Have the same mind of reaching to those

things, which are ahead, pressing on, giving it your best effort.

Paul said they that run in a race, run all, but only one receives the prize. So run that you might obtain! Run to win! Don't just be in, you know, there jogging along in a lackadaisical fashion, but give it all you've got in your commitment to Jesus Christ!

As many of you as want to be mature, be of the same mind. And if in anything you're otherwise minded, then may God reveal it to you. May you be convicted for the sloven way in which you are seeking to run this race.

¹⁶*Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.* Let's have a unity of our minds. Let us walk by this rule of full-on commitment!

¹⁷*Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.* Paul is saying, now, follow my example. I've given myself totally and completely over to serving Jesus Christ. I'm pressing toward the mark. I've laid aside every weight that I might run this race as I look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of my salvation. So be followers and mark those which walk so as you have us for an example.

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:* Jesus said, if you want to come after me, deny yourself and take up your cross.

There are many who are enemies of the cross of Christ. They preach a gospel of personal gain and riches, not a gospel of sacrifice, not a gospel of commitment. And they, themselves, live by these rules. In other words, they brag in the fact that they drive Rolls-Royces. They brag in the fact that they have their own private jets, that they jet around the world in. And yet they call themselves servants of Jesus Christ. But it's that they preach a doctrine of personal gain, of how you can learn to write your own ticket, in a sense. Fill out the check yourself, according to your faith.

And Paul said, I'm warning you again, even weeping, because there are those who aren't really walking a life of commitment. They haven't really denied themselves. They haven't really taken up the cross. They are actually enemies of the cross because the cross speaks of sacrifice.

Paul says, ¹⁹*Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, (Their belly is actually their God.) and whose glory is in their shame, (Things that they should be ashamed of, they are glorying in, because) who mind earthly things.)* Their hearts are in the earthly treasures, in the earthly possessions.

But Paul said, ²⁰*For our conversation (or our manner of life) is in heaven;* It's not in the earthly things. We are not seeking to build up an earthly estate, earthly glory. We are seeking to build up a heavenly estate in heavenly glory.

Our citizenship, our manner of living is in heaven, *from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:* We are looking to heaven for our Lord to come. And we should live in constant anticipation of His return, expecting the Lord.

And I'm expecting the Lord to come before the New Year. It won't bother me a bit if we don't celebrate Christmas—that is here. Well have a new celebration. But we are looking for our Lord.

²¹*Who shall change our vile body,* Now Paul said (2 Corinthians 5), we who are in these bodies do often groan, earnestly desiring to be delivered, not that I would be unembodied but I want to be clothed upon with the body which is from heaven. For I know that as long as I am living in this body, I'm absent from the Lord. But I would choose rather to be absent from this body that I might be present with the Lord! He is going to change these vile bodies.

Paul, writing to the Corinthians, chapter fifteen, said, I'm going to show you a truth of God that hasn't been revealed in the past. We are not all of us going to sleep, but we will all be changed in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye.

So we look to the heavens, our life is in the heavens, from whence we look for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who when He comes, He is going to change our vile bodies. It will be a metamorphosis, a change in bodies.

Paul says, for this corruption must put on incorruption. This mortal must put on immortality. Flesh and

blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven, so the Lord is going to give me a change of body. The vile body, the old body that is feeling its age more and more every day. I don't jump over walls anymore. I get down carefully. The body is changing. And He is going to change this old vile body. He's going to give me a new body that is fashioned like unto His glorious body! Oh, yes!

Beloved now are we the sons of God. It doesn't yet appear what we are going to be, but we know that when He appears, we're going to be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is! And so this body, this vile body, He is going to change.

So that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. So the glorious third chapter of Philippians. I love it! And now as we go into the fourth chapter, we have some glorious promises that are given unto us in Philippians, chapter four. Next week we will finish the Book of Philippians. So your assignment is to read ahead and study.

Father, we give thanks to You for the wonderful hope that we have in and through Christ Jesus. As we look, Lord, for Your return and for the marvelous changes that will take place as You give to us that new body, fashioned like Your own glorious body. But Lord, in the meantime, help us that we might press toward the mark, that we might live a life of full and complete commitment. Lord, that we will not be caught up with the material world and the material age, but Lord, we will be caught up in our relationship with You, realizing our citizenship is in heaven. And may we press toward that mark, for the prize, the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.