

Philippians 3:12-4:1

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[0 : 0 0] Okay, good morning, Christchurch. How are we doing? Sweet. I'm Michael, most of you know that.

! So we're going to be going through, we're going to continue our teaching. We've been going through the book of Philippians.

So today's passage that we're going through today is Philippians chapter 3, verses 12 through 21. And then we've got one verse to end it in chapter 4, verse 1. So that's our scripture we're going through.

If you want to just have your Bibles there, we're going to be kind of, we're going to be looking at it here and there and revisiting it. So yeah, that's what we're getting into this morning. I'm just going to start off and just pray real quick.

[1 : 0 0] Thank you, Lord, for this morning. Thank you for your word. Thank you for your spirit that you left us a helper to help us. You've not left us alone. And everything you've commanded us to do, Lord, you have not left us alone.

And I thank you for that. You have been so good to us. And we just, as we're remembering, just recently, just remembering your resurrection, you did not stay in the grave.

You rose again. And when you ascended on high, you left us with your spirit. And I just thank you for that. It's good to remember this. And we just praise you and thank you for not leaving us to our own devices and our own abilities.

But you have left us your spirit. And that was very kind of you. So thank you for your spirit. Thank you for your helper. I just pray that you would help me to articulate the word that you have for us this morning.

Thank you for the letter of Philippians. Yeah, just bless our time together as we dig into this. In Jesus' name. Amen. Okay, so just to start off, we're picking up where we left off.

[2 : 1 9] Philippians 3, verses 1 through 11. Seth covered that. And he gave a really sweet message on counting any gain of our own efforts and righteousness apart from the righteousness of Christ as lost for the sake of knowing Christ.

That was a sweet message. This theme is kind of continuing into our passage as well, but just in a little bit different flavor. But we're talking about the righteousness of Christ.

We're talking about Christ-likeness. So it kind of flows into it, but just a recap on that. That's where we're going to pick up where we left off. So if everyone can just read through with me.

I'm going to just read through the passage that we're going to go through. We're going to read through the text, and then we'll get into it. So starting in Philippians 3, verse 12.

So it says, Not that I've already obtained this, or I'm already perfect, but I press on to make it my own. Because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

[3 : 2 9] Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Let those of us who are mature think this way. And if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.

Only let us hold true to what we have attained. Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.

For many of whom I have often told you, and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their God is their belly, and they glory in their shame.

With minds set on earthly things, but our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior. The Lord Jesus, who will transform our lowly bodies to be like his glorious body, by the power that

enables him even to subject all things to himself.

[4 : 54] Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm, thus in the Lord my beloved.

So, just to kind of pan out before we dig into the text, I kind of want to pan out a little bit, and sort of take just a big picture.

We want to just think, we're just going to give some contextual ideas before we jump into this. So, thinking about Paul's calling, and how he is unwavering in his aim to fulfill his call.

He's unwavering. So, we're going to pan out, and just look at, so, Paul's in prison at this point, writing this letter to the Philippians.

And, that's also just kind of proof that he's pretty unwavering. He's got his eyes on the prize. He's doing this thing, whether it gets him in the clink or not.

[5 : 56] Like, he doesn't, he's in, he's in jail writing this. So, he's very single-minded. Nothing is going to derail him. Nothing, he's like very, very, yeah, intensely focused on this thing.

So, we're going to pan out, and you don't have to go there. I'm just going to read in Acts chapter 9. I'm going to read verses 10 through 15.

Just to kind of just remember Paul's journey. So, Paul is on the road to Damascus doing his thing. He was on his way to kill Christians. And, the Lord gets a hold of him.

But, we're going to start in Acts chapter 9, verse 10 says, Now, there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, Ananias.

And, he said, Here I am, Lord. And, the Lord said to him, Rise and go to the street called Straight. And, at the house of Judas, look for a man of Tarsus named Saul.

[7 : 01] For, behold, he is praying. And, he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come and lay hands on him, so that he might regain his sight.

But, Ananias answered, Lord, I've heard from many about this man, how much evil he's done to your saints at Jerusalem. And, here, he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.

But, the Lord said to him, Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and children of Israel.

For, I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name. So, that's just kind of backing up a little bit. Big picture. This is Paul.

This is where he was at. This is, I mean, we all know this. But, as we get into this scripture, I think it's helpful to remember he was on his way to kill Christians. And, even this dude's like, he's got a reputation for this.

[8 : 10] He's like, What's going on here? Oh, God. Like, which shows, that speaks to the faithfulness of this dude, too. Ananias. He's like, Alright. That'd be, that'd be wild. The Lord tells you to do this.

Hold on. That's, that's talk about trust. I mean, that's a wild, that's a whole other thing. But, so, it says at the end, so, I love that verbiage.

It says, For he is my chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles, the kings and children of Israel. Kings of the earth and children of Israel. That's awesome.

So, big picture. That's, that's Paul. That's specific. There's a unique calling on Paul. And, that's pretty wild and awesome.

But, we can, we can kind of fast forward. And, this is, this kind of calling is still applicable to us. We can think about this.

[9 : 04] We were all, at one point, doing our own thing. We were all enemies of the cross at one point. We were, we were not always, we've not always served, you know.

So, we were all going in one direction. And, the Lord got a hold of all of us. One way or another, he got a hold of us. And, so, he's kind of course corrected us. Just like he did here with Paul, we see. And, so, it's interesting. So, we see, he says, I'm going to show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.

And, so, I just want to pause here. We're going to get into text here. I got a little bit of a longer intro. But, we'll get there. So, I want to pause here and think about suffering for a little bit.

So, yeah. Paul's written, like I said, from the perspective of in jail. So, he's suffering. Then, he also, later on at the end of Philippians, he says, we all need to rejoice in our suffering.

[10:07] So, recently, so, it's almost like, recently, we went through a fair amount of suffering, you could say, just with the surprise of we were not anticipating having a Down syndrome baby.

We did. We're, hindsight's 20-20 now. Five months into it, we're very grateful for her. We love her to pieces. But, you know, it's a surprising thing when all of a sudden you're like, you don't know the gender.

You don't know what's going on. All of a sudden, baby's born. It's like, oh, okay. That's interesting. That's different than what we were thinking. So, there's a level of suffering that, you know, was involved there and just kind of adjusting.

But, Lord's good. And we can suffer in good ways. We can suffer in not so good ways. I didn't go through that very well. But the Lord is gracious.

He's very faithful and patient with us. And this is a very sweet thing. So, anyway, it's a different kind of suffering. But we want to bring this all back to this.

[11:10] It's still all relatable. We can all think of things in our lives where it's like, how can I suffer better? Like, looking at trials and different things we're going through, we can rejoice.

There's like a, if he tells us to do something, he's going to give us grace to do it. And to rejoice through it. That's a wild thought. That's not a natural thought. So, whenever the Lord gives us, like, really seemingly crazy commands, it's like, well, it takes him to do that.

You know what I mean? So, it's a good, like, it's a total ditch if we try and approach God's commandments in our own strength.

So, it's a supernatural thing. So, anyway, moving on. So, we too are called to suffer and advance the gospel. So, we want to, I want to look into this.

Remember back in the start of Philippians, we see Paul's love and appreciation for the Philippian believers. He's really, uh, has a lot of affection towards this, this group of people and, uh, believers in Philippi.

[12:26] And so, he says, remember, he says, because of your partnership in the gospel, from the first day until now, I'm sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Christ Jesus.

So, um, that's part of the kind of the context. He's, he's got a lot of love for these people. And, um, yeah, there's, they've been partnering with him.

They've been financially partnering with him when he's in Thessalonica. And he's got, there's a really sweet bond that we see he has with these people. So, anyway, he goes into, uh, okay, before, one last kind of side note before we get into the text.

So, for today's purpose, kind of the body of, like, our main focus, we're going to think through this text kind of in terms of, like, a race.

So, the Bible, um, the Bible has a lot of language, like in the Christian life, Christian walk to a race.

So, today, as we're going through this, we're going to, there's going to be, we're just going to kind of think of it as running and in a race.

[13:32] So, we've got, um, just a couple, a couple verses. I'm just going to, there's, I got four verses here I'm going to kind of go through real quick.

Um, so, 1 Corinthians 9, 24. Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So, run that you may obtain it.

Um, Hebrews 12, 1 and 2. Therefore, since we are surrounded by great, so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.

And then we got, uh, 2 Timothy 4, 7, 7, I, here we go, Dennis. Uh, I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith.

Um, I love that one. It's, um, so Galatians chapter 5, verse 7. You were running well, he says to the Galatians.

[14:36] Who hindered you from obeying the truth? So, we've got this language and this kind of imagery of running a race. Um, let me see here. So, yeah.

Last thought. Again, we were, we were running our own race. We were, we were doing our own thing. But God, being rich in mercy, made us alive in Christ. In Ephesians 2.

Thank God for that. We were, we were up a creek without a paddle. We were totally dead in the water. And God was very rich in mercy towards us. So, praise him for that.

This is, um, this is good imagery. This is good as we dig into this. The other thing about when we hear race, um, it's a marathon. Not a sprint.

So, it's not like, alright, cool, I'm gonna, uh, I'm just gonna just exert all. We're, we're, we're, we're, we're gonna long road here. It's a marathon. I'm reminded, like one time me and, me and Judah were, we did a little race swimming at the, the Reta went well to center.

[15 : 37] and we had, we were, there was a little dispute or a little confusion. It wasn't clear what qualifies a lap.

So in his mind, he thought a lap was, I mean, you count it either way. There's no right or wrong. But in my mind, a lap was there and back. In his mind, a lap was there.

And then going back is two laps. So I'm going to pick on you a little bit, Julia, here. But it's just for the sake of driving this point. It's not a sprint. It's a marathon. So we are, we start, we get, we start swimming and he's going for it.

I was like, man, he's, he's actually a fast swimmer. Holy crap. I got it. Like, man, I got my workout out here and he's going for it. He's got a pretty good lead on me. Like, I don't remember.

I think it was like 10, what was it? 10, I've done it. I think it might've been 10 laps. It was a lot. It was long. It was, it was probably way too much for both of us to try and tackle.

[16 : 41] But anyway, uh, he's, I'm going, I'm like going steady. And he's got like, he's got probably a lap, a Judah lap on me.

And I'm like, my gosh, I'm going to lose this. I'm going to lose. I was not expecting this. Cause I had been going, I'd been like swimming consistently for like a month or two or so. And I'm like, man, I was fully prepared to beat him.

And he's got a lap on me. Half lap. Um, so anyway, well, he, we get to like lap, I don't know, whatever it was halfway through in his mind. And I turned, he stops.

And I like, no, I like keep going. Like he just stopped chilling there. And I'm like, yeah. What? That's weird. I just hit the wall and keep going. And we like yell back.

Like, no, no, we're halfway through. I'm like, oh, trap. Anyway, um, it's a marathon. It's a marathon. We got to, it's good to count the costs.

[17 : 38] It's good. It talks about, um, any builder before he starts building a house, counts the costs. He doesn't sit there and be like, yeah, I got five, two by four. Let's do it. No, that's it. Count the costs.

It's a, it's a race. It's a marathon. So, um, yeah, we don't want to be like wood, hay and stuff and just burn up.

You know, this is, it, anyway, it takes training. It takes spring one another on. It takes, the other thing, the other thing in this imagery I thought about, um, is the encouraging part is, like, in a marathon, runners are alone, you know, but we're, we're a bottom.

So, like, we can spur one another on. It's not, you're not doing, we're not running this thing alone. And we get in a lot of trouble when we try to, but, okay. So, we're finally getting into the text here.

So, verse 12. Not that I have already obtained this or reached the goal, but I press on to make it my own.

[18 : 48] It says, in CSB, Christian version says, I make every effort to take hold of it because Jesus Christ has made me his own.

Okay. So, I have here, thinking about this verse, uh, what is this? Not that I've already obtained this. What is this? My understanding of this is Christlikeness or perfection. It's talking about before. It's Christlikeness. It's kind of a two-fold this, but it's Christlikeness and achieving the goal of gospel advancement.

So, Paul showed, one thing I noticed here, one thing I think is good to notice here is Paul shows humility. Look at the humility showing.

He's like, he's saying, I don't, he's essentially saying, I don't have it all together. I've not reached, I've not, like, I've not reached this thing. I'm not perfect. I've not reached perfection.

[19 : 48] So, that's like an encouraging, that's just a, that shows good leadership to me. That's good leadership. That's, uh, I have not reached this. I'm not claiming to be perfect.

I'm striving. I'm pressing forward. Um, yeah. So, anyway, same with us.

I'm not, I'm not perfect. Marianna's like, amen. Amen to that. No, I'm just kidding. Um, has anyone, this is just a side thought.

Has anyone seen, um, this dude that walks around all the time on, it's like usually 87th and like Raytown Road.

There's a dude that actually dresses like Jesus and like has a staff, long hair, beard. No one seen him? He's walking around all the time. You know, I, I passed him the other day.

[20 : 42] And this, I, on this point, like externally, it's like I passed him and I'm like, wow. That's, that's a wild sight. That kind of just throws you off your day.

Like, he's like, he's like cruising on 87th. Like he's, it's usually around like the Philip 66 over here. Right over by Judah's mansion. Carlos's. Anyway, he's like, he's like walking.

He's got a full on white robe. Like the sandals. The whole ghetto. He just walked around. Huh? You didn't stop. I snagged, I snagged a picture of him one of the times. Cause I was like, that's, I got nobody, you know, I gotta have proof for this story.

That's good. But anyway, externally, like, you know, it's just like walking around dressing like Jesus. Paul's not doing that. Paul's not saying he's Jesus. He's not saying he's obtained this kind of Jesus. But it's pressing, like by God's grace, he's becoming more and more like Jesus. But in a way, like sometimes we can all kind of put on the Jesus. Yeah.

[21 : 42] Like we, I look at that dude, I'm like, man, that is wild. But it's like, we do that. Like sometimes, like we, we, we sometimes like puff ourselves up and think, yeah, I got it.

I got this. I'm, I'm good. You know, it's like, anyway, we're all the same. We all need the Lord. So it's good to, it's good to recognize this.

It's good to recognize we're not, we don't have, we've not arrived. We're all in this together. We're all striving towards this. And yeah, we can spur one another on in this.

We can encourage one another. So anyway, thinking of examples of how, like everyone's probably met or interacted with people that like act like they do have it all together.

It's really off putting, isn't it? It's like, it's like when you know, it's like, hold on. You know, there's a way, there's a way to like, imitate, later on, Paul says, imitate me.

[22 : 44] So there's a way to like imitate, like he can confidently say, imitate me. Because he's, you know, he's, he's, he's doing the work. He's faithfully serving the Lord. But then there's like a weird, like, it's just off putting when you, when you, when you're like interacting with someone and they're just like, I got this, I've got everything together.

Like, we don't want anything to do with that. Right? We don't. It's, it's no good. On the contrary, we just need to, we need to continue encouraging one another onto Christ likeness, knowing that we are weak and all need the Lord.

So what does it look like? So moving on, he says, I press on to make it my own. What does it look like? What does it look like to press on to make Christ likeness our own?

Christian standard Bible says, make every effort to take hold of it. How can we, as, how can we make every effort better? How can we do better at this? How can we get better at making every effort to make Christ likeness our own, to lay hold of this prize?

These are good things to think through. Um, it's good questions to ask throughout the week. Maybe how do I make every, every effort better? Am I making every effort?

[24 : 03] All of us are making some kind of effort, obviously, right? We're making some kind of effort. Paul talks about making every effort to lay hold of this. How can we, uh, strive towards this more?

It's a good question to ask ourselves. Um, what are ways in which we've gotten lazy and complacent? Um, the other thing is, where's our, where's making every effort?

Uh, where is that on our priorities list? Like, where is it? We all have a whole bunch of priorities, kind of revolving door priorities, just like whack them all.

Like, it's important for us to, and this is, I'm preaching to the crowd here, this is for me, maybe more than anyone else. The priorities, the prioritizing, making every effort.

This is convicting going through this because it's, I'm thinking of the shred challenge. Like we just went through the shred challenge. Um, I started out good, but it was like a three and a half month long deal.

[25 : 05] It was a little too long in my opinion. Anyway, but, uh, I was, I was prioritizing the shred challenge for like a month and a half, two months. And then I was like, other stuff happens and life and work and whatever.

And I just, it just kind of bumped down on my priorities and it dropped off. Well, um, may we not treat spiritual things like this.

Not that that's unspiritual. I was just saying we need to, it's, priorities are important. We need it. And, and for the long haul, we got to spur each other on to continue to prioritize the likeness, uh, being conformed to the image and likeness of Christ.

Um, moving on. And what, why should we do this? Why should we prioritize this? Why is this such a important thing to prioritize? Well, it says right here, because Christ has made me his own.

So you're not, we're not even our own. That's why. Really simple. It's like, it's just very little room for confusion here. Why do we do this? We aren't our own.

[26 : 10] Christ has made us his. So we, we actually, um, Josh talks about King Jesus and kingdom priorities. Shared priorities. You know, like, that's a good way to think about it.

We're, he's the King and he bought us. That's why we do it. Because we don't call the shots anymore. Sometimes we try, but we shouldn't. We don't get to. We don't have that liberty anymore. We're bought with a price.

So if that's why we should make it our aim to prioritize Christ-likeness in the advancement of gospel. In verse 13, we're moving on to verse 13.

Brothers, I do not consider that I've made it my own. But one thing I do for forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead.

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward calling, of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. So let's kind of just look into this one.

[27 : 11] Verse 13 and 14. He says, I don't consider I have made it my own. But one thing I do, and it's kind of weird because he kind of lists three things. Forgetting what lies behind, straining forward, and pressing on.

So we're going to kind of, we're going to focus a little bit of time on forgetting this phrase, forgetting what lies behind. So we got, we're going to, there's three points here. Forgetting, straining, and pressing.

So starting with the idea of forgetting what lies behind. So this idea with forgetting what lies behind, there's good ways and there's bad ways to forget.

There's like, there's a good forgetting and there's a bad forgetting. I want to kind of dive into some of that. So an example of, an example of a good way.

Sorry. Yeah, we're going to, we're going to dive, we're at here. An example of a good way is to look back. Sorry. A good way to remember.

[28 : 18] This is a good way to remember. We shouldn't forget everything. We should remember some things. So a good way to remember is like in Revelation 2, 5. It says, remember therefore from where you have fallen.

Repent and do the works you did at first. So this is a good, this is, this is, we need to, we shouldn't forget that. We need to remember that. Remember from where we have fallen.

Repent and do the good, do the works you did at first. That's just a side note. Just a little, we need to remember this.

It's always very helpful to remember where we came from. Not to focus on it, not to dwell on it, not to glorify what we used to be or anything like that. But remember where we came from. Like sometimes it can be really easy for us to be like, I was never, you know.

I know, you know, we were all up a creek, like I said. We were all totally up a creek. So this idea of forgetting, forgetting what lies behind, there's a, there's kind of a humility that I kind of want to touch on here.

[29 : 25] And I want to quote, some of you have probably read this book by Tim Keller. It's called The Freedom of Self-Forgetfulness.

Really good book. It's a little pamphlet. Really good book. But anyway, he, this is Tim Keller quoting C.S. Lewis. And then he kind of talks a little bit here and there. But I'm going to read something. It's a little bit long. So just try and bear with me and focus if you're not listening.

Focus in on this because it's really good. All right. C.S. Lewis in Mere Christianity makes a brilliant observation about gospel humility at the very end of his chapter on pride.

If we were to meet a truly humble person, Lewis says, we would never come away from meeting them thinking they were humble. They would not be always, they would not be always telling us they were a nobody because a person who keeps saying they're a nobody is actually a

self-obsessed person.

A person that keeps talking about how I'm nothing, I'm this, I'm that, I'm that. That's right. That's right. They're actually self-absorbed and obsessed with themselves. The thing we would remember from meeting a truly gospel humble person is how much they seem to be totally interested in us.

[30 : 55] Isn't that interesting? We have a really interesting example in Jesus and Paul. Jesus did not come to be served, but to serve.

Just picture this. Like, Jesus, the Son of God, he's perfectly self-sufficient, perfectly at peace with God, and the triune God up there is dwelling in perfect harmony.

Flash forward to just him kneeling down and washing a stinky Jewish dude's feet. That's pretty interesting.

Think about that. That's wild. I mean, that's, he's, we need to be more like Jesus in this way, I think. We need to be, I derailed.

I'm going to get back to the verse. Or I mean the, not the verse. No, the quote. All right. A truly gospel humble person, the thing we would remember from meeting a truly gospel humble person is how much they seem to be totally interested in us.

[31 : 58] Because this is key. Because the essence of gospel humility is not thinking more of myself or thinking less of myself.

It is thinking of myself less. That make sense? Not thinking more of yourself. Not thinking less of yourself. It's thinking about yourself less.

That's true humility. Gospel humility is not needing to think about myself. Not needing to connect things with myself. It is an end to thoughts such as, I am in this room with these people.

Sorry. I'm in this room with these people. Does that make me look good? Do I want to be here?

True gospel humility means I stop connecting every experience, every conversation with myself.

In fact, I stop thinking about myself. The freedom of self-forgetfulness. The blessed rest that only self-forgetfulness brings.

[33 : 05] So, forgetting what lies behind. There's a way that, I've got one more note. Peter Kreff says, take your temperature when you're sick. Otherwise, look at God and other people. They're much more interesting.

Take your temperature. Like, we're not, how weird would that be if you're taking your temperature every day? That's obsessed with yourself. You're being obsessed with yourself. You're not looking to do this.

You're not, like, there's like, what's that thing? I can't remember. There's like that thing where, let's say, did someone help me? Let's say these where people constantly think they're sick with something. What is it?

Hypocond. Yeah. That's like spiritual, being a spiritual hypochondriac. It's like, how am I doing? Am I good? Am I this? Am I that? Freedom of self-forgetfulness. Forget what lies behind.

There's a total freedom, I think, in Christ for us here. So what are the pitfalls of looking back? It's important to remember we have an enemy. So we're running this race.

[34 : 02] We have an enemy that's going to try and come at us with different tactics. So what are these? We have an enemy who does not want us to look to Christ and depend on him every hour.

He doesn't, like, he wants, we have an enemy that wants to bind us up and keep us frozen. And keep us from this aim, this calling, this thing that Paul was just gripped with.

We can't let him do that. We can't let him have a heyday. We can't, we shouldn't be unaware of his schemes in this respect. So what are the pitfalls of looking back? They can keep us looking back in our past and focusing on our past and certain things we've messed up or I botched this, I messed this up, I did this.

There is no condemnation for those in Christ. There isn't. So if you're under condemnation, you need to get out of it. Stop. Believe the gospel and move on.

Press on. You're not going to be able to strain forward. You're not going to be able to strain forward and press on if you're constantly focused with what I don't have, what I missed out.

[35 : 10] I missed this out. No, no, no. If you're focused, as long as we're dwelling on things in the past like that, we aren't fulfilling what the Lord's called us for today. You know?

So we can't, we can't let that, we can't let that sneak into our thought process. So there's wounds. There's wounds in our past that can sometimes bind us up.

It can freeze us up from walking in the freedom that there is in Christ. We need to be delivered from those things. We need to be set free. It's freedom for, it's for freedom that Christ set us free.

So we can't go back to, again, a yoke of slavery. There's shame, condemnation. There's things, there's another aspect of looking back where it's like, there's like, it's kind of a weird one.

So there's like a kind of spiritual, there's kind of like a spiritual flattery. Like we can kind of flatter ourselves with the good things we've done.

[36 : 11] For God. Like we can be like, and we can kind of try and live off of that, those fumes. That gas tank, you know, maybe, sometimes it might be years, years ago.

Or like, you know, if you've lived a life, I did this for so many years for God. And it's all, or it's like, that's fine. There's a way to share God's faithfulness. And there's a way to talk about those things. But then there's a way, there's like a weird spiritual flattery. I think that you can sometimes, it can be a crutch where it's like, I'm good. I don't have to do that today because I already did all this other stuff.

Here's a like little example. I joke with one of my old co-workers, Adam Wilson. He makes fun of me about this. So when I was in high school, I actually, it was a little bit of like a kind of hippie, a little bit, like kind of green, whatever.

And I actually started this environmental club. So this is why Adam, like, Adam is so hilarious.

[37 : 15] He makes fun of me a lot of times. Because the joke was, the joke was, I told him this. It was called, it was called SEED. S-E-E-D. Saving Earth Every Day.

I think that, I actually, side note, I think the club actually still exists. And it like, maintained. The whole, the whole green thing kind of took off. A little bit.

2005 or something. Anyway. So the joke is, I don't know if Sam, if you've heard us talk about this.

But the joke is, I don't know.

I probably did something stupid. I probably like threw like a wire net or something. Like, I don't know, off a ladder or something. And Adam makes fun of me. Like, hold on. What happened to SEED?

And I'm like, yeah. I already, I already chucked that box. Like, I started, I could do that. Because I checked that box. I started, see. I could litter a little bit. You know, like. So that's kind of the joke.

[38 : 14] But there's like a spiritual. Sometimes I think we do that spiritually. Like, we're like, I did that. You know, I did this, all this other stuff. I'm good. Like, I'm good. We're like, no.

That's not, that's not how it works. That's a, that's a spiritual flattery. You know. That's no, that's a pitfall. We can't do that. That's, anyway.

Where are we at here? I gotta regroup. Okay. So, let me see. Yeah. Checking boxes. So, remember, here's an example, a biblical example.

Look at the people in, true and false disciples. In Matthew 7, 21 and 23. Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only those, the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? And in your name drive out demons? And in your name perform many miracles?

[39 : 11] Then I will say to them painfully, or plainly, I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers. So, that's a sobering verse. But look at what they were doing.

They had a talent of all the good stuff they did for God. They kept track. They knew it well. Like, remember the Keith Green song where he talked about, I think, the sheep and the goats?

Where he's like, Lord, didn't we take you in, Lord? But, Lord, you know, like, and he's like, no. And then the sheep are like, hold on.

The sheep are like, when did we do that? They weren't even really like a way. They weren't, it was not in the forefront of their mind. They were unaware of it. They were like, Lord, when did we take you in? When did we feed you, Lord?

Like, there's like a, there's God's work that he can do in us. And when we're doing it for him and through him, by his power, it's like we don't matter that much.

[40 : 14] It's like, they're like, when did we do that? I don't know. We did that? And it's like, he says, yeah. Whatever you've done until Lisa, my brother, you've done it unto me. So anyway, I got to keep going here.

But straight, point to a straining forward to what lies ahead. So this, I kind of, straining forward is kind of an interesting phrase. I want to look it up.

So the Greek, to strain forward in Greek, it means to stretch yourself out towards something. To stretch yourself out towards something. And it says, you know, that can be uncomfortable at times. Like, we were just talking about, like, stretching and flexibility and stuff. And, yeah, stretching can be painful sometimes. Like, I don't want to reach that far.

It hurts, you know. But straining forward to what lies ahead. This is what we need to do. Like, sometimes, we don't always want, feel like, we don't need to be slaves to our feelings.

[41 : 14] We don't, we're not always going to want to strain forward. That's the fact of the matter. We're not always going to, this is not always going to bubble up out of our hearts. Sometimes we just kind of, it's like, all right, got to stretch this out.

I got to strain forward here. To enter, but it is like a straining to enter into this rest. There is, there is, it's death unto life type thing. Let me see.

So, yeah. So, moving on to pressing on toward the goal. Pressing on toward the goal for the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus.

So, press on to what? Pressing on toward the goal. What's the goal? In my understanding, the goal here is Christ-likeness and gospel advancement.

So, we're pressing on toward the goal. As, it's good to think of it, again, remembering back on Paul being called God's chosen instrument for advancing the gospel.

[42 : 27] Paraphrase. But, we're pressing on towards that end. What is it? So, it says right here, toward the upward call. So, I want to think for a second here on our calling, Christ-likeness in our calling.

So, in Romans 8, 28 through 30. And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good. For those who are called according to his purpose.

For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son. In order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

And those whom he predestined, he also called. And those whom he called, he also justified. And those whom he justified, he also glorified. So, this idea.

So, the verse we're looking at. Again, we're looking at. I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. So, let's think about this idea of calling for a second.

[43 : 32] Are we, are we, sometimes we can wonder what our calling is. We can, we can think and say, God, what am I called to? What is my calling? What are you calling me to? And, the big picture, the short answer, and the really simple answer is Christ-likeness.

That's what he calls us to. Called according to his purpose. It's to be conformed to the image of the likeness of his Son. We also call, again, in those whom he predestined, he also called.

And those whom he called, he also justified. So, the broad stroke here is you're called to Christ-likeness. You're called to be conformed to the image of the likeness of Christ.

So, that's kind of the rolling theme here. We're set flesh off. It's we don't put confidence in the flesh. We're called to Christ-likeness. By faith. It's all by faith, remember.

It's all trusting in him to do it in us. And, as far as specific callings, we just have to trust him to show us along the way, I think.

[44 : 37] That's between you and him, kind of. And, you can give prophetic insight and stuff like that. But, as a general broad stroke, we're called to Christ-likeness. So, let's kind of apply this to us, Christ Church.

We're a mixture of old, young, single, married, mothers, fathers, kids. So, how does this calling apply to us?

This is going to look different. It's just going to look different for everyone. But, the theme is still the same. It's, in our decision-making processes, life is full of decisions as moms, dads, employees, employers.

As we think about how to go about this race, we're going to have a bunch of decisions before us. And, a simple kind of radar is, a simple question to ask, is this going to be conducive to Christ-likeness?

And, me being conformed to the image and likeness of Christ? Or, is it going to detract from it? So, these are some of the things, very simple. Very simple kind of practice, question to ask. Because, our calling is not going to look like, exactly, like, let me just try and think here.

[45 : 52] I was going to go through examples of, like, I'm going to go, I'm going to jump forward, actually. Like, in 2 Corinthians 11, 23, Paul kind of goes through, I'll jump forward to 24.

Five times I've received at the hands of Jews, 40 lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. A night and a day I was drifted to sea on frequent journeys in danger of rivers, danger of robbers.

I'm actually going to skip the rest of that. You get the point here. I had it all typed up. But, the point is, Paul's calling and Paul's sufferings, in a way, kind of look different.

But, we can still apply. There are ways that we can suffer. There are ways that we are called to suffering and called to rejoice in our sufferings that aren't going to look like, That's a pretty wild set of sufferings and experience.

But, like, when we read that, it's like, you look back, it's like, oh, man. My problems are not the same. But, we do have, let me see.

[47 : 10] I'm going to try and, I'm going to continue reading here. In verse 15, so I'm going to go through verse 15, 16, and 17. It says, Let those of us who are mature think this way.

And if anything, if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that to you also. Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. So, what's the example we have in the Apostle Paul?

Well, he's writing, again, he's writing this letter from jail. And then later on, he's telling us to rejoice in our sufferings. So, he's not telling us all this stuff without, like, living it.

You know, this is like a very, this testimony we have is proof that God's grace is enough. His grace is sufficient. For anything and everything that we're going through, his grace is enough.

[48 : 15] Look at it. Look at that example we have. He literally says, Join in imitating me. Keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. That's a pretty killer example.

That's a pretty killer, that's a pretty incredible testimony of God's ability and God's grace that he can pour out on someone. That's supernatural.

Nobody rejoices in jail. Nobody does that. Like, that's wild. So, he's suffering. He's been shipwrecked. He did all this other stuff. And he's rejoicing through it. So, in our trials, in our sufferings, we can rejoice in our sufferings.

We can do this because he literally says, look at it. It's right there, you know. And there's a bunch of other examples. But I like this. Check it down here.

Oh, my goodness. I'm not even close to finishing. I'm sorry. 49 minutes. I got to wrap this up. I'm going to bag it. All right.

[49 : 16] So, what do I do here? All right. I'm going to cruise through this really quick. Give me like five more minutes. All right. God is faithful. Point here.

He's, if we're, we should be mature. We should think maturely about this stuff. God's faithful to reveal it to us. He's faithful to walk us through all of this. Next section is 18.

For many of those whom I have often told you, and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction. Their God is their belly. And they glory in their shame with mindset on earthly things.

We need to not have our mindset on earthly things. There's a temptation I feel all the time. So, we can't have our mindset on earthly things. God will help us through this. There's a whole bunch of earthly things.

There's a long list. The enemy is always trying to come at us. There's all kinds of temptations. We just need to pray for grace. That the Lord would give us grace to set our minds on things of office.

[50 : 25] Verse 20. But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. 21. Who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body.

By the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. This is a really sweet verse.

There's some really sweet stuff in here. Our citizenship is in heaven.

It's present tense. It's present tense. That's an important distinction. We need to think about this.

We're citizens of heaven. We're not first and foremost American citizens. We're not first and foremost of the Cherokee Nation or whatever.

Or like identifying with ethnicity, nation, whatever. We're sons and dogs of the king. Citizens of heaven. Moving on. Verse 4.

Sorry. Verse 1, chapter 4. Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown stand firm. Thus, in the Lord, my beloved.

[51 : 33] There's a crown before us. There's a crown before us. If we don't give up, we keep going. And he talks about his joy and crown being the people he's, by God's grace, disciple.

So, these are earthly, or these are heavenly values here. This is a heavenly value system. And he kind of ends up, he kind of wraps it up with this idea.

I got a quote and stuff. I'm going to do this quote. We'll end it with a quote. So, this is Spurgeon. He says, How intimately is the whole of our life interwoven with the life of Christ?

His first coming has been to us salvation. And we are delivered from the wrath of God through him. We live because he lives.

And never is our life more glorious, more joyous, than when we look to him most steadily.

[52 : 43] I'm going to read that last one again. Never is our life more joyous than when we look most steadily to him. Last thought. Adam, you can come up.

We're going to end in some prayer. But last thought is to kind of recap all these thoughts and ideas. Very simply, we need God for all of this.

We need the Spirit of God. We are desperately needy. We're totally dead in the water. So, we need the Spirit of God to do all of this in us.

So, We'll be right back.