

Keep Moving Forward

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[0 : 00] All right. Well, open up your Bibles to Philippians chapter 3. Philippians chapter 3. We'll start in verse 12 today.! And before I begin preaching, let me just say again how thankful I am for you as a church. That was a really kind gesture, Stephen.

Thank you for, I guess, organizing that. I don't know who all did, but I really appreciate everything that you guys have done as a church to help Audrey and I feel very welcomed here. It's been an incredible first couple months. Feels like I've been here forever because of how welcomed y'all have made me feel and made us feel.

So, very, very thankful and I just, I appreciate it. I really do. Yeah, it threw me off a little bit. So now I'm trying to refocus here before I get into preaching. You guys are just amazing. I really, really appreciate it.

Like I said, we'll be in Philippians chapter 3 starting in verse 12 and we'll read into chapter 4 verse 1. And this, I don't know if you know this, but the chapter and verse breaks in the Bible were not original to when the letters were written.

All right? And sometimes, every now and then, the chapter and verse breaks were really poorly chosen. And this is one of them. Chapter 4 verse 1 is a verse that really belongs with the unit before it in chapter 3.

[1 : 21] And so, we're going to read ahead a little bit. And so, if you would, stand with me to honor the reading of God's Word. And we'll read Philippians chapter 3 verses 12 through chapter 4 verse 1.

The Lord of the Lord says, Therefore, let all of us who are matured, Think this way.

And if you think differently about anything, God will reveal this also to you. In any case, we should live up to whatever truth we have attained. Join in imitating me, brothers and sisters, and pay careful attention to those who live according to the example you have in us.

For I've often told you, and now say again with tears, that many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction. Their God is their stomach. Their glory is in their shame.

And they are focused on earthly things. Our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly wait for a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humble condition into the likeness of His glorious body by the power that enables Him to subject everything to Himself.

[2 : 53] So then, my dearly loved and longed for brothers and sisters, my joy and my crown in this manner, stand firm in the Lord. Dear friends, let's pray together.

God, thank you for who you are. Thank you for your word. And God, now as we gather to study your word, I pray that you would bless this time. God, I pray that you would meet with us. Holy Spirit, we pray that you would fill this place.

Let us experience a closeness to you that we haven't yet even today. God, we love you, and we praise you, and we pray for growth as we study your word today. And it's in Jesus' name that we pray. Amen.

Amen. All right. You can be seated. So, title this sermon, this message, Keep Moving Forward. Keep Moving Forward. And the reason is because this idea that Paul is talking about is reaching forward to what God has for him.

Really, it's reaching forward to knowing Jesus more. Knowing Jesus more. And so, as I was thinking about this, it kind of made me consider, what does it mean to have like a winning mentality, right?

[3 : 56] Or a winner's mentality. I may not look like it now, but just a few years ago, I played sports when I was in high school. Played sports, and not just high school, but like little league, I played sports.

And let me tell you, I don't know if any of y'all are like this or any of your kids are like this, but I was like, I was a really bad loser growing up. I did not like losing. When my team lost, I was in a bad mood.

I mean, when we played card games at the house, and if I lost, I was the kid that flipped the Monopoly board. So, it was, it wasn't, I was really competitive. I still am pretty competitive. I'm not going to lie to you, but I'm not like that anymore.

But anyways, I remember as a kid, you know, I'd be on a losing team or whatever, and going home from practice and just complaining, like, I don't want to go back to practice. I'm done. That team's terrible.

The coach is bad, whatever. And, you know, saying to my dad, like, we'll never win. You know, we're so bad. And he'd always say the same thing. Not with that attitude you want. Like, what does my attitude have to do with us winning, you know?

[4 : 53] But as I kind of got older, the message came across. I learned what he meant. If you want to succeed, then you have to stay focused on getting better and improving, right? And sometimes that's easier to do when you're losing.

Sometimes it's really hard to do when you are having success, when you're winning, right? But there's certain people in the world who are greats across, you know, different platforms, right? You have sports. You have the arts. You have other areas where people are great at what they do. And one thing that separates people from good, you know, at what they do and great at what they do is people who are really committed to growing and learning and getting better at what they want to do well.

It can be easy for us to let ourselves get stagnant in life, whether it's physical health. I know for me, it's easier to desire to lose weight if I look at myself and think, well, that doesn't look good, you know?

But if I'm like, hey, I look fine, then it's way more difficult, much more difficult for me to be motivated to try to lose weight or be healthy. It's easier to make healthy decisions when I look worse physically.

[5 : 58] It's easy to get stagnant in work and school or in our Christian walk. We tend to get stagnant and comfortable with where we are. However, we do this when we buy into the lie that we're doing okay or we're good or we won't have to struggle with something anymore, right?

When we get stagnant with a particular sin struggle that we've been fighting and we get stagnant, we say, you know what? I've beat it. Woo-hoo, no more sin in that area. I'm good. And then temptation comes along and we aren't prepared to face it because we've grown stagnant. We haven't kept fighting, kept growing in our walk with Jesus. And today, as we look at this passage, I want us to think as a church about what it would take individually, what it would take for me, what it would take for you individually, to get past that stagnation, get past the satisfaction, and develop a holy dissatisfaction with where we are in our walk with Christ and pursue to know Christ more?

What would it take for us as individual Christians to desire to know Jesus Christ more each and every day? I think that's what Paul's talking about here in this passage as we looked at it already. And look at verses 12 through 14 again. He says, Not that I have already attained it or have reached the goal, not that I have already reached the goal, or am already perfect, but I make every effort to take hold of it because I have also been taken hold of by Christ Jesus.

[7 : 27] Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it, but one thing I do, forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead, I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus.

And, you know, you wonder, what is this goal that he's reaching for? Well, if you look back at verses 10 and 11, which we studied last week, verses 10 and 11 said, My goal, he tells us what his goal is, My goal is to know him, Jesus, and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death, assuming that I will somehow reach the resurrection from among the dead.

Paul's goal was to know Jesus more. That's very simple. His goal was to know Jesus, have a better, personal, intimate knowledge of Christ Jesus. That was his goal.

And evidently, there were some people in Philippi who thought they had reached that goal. They thought they were perfect. They thought they were fully matured as Christians, that they knew Jesus as good as they were ever going to know him.

And Paul's warning them here, Look, I haven't even reached that goal. I'm not perfect in my walk with Christ. I don't know him as well as I would like to. I want to know Jesus more.

[8 : 36] He was not satisfied with where he was in his Christian walk or with his accomplishments in ministry or anything. He wanted more. He wanted to fully know the power of the resurrection of Jesus.

He wanted to fellowship fully with Jesus in his sufferings. And he wanted to be conformed daily to the death of Christ. He still wanted more.

He was incredibly, Paul, this is the Apostle Paul I'm talking about. He was incredibly driven in his walk with Jesus. If anyone would be able to rest on his accomplishments, we talked about this a little bit last week, if anyone could rest on their accomplishments in their faith, right, even before he knew Christ.

Remember he said last week he counted those things as dung. He doesn't even consider those things anymore. They're worthless to him because he knows Jesus. But then let's take his Christian life into consideration. The Apostle Paul, once he was saved, right, the Damascus Road, once he was saved, he planted churches.

He was a preacher. He wrote half the New Testament. He had a pretty impressive track record, right? If anyone could look back on their record, their life in the faith, and say, I've done enough.

[9 : 42] I know Jesus enough. I'm going to sit back and coast until I die. I'll wait out this prison experience here in Rome. And then after that, I'm heading to the beach. I'm going to count seashells, right?

I'm done. If anyone was going to do that, it would have been the Apostle Paul. But even him, he had this hunger and thirst to know Jesus more. He wasn't satisfied with where he was in his Christian walk.

It doesn't make any sense for the Christian to claim to know and love Jesus and not desire a deeper, more personal, more intimate relationship with him.

Like Paul, he wanted to pursue Christ because he saw that he had been captured by Christ, right? He wanted to take hold of Jesus because Jesus had taken hold of him.

That's the reality for Christians. That's the reality if you've put faith in Jesus. Jesus has taken hold of you. And if he's taken hold of you, the natural inclination is from that point to get to know him better, to go from where you were to knowing him more.

[10 : 46] That's the natural inclination for the Christian. He didn't, Paul didn't think of himself as having attained the spiritual maturity or perfect relationship with Christ that he wanted to have.

And why is it that so many today seem to be okay with where we're at in our walk with Christ? I'm guilty of this too, right? Where it's like, you know, I'm not as good as I'd like to be, but I'm not as bad as I was.

So that's, you know, you weigh it out. It seems okay. It's not as bad as it looks. But the reality is all of us should be on a constant upward trajectory, right? Reaching closer to that relationship with Jesus that we desire.

Not many people would admit that they don't pursue Christ daily or want a deeper relationship with him, right? Not many people would publicly say, like, I'm good with where I'm at. But a lot of us do that by our actions when we don't read the word, right?

When we don't spend time in prayer, we don't fellowship with fellow believers, we don't worship joyfully, right? When we show by our actions all too often that we aren't pursuing that goal that the Apostle Paul had, which is a closer, more intimate, more personal relationship with Jesus.

[11 : 58] So here are a couple of things that I'm going to take from this passage directly about how we can do a better job as individual Christians of pursuing a deeper, more personal relationship with Christ, a deeper knowledge of Christ even.

All right? This is directly from this passage. Number one, forget what is behind you. Forget what is behind you. He says in verse 13, Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it, but one thing I do, forgetting what is behind.

Forgetting what is behind means you don't let the guilt of your life before Christ hold you back, hold you captive as you pursue him daily.

Don't let the guilt of your sinful life before Jesus, before you were saved, hold you back in your walk with Christ. If God can use a man who tried to kill Christians and destroy his church to do all of the things I just mentioned, write half the New Testament, plant churches all around the world, all of

those things.

If God can use Paul to do that, then I promise you God can forgive your sin and give you freedom from your sin. If you put faith in Jesus, you don't have to hold on to that anymore.

[13:15] Forget what's behind you. At the same time, it means don't rest on your spiritual accomplishments. Right? Like sometimes we, like, man, I've been really, really good with my walk with Christ lately.

I've read the Bible every day for like 80 days in a row. I'm doing good. Like, well, don't rest on that and then get lazy and not keep going, but pursue Christ more.

Don't rest on the accomplishments from behind. Instead, have that holy dissatisfaction with where you're at in your spiritual life and grow closer. Try to know him more.

And the second thing, reach, so forget what is behind. And the second thing, and directly from the passage, is reach forward to what is ahead. The picture that's being painted here is that of somebody running in a race or competing in some competition.

And focus, their attention is focused solely on the prize that's ahead of them. Right? Running a race is a really good example. Somebody running and not thinking about everything, not letting the noise distract them, not letting anything, the fellow competitors distract them.

[14:20] But they're just running solely focused on the prize, winning the prize. I was listening to a teacher of the Bible. His name is John Piper. I was listening to a John Piper video about this passage, and he gave a really, really good illustration for what this idea of reaching forward to what is ahead and forgetting what is behind.

He gave a really good illustration, and I want to share it with you. And let me start by saying I'm not a cyclist. Is anybody in here a cyclist? Anybody really into bike, like riding bikes? Okay, good.

We're normal people. Okay, I'm just kidding. Okay, so I'm not really into cycling, but this is a really powerful example or illustration. In 1989, in the Tour de France, it was just a big, you know, big cycling company.

We all know what that is, right? Okay, okay. So I'm not big into that, but this is a really neat analogy. In 1989, there was an American. His name was Greg LeMond, okay?

And he was fighting to win. He was in the competition. He wanted to win the race. And coming into the final day of the Tour, he was behind the leader, which is a Frenchman, actually. He was behind the leader by 50 seconds.

[15:28] And the final stretch of the Tour was what's called a time trial. Again, I'm not into racing, and since you're not into bike racing, let me explain what a time trial is. I had to look this up, okay?

The time trial means that riders compete individually against the clock rather than directly against each other. Riders start separately, typically one to two minutes apart, and aim to complete the course as quickly as possible.

The goal is to post the fastest time, which adds directly to your total time and the overall race standings. All right? Fair enough? We're all good? Okay. So Greg LeMond had this final stretch ahead of him.

He had a 15, it's about a 15-mile ride, give or take. And he was behind by 50 seconds in the race. And normally in these situations, when the riders are in these time trials, they'll have somebody radio in to them while they're riding and keep them up to date on how they're doing, what their pace is, and if they're going to get the, you know, if they're going to reach the limit that they wanted to reach.

Well, Greg LeMond told his team, don't tell me how I'm doing with my race. I don't want to know. Don't tell me how I'm doing. Don't tell me how the competition, the French guy that he was racing against.

[16:40] Don't tell me anything. I'm going to put my head down, and I'm going to ride, and I'm going to try to win. That's what he tried to do. So he did that. He put his head down. He didn't listen to anything. He rode.

He averaged over 15 miles. He averaged almost 34 miles per hour riding a bicycle, which is a little bit scary if you think about it. Anyways, he would finish that 15-mile stretch in about 26 minutes and 57 seconds, and he made up the 50-second difference that he was behind and ended up winning the tour by eight seconds.

It was the closest tour finish ever. And he made up that time riding by himself. He wasn't listening to the distractions. He didn't want to keep up with what was behind him. He was not focused on

behind.

He was focused on what was ahead, right? He put his head down, and he rode, and he ended up winning. And Piper used this illustration to show kind of what it would look like to only focus on what is ahead.

And I think that's pretty clear, right? Pretty helpful. We just put our head down and focus on what we're supposed to do as Christ followers. We don't worry about the things that God has used us to do in the past. We don't worry about the things that we did before we were saved.

[17:49] Instead, we focus on how we can move forward and how we can grow in Christ and grow to know him more. So as you think about what it would take to strive for a deeper relationship with Christ, a better knowledge of him, do this.

Make decisions daily that inch you closer to Christ. So what I mean by that is if you aren't reading the Bible regularly, well, start by reading the Bible a few days a week.

Just get into the habit of consuming God's word. If you aren't spending time fellowshiping with other believers in Bible study, then maybe try to join a Bible study and have that accountability factor, right?

That encouragement of the saints getting together and studying the word together. Make decisions with the goal of knowing Christ more in mind each day, right?

Small decisions. Eventually, those become habits. And then you make further decisions and so on and so forth. Kind of snowball into this deeper relationship, deeper knowledge with Christ. The next thing that we're going to talk about here is verses 15 through 17 is we got to keep looking for examples to follow.

[18:53] So we keep going as Christ followers and now we keep looking for examples to follow. And verses 15 through 17 says, We're reminded in verses 15 through 17 of a very simple reality.

We can follow the example of other people who have walked closely with the Lord for a long time. It's a really neat thing, right? We don't physically have Christ here in front of us. He's ascended. He's at the right hand of the Father. We don't have the Apostle Paul back in the back writing more books for us. That'd be pretty cool. Both of those would. We don't have that. But what we do have are faithful believers, faithful examples, people who love the Lord and are in our lives.

We know them personally, right? And so we can watch their example and we can follow their example. It's a sign of spiritual maturity to recognize that you have a long way to go in your walk with Christ.

That's not a bad thing to recognize that you need to grow closer to Jesus. The Apostle Paul did it, right? And I'd argue he was spiritually mature. Actually, in verse 15 where it says, Therefore, let all of us who are mature think this way.

[20:17] That's actually the same word from verse 12 where he says, I'm not already perfect. So he basically says, I'm not perfect. And then he says, Therefore, let all of us who are perfect think this way.

The idea is spiritual maturity. But it might also be a dig at some of the people who called themselves perfect, right? Hey, look, if you're perfect, then guess what? Keep going, right? If you're already there, if you already think that you're perfect in your walk with Jesus, you're already fully sanctified, you've been made holy and righteous completely in every way, perfect.

Keep going and look to other examples of people who you can follow. So for people who aren't particularly spiritually mature in the faith, this should be an encouragement to you.

Live to the truth that you have attained. Verse 16, In any case, we should live up to whatever truth we have attained. If you've come to faith in Christ, and you don't know everything, right?

I could throw around theological words that people in here would be like, Is that even a word? You know what I mean? And that's not bragging. That's because I had to study it for seminary, honestly.

[21:23] But the point is, not everybody knows all the theological words. Not everybody knows all of the different nuance of Scripture and all the Greek verbs and all of the... It doesn't matter. You don't have to know all of those things.

Live up to the truth that you have attained. Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? Check. Do you believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sins? Check. Okay. From there, grow closer to Him.

Learn more about Him. And watch how God gives you this heart of hunger for His Word, for His truth. He grows you in sanctification. And watch how your life begins to look more like Christ.

Live up to the truth that you have attained. But there's an element of faithfulness there too, right? For all Christians, for all of us, we have a responsibility to live up to the truth that we have attained. So if you know that you need to walk closer by reading the Bible every single day and you've been doing that, well, live up to that, right? And watch how God grows you even more. And the best thing is, verse 17, God has given us amazing examples to follow.

[22 : 27] Verse 17 says, Join in imitating me, brothers and sisters, and pay careful attention to those who live according to the example you have in us. Right? It's not just Paul. He's not the only example worth imitating.

He says to imitate me, but then he says also imitate the people who live like us, the people who have spiritually matured. And like I said, there's people in our church who are spiritually mature, follow their patterns, learn from their behaviors.

If you want to grow, you should look to the examples that you have in spiritually mature believers here in the church. And I know that, so for me, I've worked at different places that aren't churches, just so you know, I haven't only worked at churches.

And core value at places that I've worked at has always one of the core values everywhere. It should be a core value for churches too, but it's to be teachable, right? Be a teachable person. How many teachers here be teachable? Is that a thing? Are teachers supposed to be teachable? Is that a thing? Oh, okay, cool. All right. So being, there's a lot of teachers in this church. I had to ask that question. Okay. You won't be a good employee if you aren't teachable, right?

[23 : 34] Being teachable, it requires a level of humility to say that you don't know everything you need to know yet, right? So you follow the example of people who are on your team, who work with you, coworkers, who have been there for a while.

They've been working hard. They know the ins and outs. They know the rest of the culture of the workplace. And so you follow their example, right? Be a teachable person. Well, in the same way as a Christ follower, be a teachable Christian, right?

Admit that you haven't made it everywhere you need to make it as a Christ follower like what Paul did here, and submit yourself to learning humbly what it would look like to grow in your walk with Jesus.

So be a teachable Christian. Follow the examples of faithful people as you seek to reach the goal of knowing Christ Jesus more. And I'll add one other thought here, and that is Paul in multiple places calls people to imitate himself.

In 1 Corinthians 11, he says, imitate me as I also imitate Christ. All right? And so here's something that I just, this is a food for thought. Do you live a life worthy of imitating?

[24 : 36] As a Christian, could you say to a new believer, somebody gives their life to Christ in the church, could you walk up to them and say, hey, I'm so excited for what God's done in your life, I want you to imitate my life.

Is that, do you live a life that you could say to a new believer, imitate my life, so that you can walk closer to Jesus? And by the way, there's no arrogance there from Paul, right? There's no arrogance from Paul to say, imitate me as I imitate Christ, because he's actually imitating Christ, right?

It's not arrogant for me to try to teach my, you know, almost two-year-old son how to do something, because I know how to do it, right? It's like he's trying to, you know, little kid, try to twist things, try to open door.

It's like, hey, let me show, well, I don't want to show him how to open a door, but, you know, the little things, right? Jack, watch me. I'll show you how to do this. Now do the same thing that I did.

That's not arrogance. That's me helping him. It's me coming alongside of him and showing him how to do the thing that he's trying to do. In the same way, as Christians, we can be people who very humbly can look at other Christians and say, hey, I see where you're at.

[25 : 43] I want you to imitate where I'm at. Like, follow my example. You could do that. You could do that. So live to be a Christian worthy of imitating, all right?

And the way to do that is to imitate Christ. The way to be worthy of imitating is to imitate Christ in your life. And here's the thing. For as many positive examples as we have for growth, there's a world full of people who live as enemies of the cross, is what it says in verses 17, or verses 18 and 19.

And so the next thing is we're going to keep watch, all right? Keep watch. Keep looking at examples. Now we're going to keep watch. Verses 18 and 19 say, For I've often told you, and now

say again, with tears, that many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.

Their end is destruction. Their God is their stomach. Their glory is in their shame. And they are focused on earthly things. So very simple here. Watch out for the lies of the self-sufficient crowd. When Paul wrote this, he was probably talking about the Judaizers. And you remember the Judaizers, right? We talked about them last week. That group of Jews who followed Paul after he led people to Christ.

[26 : 53] And they would tell the people that he had led to Christ that they weren't Christians because they weren't following the Jewish law. They were adding all these legalistic steps to know Jesus. So he probably had them in mind as he wrote this.

But we have a similar warning because there are people who are still enemies to the cross of Christ. People who still teach things as truth that are enemies to the cross of Christ. There are people who peddle the lies that people can be made right with God through works. There are people who say that the cross is not as important as you might have learned. They'll say that the cross was a good example and that Jesus was a good example. But he doesn't want any more of you than just for you to try to live as a good person like he was. In doing that, they minimize sin and they shipwreck the faith of many.

So watch for people who minimize the cross. Watch for people who are enemies of the cross. And don't fall into that crowd because there's a really sad reality for them, which is Paul shared with tears that their end is destruction, separation from God, eternal separation.

[28 : 04] This is not a happy thing for Paul. Sometimes Christians are really happy when bad things happen to people we deem as bad, right? And that's really not the heart that we should have towards people because the reality is when people are apart from Christ, their end is destruction.

And that's a sad reality. And Paul was not being insincere here. In Romans chapter 9, he explained, talking about the Jews, that he himself would rather die and go to hell if it meant that every other Jewish person ever would come to faith in Jesus.

He says in Romans 9, verses 1 through 3, I speak the truth in Christ. I am not lying. My conscience testifies to me through the Holy Spirit that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the benefit of my brothers and sisters, my own flesh and blood. He was very sincere in his heart for the lost, right?

And we have to be very careful here. People who are enemies of the cross, as described here, people who minimize the cross, their end is destruction, and that's a heartbreaking reality. But as we live as Christ followers, we can show them who Christ is, and we can hopefully lead them to the person of Jesus Christ.

[29 : 22] And notice, too, one of the characteristics of the enemies of the cross is that they're focused on earthly things. The earthly focus can't be true of a person who desires to know Christ more.

So look at verses 20 and 21. Look at the future hope that we have in Christ. Verses 20 and 21. So we're going to keep hope in sight.

Keep hope in sight. Chapter 3, verse 20 says, Our citizenship is in heaven, and we eagerly await, we eagerly wait for a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.

So we've talked about this idea of being citizens of heaven before. If you look back in Philippians 1, verse 27, he says we're citizens of heaven there. And citizens of heaven can't remain focused on earthly things.

We're citizens of a higher domain. So this idea is stated in other places in Scripture. Clint read 2 Corinthians 4, 16 through 18 earlier. He says, We do not focus on what is seen but what is unseen, for what is seen is temporary, what is unseen is eternal.

[30 : 21] Colossians 3 says, So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

For you who died and your life is hidden with Christ in God, when Christ appears, who is your life, then you also will appear with him in glory. Being citizens of heaven means that we have to focus on heavenly things.

We have a hope beyond this earth. So we set our eyes there. And I'm going to add something. This is just, let me, I want to address something real quick.

All right? This is important. When you read citizens in the Bible, and you think about the fact that we're in an election year, and an election is coming up pretty soon here, I have to address this just

for a moment.

Because we as Christ followers can't focus only on earthly things. At the end of the day, a political election in a nation that's been around for a couple hundred years is a pretty earthly thing, right? [31 : 24] If that's our only focus and our only hope. That's an earthly thing to have our focus and our hope in. So we're citizens of heaven, and we know that our Savior will return. It says we eagerly wait for a Savior from there.

So regardless of whatever happens politically or nationally, we're citizens of heaven. And regardless of who the elected leader is of America, Christ is on his throne. And that's not to say that there aren't important issues at stake in this election.

This election, as in every election, holds some very important issues in its hands, especially for churches and parents and Christians. So while we are citizens of heaven, we are still here on earth. As citizens of America, I just want to encourage every single one of you who's old enough and able to exercise your right to vote, read God's word, pray through the issues at hand, and vote in a way that honors God.

After praying through and researching, I think there is a clear choice on who Christians should vote for. And I think that many can come to the same conclusion. So vote prayerfully. And after studying well, being a citizen of heaven doesn't mean that our earthly citizenship doesn't matter.

[32 : 28] It means that our perspective on our earthly citizenship is different. Why? Because we have the hope of a Savior who's coming from our real citizenship, heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And the hope is powerful. So we're going to look at verse 21. He will transform the body of our humble condition into the likeness of his glorious body by the power that enables him to subject everything to himself.

Christ followers have the hope that we will be transformed. We'll have new bodies made fit for heaven. And how can we trust this hope? What's the guarantee that this will happen?

We're not hoping in our ability to do good. We're not hoping in our ability to stand before God and give him a list of all the nice things that we did in his name and hope that that's enough to get this new body.

We have our hope in the power of Christ Jesus. The power that enables him to subject everything to himself. The all power of God is what we have our hope in.

[33 : 34] The power that raised Jesus from the dead. Remember Philippians 2, 5 through 11. Every knee will bow, every tongue will confess on earth and under the earth that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

We trust that power. We don't trust ourselves. We trust him. And so I'm going to close today by reading three passages of scripture that I think are pretty helpful with thinking about how much hope we have in Jesus as citizens of heaven.

All right? So I'm going to read three passages of scripture. This will be our closing time, and then we'll sing together. But it says in Romans 8, 23 through 25, it says, Not only that, but we ourselves who have the spirit as first fruits, we also groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

Now in this hope we were saved, but hope that is seen is not hope, because who hopes in what he sees? Now if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with patience.

1 Corinthians 15, 42 through 44 says, So it is with the resurrection of the dead, sown in corruption, raised in incorruption, sown in dishonor, raised in glory, sown in weakness, raised in power, sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body.

[34 : 56] If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. 1 Corinthians 15, 51 through 53 says, Listen, I'm telling you a mystery. We will not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet, for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed.

For this corruptible body must be clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal body must be clothed with immortality. Christian, we have hope. We have hope.

We have hope in a resurrected Savior who will resurrect us. So as Paul says in chapter 4, verse 1, So then my dearly loved and longed for brothers and sisters, my joy and my crown, in this manner, with all of that knowledge of the hope that we have, stand firm in the Lord, dear friends.

As you grow and you keep going, don't get stagnant. Pursue Christ more. And why? Because we have hope in Him. We have a sure, confident hope. And I'll just add this.

If you're in the room and you're not a Christian, I invite you today, a very simple invitation, join in that hope. Put your faith in Jesus Christ today. Let's pray together. God, thank you for who you are. [36 : 12] Thank you for your word. Thank you for the powerful reminder of the hope that we have in Christ Jesus, and the reason that we pursue our growth in our relationship with you.

Thank you for your grace. Thank you for your grace.