

Walking in Righteousness

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[0 : 0 0] We're going to read in Paul's letter to the Philippians chapter 3. Philippians chapter 3. And we can read from the beginning of the chapter.

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Philippians chapter 3. you be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even the Son to you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as you have us for an example. 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, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, 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. Amen, and may God bless to us that reading. We're going to sing again, and this time we're going to sing in Psalm 36. Psalm 36, at verse 5.

[4 : 0 1] Thy mercy, Lord, is in the heavens, thy truth doth reach the clouds. Thy justice is like mountains great, thy judgments deep as floods. Lord, thou preservest man and beast, how precious is thy grace.

Therefore, in shadow of thy wings, men's sons their trust shall place. We're going to sing to the end of verse 10. Psalm 36, at verse 5. Thy mercy, Lord, is in the heavens, thy truth doth reach the clouds.

Thy mercy, Lord, is in the heavens, thy heavens, thy truth doth reach the clouds. Thy judgments, thy judgments, thy mountains great.

Thy judgments keep us full Lord, every selfless man of this The precious is Thy grace Therefore, in shadow of thy wings Men's sons, their trust shall be Be with the fullness of thy house Shall be well satisfied

From rivershew, thy pleasure thou Will bring to them provide Because of thy dumb and new Release the Lord with thee Again, the purest light of thine We clear the light shall see Thy loving kindness

[7 : 15] And bless unto them Continue that the Lord And still, O man, the brightened heart Thy righteousness bestow Let's turn back to Philippians chapter 3 And we can read again at verse 10 That I may know him And the power of his resurrection And the fellowship of his suffering Being made conformable unto his death If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead

Not as though I had already attained Either were already perfect But I follow after If that I may apprehend that For which also I am apprehended Of Christ Jesus Now before we come to look at these verses Just to give you the context in which they're found Paul begins the chapter by Warning the church here at Philippi Against those that had come into their midst Claiming that they themselves were Christians That they had believed in the Lord Jesus Christ But who were insisting on the ceremonial law Still being practiced So they were preaching a gospel Contrary to the gospel that Paul was preaching

They were preaching a Christ plus gospel They were saying it's not enough That you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ You still have to perform these religious rituals And especially the circumcision You must still be circumcised Even or though you have believed in Jesus And Paul is making it clear That they're dogs Now he doesn't mince his words In the letter to the Galatians He says Let anybody who preaches any other gospel Let them be accursed In other words Let them go to hell That's so serious He was taking those That were preaching a gospel Contrary to the gospel That he and the rest of the apostles Were preaching And let's not think for one moment That in our generation

We're immune from these things There's a gospel being preached In our churches Up and down our country Which is not the gospel of Jesus Christ They have either added or detracted From the gospel And this is what Paul Is seeking to safeguard the Philippians from That they're not taken in by these people That have entered into their midst Claiming that they themselves are Christians But insisting on their performance Of these rituals He says They're dogs Beware of them We are the circumcision Which worship God in the spirit And rejoice in Christ Jesus And have no confidence in the flesh So there he gives A true token of those That are truly converted They worship God They worship God In the spirit They are people

Who have been born again Of the Holy Spirit of God And they are dependent Upon the spirit To lead them into the truth In order for them to know How God is to be worshipped In spirit and in truth And they have absolutely No confidence in the flesh In other words They have no confidence In anything that they themselves do Not even their most religious works Do they put any confidence in As a means by which They're going to earn any favor with God They have absolutely no confidence In their own righteousness In other words In their own religious efforts Their confidence Confidence is in the spirit And the spirit enables them To look to Christ Jesus They rejoice in Christ Jesus Because this is where they find

[12 : 22] The fullness of their salvation This is where they put their trust In the work that he did Not in the work that we do But in the work that he did For his people Their rejoicing is in him They have absolutely no confidence Whatsoever in the flesh And he goes on to say That if anyone was to have confidence In the flesh That he's got more reason Than anybody else And he gives us a list Of his pedigree Circumcised on the eighth day Of the stock of Israel Of the tribe of Benjamin And so on In other words There isn't a Jew As Jewish as I was I had every privilege That was possible For me to receive And not only was I born With these privileges But I myself sought to add

To what I received I was zealous In my zeal for The faith that I had I was diligent In my study of God's word I became a Pharisee I knew God's word And anybody that believed In anything contrary To what I believed in I persecuted them And I was prepared To put them to death So he says If anybody would have Confidence in the flesh I've got more reason To have confidence In the flesh Than any of these people I had excelled In my own religion The religion Into which I was born And in the religion That I sought to add to In order to Attain this righteousness Which is of the law

And he says I attained the righteousness Of the law To such a degree That nobody could Point a finger at me And say that I was guilty My life outwardly Was impeccable I was religious And I didn't do anything That would be offensive To anybody as seen As a lawbreaker Paul was somebody That you would like To have as a neighbor Because you knew That you could trust him But he says All of these things I came to consider As done In comparison To what I had Now in Christ Yea doubtless I count all things As laws For the excellency Of the knowledge Of Christ Jesus My Lord For whom I suffered The loss of all things

And count them But done That I may Win Christ So everything That he had He considered It as done Now the word That's Translated Dung Is The awful That they used To Take outside Of the city To burn In the huge dump That was outside Of Jerusalem Because as you know If you've read Your Old Testament They were continually Sacrificing animals At the temple And the awful Was carried out To be burnt In a big Tup outside The city And that fire Was continually Going There was smoke Arising from that Dump Continually As they sought To burn up That awful There was a stench Because In the warm Climate That they lived In There was A smell From that dump

And There were Maggots And flies And scavenging Dogs Around that dump And this is What he resembles His own works To As dung Foot for nothing But the dump To be burnt up Because it stinks It's dead It's of no value Whatsoever And these things That they're insisting That you must still Practice Is foot for the dump Christ has come Christ has fulfilled Everything that The ceremonial law Was pointing to We are the circumcision Not the circumcision Of the flesh But the circumcision Of the heart Those who are born again Of the Holy Spirit We are the circumcision That's what circumcision Was pointing to And Christ has come Sending his Holy Spirit Into our hearts

[17 : 27] We're circumcised In our hearts We're the ones Who worship God In the spirit And we have absolutely No confidence In the flesh And we rejoice In the one Who earned this For us Our Lord And Saviour Jesus Christ And then he says To be found in him Not having my own Righteousness Which is of the law But that which is Through the faith Of Christ The righteousness Which is of God By faith So he's speaking Of two types Of righteousness The righteousness That we seek To clothe ourselves In by trying To fulfill God's law Which he Has previously said Is like dung We can seek to try And clothe ourselves And clothe ourselves In that dung Or we can accept The righteousness Which God has made Freely available to us In Christ Jesus

This righteousness This righteousness Has its origin In God himself It is God Who has provided This righteousness And he's willing To give us That righteousness And all we have To do Is to receive it By faith And that's the righteousness That Paul now Considers of far Greater value Than the righteousness That he had Previously sought To clothe himself in And the righteousness That these Christians That had Come into their midst And were insisting That we still had To try and attain to And Paul is saying Oh that's rubbish Don't believe a word of it Accept what God Has done for you Because It's like climbing A ladder to heaven By trying to

Attain to Reaching the top In your own efforts You'll never get To the end of that ladder It's an infinite ladder We'll never ascend To the top In other words We will never come up To God's standard In order for God To allow us To enter into heaven So why are you Going to waste Your time Climbing that ladder When you can just Step into the lift And allow God To take you there Because he's freely Making his power Available to you And he's willing To give you This righteousness And all you have To do is To believe In the Lord Jesus Christ And nothing else Faith alone In the Lord Jesus Christ And he goes on From there To say This is Now what I want That I may know Him The power

Of whose resurrection The fellowship Of whose suffering Being made Conformable Unto his death So what he's doing There is That he's After having received The righteousness Which is of God By faith He's wanting To live out That righteousness In his life And in order To live out That righteousness In his life He needs to know Christ better Because his desire Is to become Like Christ That's what Every Christian's Desire ought to be To be Christ like That's the goal That's been set Before us This is what Paul was Pressing on to And this is The way That he was Going to press On towards That goal He must Know Christ Better Now The knowledge

That he speaks Of here Is not just A head Knowledge Yes we need Head knowledge We need to know what the Truth teaches And we need To know what The truth Has revealed To us Concerning Christ But it Doesn't just Stop at Head knowledge That knowledge Must permeate Down into The depth Of our souls And it must Begin to Have an Effect on The way That we Live our Lives So that We'll start Living lives That are Righteous Because we Have received The righteousness Of Christ And if we Have received The righteousness Of Christ And if we're Endeavoring to Be like Christ Then we Must become Righteous And the only Way that we're Going to Become righteous Is that we Allow the Truth to Shape us To conform Us to the Image of Christ So it must Sink down Into our

[22 : 32] Souls after It's entered Into our Understanding So that it Might influence The way That we Live our Lives And this Is The effect That it'll Have on us We will Shun Shun Everything That belongs To the Flesh And we Will steer Towards where The spirit Is leading Us And this Is where The spirit Will always Lead us He'll lead Us into The truth In other Words He'll lead Us into The paths Of righteousness And we all Know these Words Very well This is What the Holy spirit Enables us To do As he Enlightens Our minds In the Knowledge Of Christ He also Empowers us And he Influences The way That we Conduct Ourselves The beginning God's fear Is the Beginning

Of wisdom And to Depart From evil Is Understanding So our True knowledge Is understanding And understanding Is to shun Away from The evil And to Walk In the Light As he is In the Light And that's What the Holy spirit Enables us To do And as we Develop In our Knowledge And in Our Progress In walking In the Paths Of Righteousness We grow In our Knowledge Of the Intimate Relationship That we Are beginning To form With Christ This knowledge Brings about A personal Relationship With our Lord and Saviour And it's Not that he Didn't have A relationship He did But he Didn't have It to the Extent that

He wanted To have It He wanted To grow Closer In that Relationship It's like Every Relationship In which You fall In love With a Person You want That Relationship To grow You nurture It So that you Will get To know The person Better Because if You love The person You'll want To know Them And you'll Want to know Everything About them And you Want to Grow Closer Together To them And this Is what Paul Means When he Says That I May Know him Because he Realizes That if he's To walk In these Paths Of righteousness That he Needs to be Empowered Who's going To empower Him Well there's Only one That can Empower us And that's The Lord Jesus Christ That's What grace Is Along with Everything Else That grace Can mean To us It means

Power He gives Us help He gives Us the Power To help Us In our Time of Need He empowers Us So he's Asking To have The power Of his Resurrection Because he Knows That if he's To walk In the Paths Of righteousness That he Can only Walk in It as He is Dependent Upon the Grace Of the Lord Jesus Christ He's Got no Confidence In the Flesh He's Lost All his Confidence In his Own Abilities He is Now looking To the Ability Of Christ His Saviour Who continues To save Him From his Own Sinful Ways And in Doing so He's Experiencing The power That flows From him The same Power That rose Christ From the Dead Is the Same Power Paul Tells In Ephesians That brought Us to Life And it's The same

Power That continues To give Us that Life Into what She has Brought Us It's It's the Power Of the Resurrection And the Goal Is That it Will lead Us Towards A glorious Resurrection If by any Means I Might attain Unto the Resurrection Of the Dead Because Whatever We're going To experience In this Life If we're Looking to Christ It's preparing Us For a More glorious Resurrection Every Christian Will have A Resurrection But some Will rise More glorious Than others And Paul Was striving To receive As much Of that Glory as He possibly Could Because What he's Going to Have in Glory Will depend On what He did In this World We will All be Rewarded According To our

[27 : 33] Works In this World Now any Works that We do In our Own Strength Will not Earn us Anything But any Work That we've Done Through faith In Jesus Christ Is put To our Account So that Those who Have done The most By trusting In Christ Will be Far more Further Advanced In glory Than those Who didn't Make such An effort And Paul Was striving To receive As much Of Christ As he Possibly Could So that He would Have this Glorious Resurrection When Christ Came Again Now he Knows That if That's Going to Be the Case That that's Going to Bring about Suffering And that's The next Thing that he Asks for To have Fellowship Of his Suffering Being made Conformable And to His Death Now The Now the

Christian Should expect That in This life He's going To have Tribulations And if He's Thriving To be Made Like Christ Then he's Going to Have to Suffer Similar To the Things that Christ Suffered Now the Christian Shouldn't Be Surprised By Suffering And by Trials We should Expect it Paul writing to Timothy says, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

The Lord Jesus Christ himself says to his disciples in John 15, the servant must be made like his Lord.

If he's going to be made like his Lord, it's through the sufferings, the same kind of sufferings that his Lord had, which shaped him.

Because it was through his suffering that he was made perfect, the writer to the Hebrews tells us. Now, not that he wasn't already perfect, but he wasn't what he had to be in order to be the perfect high priest.

[29 : 55] He had to go through suffering in order that he might sympathize with us who suffer, so that we might be conformed to his image.

Peter tells us that we shouldn't be surprised at the fiery trials, as though something strange were happening to us. But that we should rejoice in them, because we're sharing in his suffering.

Now, this is the mind of Christ. Christ, in chapter 2, we're told, humbled himself. He came from the height of heaven, and he descended to the depths of hell.

He suffered before he ascended in the glorious resurrection that he had when he was glorified by the Father.

And this is what Paul is getting at in making reference to the resurrection. He knows that if he's going to attain to that glorious resurrection when Christ comes again, that he must share in his suffering.

[31 : 08] That he must humble himself before the exaltation comes. So this is why he's asking that he might have fellowship with his suffering, being made conformable unto his death, being willing to suffer the loss of all things, even his own life, in order that he might be made like Christ.

Because that's the goal. That's what he's striving for. Now, why would Paul mention the resurrection of Christ before he mentioned his death?

Because for Christ, death preceded his resurrection. But for the Christian who sets his mind on following Christ, in order to walk in the paths of righteousness as Christ walked in, then we need to understand that we've already experienced a resurrection, a spiritual resurrection, which Christ didn't need to experience.

Because Christ was never dead in trespasses and sins such as we are. And when we were born again of the Holy Spirit, we've already experienced a spiritual resurrection.

We've been brought to life. But in order to walk in the footsteps of Christ, we need to continue to experience that same power that brought us to life.

[32 : 43] We need to experience the power of the resurrection. And this is what Christ has promised to do for us. Because he has risen, he is able to impart that power to us through the Holy Spirit, to strengthen us, to keep us, and to lead us, and to enable us to walk lives that are worthy of the calling with which we have been called.

So we need to share in the sufferings of Christ, so that we might be made conformable unto his death.

Now he goes on to say, Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect. But I follow after, if that I may apprehend that, for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

So there's Paul admitting to us that he is not perfect. Now that's an apostle. And if an apostle is telling us, he hasn't yet reached the point in his salvation that he wants to reach, he is not already like Christ.

It's a work in progress. He is not already perfect. But he's striving for that perfection. He's striving to be Christ-like.

[34 : 21] And he knows that if that's going to happen, it's through experiencing fellowship with his suffering. In order that that might happen.

Because, as he's already told them at the beginning of the chapter, if anyone was to claim perfection, I could have claimed it. Because nobody could point a finger at me and say that I was guilty.

Because the righteousness which is according to the law, I was blameless. But now here he comes to admit, I'm not blameless. I'm not perfect.

Because I haven't yet attained to perfection. It's only begun in my life. But I'm striving for that. I'm pressing on for that. And in order to attain to that, I need to be empowered.

I need to know Christ so that I will receive more power so that I might walk in the paths of righteousness. And if I'm going to walk in the paths of righteousness, I know that it's going to bring about suffering in my life.

[35 : 31] But that suffering in my life is going to work out in my life to shape me and to conform me to the image of Christ so that I will be perfect.

So that when he appears, as John tells us, we shall be like him and we shall see him as he is. That's the gospel hope.

That's what the Christian is striving for. That's what he's pressing on for as he goes on to tell us in the following verses. He's making every effort to attain to this perfection.

Now, in verse 9, he tells us there's absolutely nothing that we can do in order to save ourselves. The righteousness which is of the law is useless.

We can't do it. But there's a righteousness that has its origin in God which we can receive by faith. And we get that freely from God.

[36 : 42] It's God's gift to us. When we receive Christ, we receive Christ's righteousness. That's what we receive. But now he goes on to tell us once we receive that, we need then to strive for this perfection.

We need to press on. We need to follow after it. Not as though I had already attained it. Either were already perfect. But I follow after.

In other words, I press on for it. I'm striving. I'm straining every grace that God has now given me. I'm seeking to exercise all of these graces, my faith, my hope, and my love in order to attain to that perfection which we will have in Christ Jesus when Christ comes again and we will be made like Him.

Now he says, I haven't already attained to that point. But that's what I'm striving for. That's what I'm following after. So that I might apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

Now what he's saying is, I am now striving for the fulfillment of the purpose for which Jesus laid hold on me.

[38 : 14] Because it wasn't Paul that laid hold of Christ first and foremostly. it was Christ that laid hold on him. I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

Now when a person is converted and maybe when Paul was converted he thought that it was him that exercised faith in Christ Jesus. That he made that choice.

But he was only able to make that choice because Christ had already made a choice of him. The same as Jesus told his disciples, you did not choose me.

I chose you. And it's because he chose us that we are able to exercise faith and choose him.

Now we don't understand that when we're first converted. But as the spirit leads us into the truth we come to understand that. And that ought to give us far greater comfort than the Arminian theology that many believe in.

[39 : 27] That they made choice of Christ. Because if we believed that it was us that made that choice we would always be wondering did we make the right choice and is it the right Christ that we've believed in.

but because it wasn't us that made the choice in the first place we can have confidence. We can have confidence that he makes no mistakes.

And if he has chosen us the effect that that has had on us is that we now want to be like him. And that's the only reason that we can exercise faith in him is because he has apprehended us and what Paul is now striving for is that he might lay hold of the reason for which he was apprehended.

That he might become Christ-like because that's the goal that God has for all of his children. He wants us to be righteous.

As John tells us in his first letter at the end of chapter 2 where he's giving evidences of whether we've been born again or not to help those that might be faltering in their faith or lacking assurance.

[40 : 56] This is what John says at the end of chapter 2. Now little children abide in him that when he shall appear we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

If you know that he is righteous you know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of him. You know that everybody who doeth righteousness is born of him because that doesn't arise from the sinful nature of man.

we don't desire God's righteousness we have set about to establish our own righteousness even by being very religious as Paul was he had set about to establish his own righteousness but he's now come to the point that he's recognized that's not the righteousness that I'm striving after now because he's seen a better righteousness and the evidence that if he's striving for that righteousness is as John says it's because you have been born of him you have received the Holy Spirit because the natural man doesn't desire these things the natural man goes about to establish his own righteousness he's got confidence in his own works but the spiritual man has no confidence in his own works he has confidence in Christ because he knows that it's Christ that has secured all of these things for him and he knows that his desire is to be like him in everything that he does he wants to do it as Christ did it for the glory of the Father he wants to walk in the paths of God's righteousness so that we will become

Christ like because if we're going to heaven we need to be prepared for heaven and everybody in heaven is doing nothing but the right thing they are righteous and nothing that will defile heaven will enter into it we cannot go in there if we're still unrighteous we must be righteous we must know the right thing and we must have a desire to do the right thing because in heaven there will never again be any wrong things done we will be perfectly righteous and we will do everything according to that righteousness according to God's will there will be no more strife in heaven everybody will do what God would have them to do which is always the right thing just as Christ did he did what the Father wanted him to do and the Christian wants to follow in his footsteps realizing that if he's going to follow in his footsteps he needs to take up his cross and he needs to be willing to endure the same kind of sufferings as Christ endured on his journey back to heaven before we experience this glorious resurrection when Christ comes again we need to humble ourselves and we need to be prepared to suffer whatever we must suffer in order to shape us so that when he comes that we will be like him may God grant that he would bless to us these thoughts let's pray our Father in heaven we give you thanks for the revelation that you give of yourself and the high standard that you have set before us in the righteousness which is in Christ

Jesus and we have to acknowledge oh Lord that we only understand it in a small measure but in the measure that we understand it we know that this is what we desire we know that we want to be like Christ we desire that your will would be done because we know that everything that you have willed for your people is always the right thing and we want to be righteous Lord lead us to these ends and continue to cleanse us from our sins for we ask it in Jesus precious name Amen