

How King Jesus Trains His Army To March

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[0 : 00] we'll turn together to Philippians. Philippians has four chapters. With God's help, today we will finish chapter 3. And so our sermon text for today is Philippians chapter 3, starting at verse 12.

Philippians in the New Testament, a letter from Paul to the church in Philippi. It was called Little Rome. It was a colony of Rome in Macedonia or Greece.

Well, I read our sermon text trusting that this is God's word for his people, that it's inspired, inerrant, infallible, it's clear, and it is sufficient for us as people.

If you receive it that way, when I'm done reading, I'll say this is the word of God, and you can say thanks be to God. Philippians 3, 12 through 21.

For context, Paul had just encouraged the Philippians that their righteousness is found in Christ alone. Now in verse 12, he picks up the thought and he says, not that I have already obtained this, speaking of the resurrection from the dead and Christlikeness, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

[1 : 30] Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own, but one thing I desire, 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 it also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained. Brothers, join me in imitating me. 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 their glory is their shame. With minds set on earthly things, but our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 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.

[2 : 48] The word of God. Amen. You may be seated. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of the Lord stands forever.

Luke 1.37, Gabriel, who ministers in the presence of God, said, No word from God shall be void of power. May it be so with his word again today for his glory.

Let's pray. Amen. Amen. Lord, these are your precious people.

These are the souls that you purchased and called to yourself. I pray that through the ministry of the word, the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, you will continue to raise us up, to call us heavenward, to strengthen us with your power that's able to subdue all things, that we will march following King Jesus.

We thank you that your kingdom is advancing, that you are the one who crushes the enemy. It's your spirit that wields the sword, which is the word of God.

[4 : 05] We pray that you would do that, Lord, mightily for your glory and your honor, we ask in our lives today. Amen. Amen. One of my good memories in college was I had one year where my brother and I were roommates.

I was a senior. He was a freshman. And we got to do several trips. We had to go see Grandma and stuff like that. So we got an audio book of that historical work where they took all the, like, letters and primary sources from World War II soldiers that had dropped in behind enemy lines and taken out the artillery, clearing the path for the D-Day invasion of Normandy.

And that series was called Band of Brothers. And so my brother and I, listening to this audio book, it's one of those sweet memories. And so many of those stories come back to me. It tells about the 101st Airborne Division of the Army.

Their mission is to be the air assault branch of the Army. They go to basic airborne course in Kentucky.

And it's an intensive time of training at a very high standard. The stakes are extremely high. They have to pay meticulous detail to practice every element of their training.

[5 : 23] And it culminates with them doing a live, unassisted parachute invasion. In verse 17 of our sermon text, Paul speaks to the church like an army.

He says, we have a pattern for walking together. What's it called when a group of people walk together in a pattern? That's a march. And so King Jesus, the commander of the Lord's Army, uses lieutenants like Paul to speak to his church, just like a boot camp for the 101st Battalion, to raise them up, to train them, to get them to see the urgency of pressing on and learning to march following King Jesus.

That's what Paul does in this passage. So my encouragement for us today, if Jesus is your king, it's to see in this passage how he trains his army to march.

How King Jesus trains his army to march. I'm not skilled enough to use alliteration every time. This time it worked out more or less. So there will be four things you can listen for.

Number one, King Jesus' promise to his army, his promise. Number two, the pattern. Number three, it's a warning to be prudent.

[6 : 42] And finally, it's King Jesus' power. So promise, pattern, prudence, and power. Number one, King Jesus raises up his army with a heavenly promise.

A heavenly promise. Look at verse 12 of our sermon text. Philippians 3.12. Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own.

What's he talking about? What is it that he's pressing on toward? Because Christ Jesus has made me his own. 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.

Verse 14. I press on toward the goal of the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. He says, not that I have already attained this goal that I'm pressing on toward.

What do we think he's speaking about? If you get context, take a look back at verse 8. So Philippians 3, verse 8. He has said he considers everything else rubbish compared to the excellence of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord.

[8 : 01] In verse 9, he says, There's no greater treasure than being found in him, Christ Jesus. So he already knows that his righteousness is Christ's righteousness covering him.

He's found in Christ. So he's not trying to strive and press on to find a righteousness for himself. He already has that. And there's no greater treasure than the excellency of knowing Christ Jesus as his Lord, as his King.

Those two things are not up for dispute. Those are secure by Christ. So what is he pressing on toward? What is the goal? In verse 10, if you'll look there, he says, Being conformed to his death, to the death of Christ.

In verse 11, to attain the resurrection from the dead. See, the last enemy to be destroyed is death. And Paul will die physically.

But in his death, he knows he will be found in Christ, having a righteousness which is from God by faith in Christ Jesus. So he knows those promises are there for him.

[9 : 11] Well, then what is it that he says is the goal that he's pressing on toward? It's what will happen in his life right now between this moment when he's writing this and praying for this and that final day on earth.

So he's asking to be more like Christ now while God can still sanctify him. That's what he's pressing on toward. And this is a heavenly call with the promise attached to it.

It's so wonderful. He also is very careful to say, Not that I have already attained it or I'm not perfect already. I'm definitely not. I'm not yet matured or completed or finished.

I want to be more conformed to Christ's death. See, Paul is no different than you and me. And the letter to Romans chapter 7 makes it very clear. There is still a battle between the spirit and the flesh.

The spirit is united to Christ, but the flesh, it doesn't do the things I should be doing. And it does the things I know I shouldn't be doing. There's a battle going on. And Paul says, I am not perfect.

[10 : 15] I've not attained that completeness of Christ's likeness yet. I want to be more like Christ in his death to his flesh. I'm not there yet. That's what Paul says.

But he says, I press on. I press on in my sanctification, in my desire to be more like Christ. And that phrase, press on, it's a metaphor for a foot race.

We could challenge our teenagers. I'll race you from here to the far side of that field. And they would win every time. But we would press on. We would keep our eyes and run that foot race. A distance runner, your muscles are going to start burning. But I press on. My body, it's sacrificing. But I'm pushing the pace. I'm doing my best to keep going one foot in front of the other. And if it's really long, the jog becomes a march. But I march on. We press on. That's his encouragement to us. Because none of us are there yet.

[11:21] We're still breathing. We're still in this flesh. There's still a battle. I press on. He says that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

Let's take the second part of that statement first. Christ Jesus laid hold of Paul. Has Christ Jesus laid hold of you?

The phrase he uses has kind of a tone of surprise. You know, like he seized me unexpectedly. Well, we know in Paul's story, that was when he was going to kill more Christians and arrest them.

On the road to Damascus, the Lord Jesus appears with light. Says, why are you persecuting me? He seized him. And ever since that moment, Paul's life was not the same.

And Christ Jesus had laid hold of Paul. And Christ Jesus is now personal Lord of Paul.

[12:27] He calls him my Lord. In verse 13, Paul writes, brethren. Now, remember our previous context here. He's warning the Philippians there's going to be these legalists that are going to try to come on and burden you in the flesh with all kinds of things that are not the commands of Christ.

And even though he's the Jew of Jews, Hebrews of Hebrews, Pharisee of Pharisees, he says, you're my brothers. You Gentile Philippians. You're my brothers and sisters.

I'm with you. The gospel and Jesus Christ, that's who we are. Verse 13. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended it, but one thing I do.

He says, one thing I do, then he lists two things. Why is that? It's because it's one motion. You can only run in one direction or another.

You can only run forward if you're pressing on toward Jesus Christ. And he says, like a runner, I'm not looking backward. I forget the things that are behind.

[13:34] If you're always looking to see where's the next person or comparing yourself, looking all around, you will not have your eyes set on one thing. And he uses the present, continual, active tense.

Forgetting. Why is that? It's because Satan is the accuser. He wants to accuse us to ourselves. He wants to accuse God to us. He wants to accuse other Christians to us.

And we need to be actively forgetting those things that Satan is trying to accuse us of or distract us with. We're actively, continually, right now, in the practice of forgetting those distractions.

And pressing on forward toward that which is ahead. It says reaching. You know, forgetting what's behind, but reaching or stretching forward.

Picture, you know, Eric Little, Chariots of Fire, that last thing. He throws his head back and reaches for that final line to cross. What's ahead?

[14:36] In verse 14, he says, I press toward the goal. On a hundred yard dash, it's a straight shot. There's no curves and you can see that line that you need to get to.

And that's the goal in a foot race. You keep your eye on the line. Undivided focus. That's where I'm running to. It's the marker at the end of the race upon which you fix your eyes for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

So you fix your eyes on the call. In Christ Jesus. See, the eyes of faith are watching Jesus Christ, the forerunner, the firstborn from the dead.

Our eyes are fixed on him. And it's him through his word, through his Holy Spirit, calling us upward, onward toward Christ. Toward that finish line. In 1 Corinthians 9, 24 and 25, Paul told the church, run that you may obtain the prize.

Every athlete exercises self-control in all things and they do it to receive a perishable wreath.

There's the analogy. We're watching in these Greek cities, these Olympic games, and you watch these extremely disciplined athletes.

[15:57] Picture like someone training for an MMA fight where they've got to make a certain weight. I mean, they're beating their bodies to be ready. And it's perishable. In the Greek world, it was that wreath made out of, you know, green leaves like that that would go on the head.

Talk about perishable. Leave it out a couple days and it's already brown. That's the image. But he says, the wreath that will go on the head of my people running after Christ Jesus. It's imperishable. We don't even know anything imperishable. Everything that's created can be destroyed or transformed and changed. Has Christ Jesus laid hold of you? Can you say like Paul, Jesus, my Lord. Christ Jesus purchased you who believe with his own blood. Christ dispossessed Satan. Of your soul. He disarmed the strong man and took you. You're his. His spirit entered into you to dwell in your body as his tabernacle.

[17 : 11] Christ Jesus, has he taken up his residence in you? Can you call him my Lord? If Christ Jesus has laid hold of you, then you too will press on to take hold of the Christ likeness.

For which Christ took hold of you. You too, in verse 14, you will press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

That crown that's a symbol of victory and honor. It represents the ultimate reward of running a race. Paul says Christ already laid hold of you.

He already secured the prize for you. In 2 Timothy 4.8, Paul said, There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day. And not to me only, but also to all who have loved Christ's first coming. The promise is for everyone who loves Jesus. Christ already has your crown.

[18 : 18] He's already redeemed you. He's the judge waiting at the end. Who will judge all who ever live. And he says, this one has already received the prize of life.

They already get the victor's wreath. Well, how can that be? If you're a judge that's just, how can that be? And it's because Jesus Christ put the crown of thorns on his head. Take the punishment that we deserved. He made himself low and the Father highly exalted him. And crowned him with glory and honor. So he can turn around and bless you.

This is the upward call. There was a pastor in a congregation in an inner city of a big city. And these people had a lot of needs. It was, you know, it was an area where their families were very broken up. Children were neglected. A lot of needs. And someone asked this pastor after decades of serving and ministering Christ to that church. How have you seen this congregation mature in the Lord?

[19 : 23] And he gave this beautiful image. He said, I take the crown that Christ has purchased and I put it above their head. And the Holy Spirit grows them into that crown.

And then his word calls us to lift that crown slightly up a little bit more in this life. And you watch the Holy Spirit grow them into that crown. Again and again and again. Keep proclaiming Christ and his glory.

And the congregation grows into that which Christ has already secured for them. King Jesus raises up his army with this heavenly promise.

You know me now by faith. You will know me one day fully. I have grabbed a hold of you now. And you see me dimly. One day you will see me fully.

Like unveiled faces. You will be in the presence of God consummately. That is the prize. It is more of God through Christ. And so treasure me, Jesus says.

[20 : 23] Press on toward me. Press on in me. I have secured the crown for you. Well number two.

King Jesus trains his army then to march following a clear pattern. He calls us heavenward. And then he trains us to march following a clear pattern. In verse 17, there are several phrases I want to point out.

One is he says join. Join in following my example. He says note those who so walk. As you have us for a pattern.

Note their way of walking. Have you ever done this where you sit somewhere. Maybe a busy public place. And you just watch how people walk. I think it's a pastime not just here. But everywhere in the world. Because linguists say that every language. Every culture has dozens of words to describe ways that people walk. It's like a national pastime.

[21 : 25] Think of some examples from English. In every language we have words to describe one who lumbers. Or one who limps. We come up with words like amble.

Mosey. Or plod. You might say yesterday I shuffled. Today I'm scurrying. And tomorrow hopefully I will strut. We come up with all kinds of words to describe how people walk.

In 1 Corinthians 11.1 Paul says. Follow my example. My way of walking. As I follow the example of Christ. So Paul is watching the pattern that's set for him.

And emulating that pattern. To the extent that I'm matching Christ. Match my walk. That's what he's saying to the church. Well who is it that is called to follow this pattern.

To note what it is. And to join in walking this way. Who is it? Who is he speaking to? I think he answers that in verse 15. Would you take a look? Paul says to the church.

[22 : 28] The whole church in Philippi. Therefore let us. As many as are mature. Have this mind. That's the mind of Christ. Christ. That's the one unifying ideal.

That holds the church together. The mind of Christ. And if in anything. You think otherwise. In other words. There might be lesser matters. That the mind of Christ needs to work itself out.

In each of you. You might have different convictions. Or arrive at maybe the same convictions. But at different times. He says God will reveal even this to you. What a high view of the Holy Spirit.

And of the church being fully equipped. The Spirit will help you work that out. But you have the mind of Christ. In Ephesians 1.17.

He says I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Father of glory. May give you the spirit of wisdom. And of revelation. And the knowledge of him. So Paul trusts that the Spirit.

[23 : 25] Will bring to the church a knowledge of the truth. And reveal it to those areas. Where their thinking may be out of step. With the pattern of Christ. But he's not going to address all of that right now.

They have the word. They have the spirit. And the spirit will guide them. And so he can say in verse 16. Therefore let us walk. So church.

Conduct yourselves. As one commentator put it. As soldiers. Who march in a line together.

Organized each in his proper position. In step with this pattern. The church is called to find that cadence.

And the rhythm set by Christ himself. This is really what Paul's been saying. Paul, Timothy, Epaphroditus, Silas when he was in prison. They're following the pattern of Christ.

As they minister to the church in Philippi. They're pressing on to keep that march. Along with Jesus Christ the commander. And he gives them five points of sameness.

[24 : 26] Okay. There are those trying to come in and divide the church. And confuse you. There's five ways that you all have the same instructions for marching. The five points in verses 16 and 17.

He says, By the same rule, let us be of the same mind. Verse 17. Brethren, join in following my example. And note those who so walk. As you have us for a pattern.

So the same rule. A rule is like a rope that's exactly one meter. We're going to use this rope as our perfect standard for measuring something.

If someone's off by a couple extra inches or less inches than that. You're going to end up with very different measurements in the end. We have the same rule. Our one meter rope is our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 5.1. Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love as Christ also has loved us and given himself for us.

[25 : 24] So church, you have one rule. And it's Jesus Christ. Number two, you have the same mind. And that's the mind of Jesus Christ. That's what Ephesians 2 is all about.

It's Jesus Christ who humbled himself as a slave. He sacrificed himself out of love to save his bride. A people for himself.

Have that mind. That you so love the bride of Christ, the church. That you are not thinking only of your own interests. But you're becoming a slave among his people.

The same rule. The same mind. There's also the same invitation that holds the church together. In the Greco-Roman world, this classical method of teaching involved imitation.

Those Greek philosophers would tell their students, follow my way of living and thinking and talking. You need to grow and become this way. If someone's going to be trained classically to play the piano or violin or cello, they're going to be studying the great masters and imitating those great pieces.

[26 : 26] Before they become creative and innovative in that field. So Paul is alluding to this. But he also uses a word that's very obscure. It's not found anywhere else in the original language.

And for us, it takes several words to explain it. In verse 17, he says, Join in following my example. That's all one word in Greek. Join in following my example.

Because no one else used this word, it's possible that Paul even, like Shakespeare, made up this word. He put words together to get at a meaning that he needed them to understand. It suggests a

collective or communal aspect of imitating.

Join in following my example. It's a shared pursuit of emulating a particular standard. So what does Paul mean by calling the church to follow and join in together following this pattern that he himself is trying to follow?

He's already said that he's not perfect. So he's calling the church to say, Look, church, let your imperfections like mine drive you back again to the perfect redeemer.

[27 : 36] Follow my example in that. That when I don't put confidence in the flesh, I go instead to the one whose righteousness God will accept that covers me by faith alone.

Follow my example, church, in resting again and again in Jesus Christ. And enjoy his presence. Because the joy of the Lord, it will stir your heart up.

Because you've rested so much in him to be restless. To see more of his kingdom come. Follow my example in wanting the kingdom of God to come.

And to press on with joy. And to call others, to disciple others. And march following King Jesus.

Follow my example this way. To joyfully lose everything in this life.

Because gaining Christ Jesus is the greatest treasure of my soul. Follow this pattern. The church also has the same assignment. He tells the church, Note those who so walk.

[28 : 40] Note those who so walk. Identify Christ-like lives. Celebrate. Honor. Examine. Study.

Analyze. Discuss. Desire such a walk. On our book table, I was really happy to see that the Puritan treasures for today are almost all gone.

And that means that our congregation has an appetite to note and learn from those from 400 years ago. And grow in Christ-likeness through their example.

We'll restock that. You need to get one of those if you missed it this first time around. We'll get more. That's our assignment. Is note those who walk like Christ. And then there's the same living example, which is your fathers in the faith.

He says, imitate Timothy as Timothy imitates me as I imitate Christ. But I'm sending you Epaphroditus. See, these are living examples in the congregation. These are people who you're going to watch them suffer up close and personal.

[29 : 43] Note their lives. You need living examples as well. And he says, walk having us as your pattern. God blesses the congregation with elders and deacons who the congregation is invited to examine, test their lives.

They're not perfect, but in their imperfections, they rest again in the perfect Redeemer. And invite you to find that kind of grace and rest in Christ. One of our brothers mentioned to me, he's got a few kids, and he mentioned each one starts walking a little bit earlier.

And it's because they have more living examples around the house. You can see how they get themselves up off the ground. And even though their heads are really disproportionate and get top-heavy, they can start taking some steps.

And having a living example gives you such good help. You know, if you grew up as an only child, you had to learn everything the hard way. You didn't just get to watch and then imitate. When we're learning from a living pattern, picture soldiers training and learning to march.

You watch, then you check yourself, you correct where you need to, and then you continue. You don't stop practicing and trying. So check, correct, continue.

[30 : 56] That's how we march out the Christian life. And we do it together. It's a joy. It's a joy. King Jesus also warns his army to guard their thoughts with careful prudence.

See, I couldn't leave this off because this is part of the drill sergeant's instructions. Jesus said in Matthew 7, 13 and 14, Narrow is the way that leads to life.

Few it is that find it. But wide is the way that leads to death. And many walk that path. So he warns his army to guard their thoughts with careful prudence.

See, in the midst of these joyous truths of the gospel, the church in Philippi has conflicting emotions. We keep seeing this in Philippians. There's great exalted joy in Christ, but then there's the pebble in the boot.

There's those who he's called dogs. There's those who are seeking glory for themselves instead of God. And here it is again. And we wonder the same things, don't we? Why is it that most who claim to be Christian talk so little about Jesus and his kingdom?

[32 : 05] That should make us wonder, what's going on? Why do most pastors who claim to be Christian talk so much about things of this world? Have you noticed this or is it just me?

Why do most people not want to mature or to march in Christlikeness? Well, in our flesh, no one wants this. But if you truly love Jesus, won't you treasure him more and more and more and more? In verse 18, he says, For many walk, 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.

These words are so strong, they're almost shocking. See, these are not merely neutral outsiders that Paul can ignore. These people are evidently too close to the church for Paul to remain detached from them.

They cause Paul tears of grief, he says. People assume these are friends of the cross, but their walk, their way of life and their religion, it must be addressed.

[33 : 16] In verse 19, Paul says, Their end is destruction, their God is their belly or their appetite, and their glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

They walk with their minds on earthly things. It's not that they outright reject the cross, that's why he has to clarify. These are enemies of the cross, people.

Don't be deceived. It's that the cross has no bearing on their life. That's what's concerning. They can't say, Jesus Christ is my Lord, because they are still enslaved to Satan.

They take pride in the flesh one way or the other. They love the flesh more than God. Whether it's circumcision or being enslaved to the lust of the flesh.

Whether it's dietary law keeping or unredeemed fleshly cravings. That's what they love more. That's what they have an appetite for.

[34 : 23] Their hunger is not for Christ and the righteousness that comes from God. Their hunger is for more and more glory for themselves. To be an enemy of the cross, one commentator named Bachmuel said, it means to trust in human wisdom and influence rather than in God's redemption accomplished through the apparent weakness and folly of the crucified Messiah.

Have you noticed, quote unquote churches, where their focus is getting butts in seats and cash in the coffers instead of faithfully disciplining the souls that Christ Jesus purchased with his blood and whom he's entrusted to their care?

Where there's no cross, the fungus will grow. The cross is like the light of God's glory. Someone shared at an Advent service, there was not a single mention to the name of Jesus Christ.

We've been to funerals where the mention of eternal life was detached from sin and our need for God as our Savior. See, these are places that claim to be churches and they don't preach the cross of Jesus Christ.

To say they don't preach the cross is to not preach the whole gospel. It's to have a different God, a different God, and a man-centered way of viewing ourselves. And all of those things diminish the glory of the Savior.

[35 : 58] Who needs Jesus? Where there's no light in a room, mold and fungus begins to grow. And it'll take something over.

It'll take over a living organism, suffocate it, and kill it. Where the light of Jesus Christ on the cross, his person and work is not preached.

In that place, Christ cannot be treasured. And there a devaluing of Jesus Christ begins to spread like a fungus. And the end is destruction.

Paul says there are many like this. Most like this. It's numerous. And he says this with tears in his eyes.

The Bible says that all will give account according to Christ's clear commands. You see the contrast of false assurance, a false church? Look at the contrast.

[36 : 59] The hope for the army of Christ is in verse 21. Take a look there. True followers of Jesus will share in Christ's resurrection. But go back to this warning in verse 19.

Paul says this with weeping as we do. Those who don't treasure Christ, their end is destruction. Ezekiel prophesies about the final coming and the judgment.

Ezekiel 7, 19. And that day, those who thought they were God's covenant people, they thought they were Christians, thought they were saved, they will throw out their golds. They won't have an appetite to eat any food because they know that food and gold can't deliver them on the day of God's wrath.

This is a warning that Christians can't ignore. A gathering of people claiming to be a church of Jesus Christ that neglects the cross and instead very obviously treasures anything other than the person of Christ and his work of love for us, that group is like a bloated corpse filled with

flesh-eating fungus.

The whole thing is going to decay and anything attached to it will face the same destiny, which is destruction. How do we warn those we love? How do we proclaim the gospel to those who have a false assurance of salvation?

[38 : 29] We need to be ones who march after King Jesus and we heed this warning to guard our thoughts carefully, be discerning, have prudence, make sure you treasure Christ, preach his cross and him alone.

Well, the fourth movement in this passage, verses 20 and 21, is this. King Jesus strengthens his army to march on in his gospel power.

King Jesus strengthens his true army, his true followers, to march on in his gospel power. I see in these two verses four injections of energy to keep his people marching together.

Number one, he says, rejoice and press on because of your status. If Jesus is your king, he says, then you're already a citizen. Verse 20, for our citizenship is in heaven.

Now to the Philippians, this means you belong to the commonwealth, you belong to the Roman Empire. That's their connotation of citizenship. This means you get a legal judicial process.

[39 : 45] You get an all-inclusive access to all the blessings and privileges of belonging to the kingdom that's powerful. It means that you're a citizen.

You're free of those crippling taxes that were imposed on enemies that they had conquered. And Paul says, rejoice and press on. Your citizenship is in heaven.

You don't just have a green card. You're not waiting on red tape or bureaucracy. You're not sitting there hoping for limited spots available that you'll get picked out of a lottery.

You're already a citizen of heaven. This should change the way we view one another. Would you just take a moment and look around you, smile, nod at one another?

You are citizens of heaven. You're surrounded by citizens of the deepest reality of the cosmos. Heaven.

[40 : 43] The undeniable spiritual realm. The kingdom that is without end. The very presence of the holy, unshakable creator God of all.

You are citizens of his kingdom and no one can take that from you if you are in Jesus Christ. If you're a citizen of heaven, here's how you know.

No other colors, no other banner will stir up more patriotism in your soul than the banner of God's love for you in Jesus and the crimson color of his blood that gave you the citizenship.

Rejoice and press on. It says rejoice and press on also because your king is coming again. In verse 20, we eagerly wait for the Savior from the kingdom of heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ.

How do we wait? Eagerly. Why do we wait eagerly? Because the Savior is coming. He's coming from the kingdom of heaven and it's none other than the Lord Jesus Christ who you know, the one who purchased you, the one who is your Savior.

[42 : 02] He's coming again. So rejoice, press on, waiting eagerly for his return. Number three, rejoice and press on because of your future state.

Rejoice and press on because of your future state. If the Lord Jesus Christ is your Savior, you can know in verse 21 that he will transform or transfigure your lowly body that it may be conformed to his glorious body.

when a human being saw an angel that lives in heaven, we fall down and tremble in fear.

And that's just an angel that are like God's slaves. They do his bidding. How is it that humans like us can be in the presence, the courts of God in heaven unless God will transform our bodies so that we fit, we belong, we'll be conformed to his glorious body.

We can rejoice and press on because this will happen by God's power. He will carry us all the way there. It's the power of the Almighty One who promises this to his people.

[43 : 16] In verse 21, he says, he'll do this according to the working by which he is able even to subdue all things to himself. Some of you are marching.

You're serving very faithfully, but it's hard. Your bodies are falling apart. You feel weak. You feel sick. You're trying to put one foot in front of the other, but even just to get here this morning was hard.

The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. You're not perfect, but you're doing your best to rest in the perfect Redeemer. Rejoice and press on together with the church 1 Peter 4.13, to the extent that you partake in Christ's sufferings in this life, when his glory is one day revealed fully, you will also

be glad with exceeding joy.

Remember that he left his exalted throne in his heavenly kingdom. He humbled himself to be a slave and to die on the cross for you. And the Father has now highly exalted him and given him the name that is above every name.

And he promises you march after me now and you're in this pattern of redemption with me to the end. Share in my cross now, you'll share in my crown later.

[44 : 35] Share in my sufferings now, and I'm sharing with you my glory and honor in the next life. So we take note. We take note of the promises and the lives that have trusted and marched after King Jesus.

Paul marching after King Jesus to the very end was not disappointed. We can look at brothers and sisters we know, family members who walk very closely with the Lord, those simple actions, coming to be with the Lord's people, hearing his words, singing and praying and taking the Lord's Supper to the very end, the simple obedience of marching with his church.

There's no better preparation for the soul. That thin veil, when you pass from this life into the next, he is with his people when we celebrate him together. There's no better preparation, as simple as it is.

So press on. Press on by his strength, and you too will not be disappointed. King Jesus says this to you and me, his army. Remember who I am.

I am the ruler of all. I am able to subdue all things to myself. My power and dominion have no end.

[45 : 54] And you, church, you are my beloved fellow soldiers. You are the ones I have called out by name. You are the ones that I am training to march. I make you able to press on together because I pressed on for you.

I make you able to live as already dead to this world because I died to this world for you. And I make you able to finish this life well because I finished well for you.

And when I receive your soul to me, my joy in you will be made full. That's how King Jesus trains us as church to march on to the end.

Let's pray in response, asking for his help and resting in the joy that he has gone before us. We'll see you next time for the next one. I'll see you next time.

Bye-bye. S build up in response Yes!