



MONDAY 16 APRIL 2018

SERIES: Philippians

Read: Philippians 3:1

Plug In...

Before kicking off to warn the Philippians about a present danger, Paul says, "Rejoice!". This is not the first time he has called them to *rejoice*. This time he adds that writing it again, calling them again to rejoice, is a "safeguard" for them.

Chew It Over...

Paul is not saying never shed a tear, never feel down; if it hurts, suck it up. Yet, in the face of hardship, Paul expects Christians really can and should have a solid joy in the Lord. Read again [1:15-18](#) and [2:17-18](#). What made Paul able to rejoice even through earthly hardship?

How is rejoicing a safeguard? How do we safeguard the safeguard? (Or put another way: How do we remember and be prompted to rejoice?)

Prayer Suggestion

Let us be glad and rejoice! Even within terrible situations, may we rejoice that our names are written in heaven ([Luke 10:20](#)) and that we will rise from this, we will be vindicated with Jesus ([1 John 3:2](#)).



TUESDAY 17 APRIL 2018

SERIES: Philippians

Read: Philippians 3:1-4

Plug In...

Paul scathes those who trust in something other than Jesus. Paul levels his intensity at those pushing an alternative to faith alone in Jesus. [NB: We saw in Matthew that Jesus is most intense with those that are deliberately dragging people away from the truth, e.g. [Matthew 23:13-39](#).]

“Flesh” is a term that gets used in different ways in the Bible, so it is not always negative. For example, Jesus took on flesh (John 1:14); simply becoming human. Paul often does give it a negative connotation: flesh = sinful nature (humanity in their wilful sin). In this passage, Paul says true relationship with God is based on His Spirit within the human, relying solely on Christ.

Chew It Over...

How does this challenge other religions or lifestyles that claim to be spiritual through their rituals, fasting, meditating or the like?

Prayer Suggestion

As we strive to live holier lives, first thank God that He has given us complete righteousness before Him, despite our on-going sin and failures. Second, praise God for the Spirit working within us, not just leaving us stuck in sin, but causing us to live daily lives of confession, repentance, and bearing true fruit.



WEDNESDAY 18 APRIL 2018

SERIES: Philippians

Read: Philippians 3:1-11

Plug In...

Paul says, okay you want to tick boxes, here goes! After his impressive religious list, he turns around and says I consider them “garbage”. The NIV tries to have a bit of decorum in printing this word, so they soften it. [Your imagination will give you the strength of Paul’s point here!]

Chew It Over...

When you think of gaining Christ and being found in Him, how do you then value everything else?

In what way do you still drift to relying on something you do? Think, what makes you feel confident?

Spend some time absorbing what Paul says in vv.10-11: *“I want to know Christ – yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.”*

Do you want to know Christ? Know Him by this definition?

Prayer Suggestion

Lord Jesus we need your righteousness. We need to see you of more value. We need you to generate in us the desire to know Christ – to know Him as He is to be known.



THURSDAY 19 APRIL 2018

SERIES: Philippians

Read: Philippians 3:12-14

Plug In...

Notice Paul counts all other criteria as worthless compared to gaining and knowing Christ. Yet, he still uses language of striving, taking hold of, pressing on. He even shares that he has not yet taken hold of the end, the prize. Paul identifies he hasn't arrived, but still has to hold on.

Chew It Over...

We know that the Bible teaches eternal security (see Jesus' words in [John 10:27-29](#)). That is, those that are saved will be saved ("once saved, always saved"). Yet, Paul never says that *he has arrived*. Taking all the Bible says together about security and perseverance is that the ones who are eternally saved are the ones that persevere to the end. The Reformers would speak of "the perseverance of the saints".

So, the ones Jesus calls, definitely will be saved. But those 'saved' people are only ultimately revealed in the end. The only way to tell a true believer is by those that remain trusting in Jesus, aiming to follow Him. The sign is not sinlessness, or perfection, but a recognition that we have not yet arrived at the goal of being *like* Jesus, but we "press on" (*cf.* [1 Corinthians 15:1-2](#); [Colossians 1:21-23](#)).

Those that know Jesus' voice, press on. This is wonderful encouragement to us.

Prayer Suggestion

You've called us heavenward Lord Jesus. Help us press on. You began a good work in us, bring it to completion in the day of Jesus Christ ([Philippians 1:6](#)).



FRIDAY 20 APRIL 2018

SERIES: Philippians

Read: Philippians 3:14

Plug In...

Let's pause further on 'the prize'.

For Paul the prize *is* knowing God and being like Jesus (see verse 10). This is the prize; this is the satisfaction and the joy.

Chew It Over...

How would adopting Paul's value system affect the way you live?

Prayer Suggestion

Ask God to help you treasure Jesus above all things, so that you might rejoice in Him regardless of your circumstances.



The Lakes

WEEKEND 21-22 APRIL 2018

SERIES: Philippians

Read: Philippians 3:15-21

Plug In...

Paul calls people to model him. His model is not suffering for the sake of it. Rather, following Christ means walking into suffering and persecution that is because you follow Him. This is where the rubber of our faith hits the road. Many live as enemies of the cross, the world is hostile to Jesus.

This passage ends with a fantastic picture of being *like* Jesus. Jesus suffered then entered *glory*. Read again [2:5-11](#) (*cf.* [3:10-11](#)).

Chew It Over...

We know that talking about Jesus, living in the way Jesus calls us to, has brought many to the faith. However, let's not be naïve. Seriously and relentlessly following Jesus will produce hostility. Given this, why is it so important that Jesus' resurrection and the promise of our resurrection are front and centre in our minds?

Prayer Suggestion

Ask that God gives us courage to follow Jesus even when there is strong push-back. May God make us know Christ – participate in His sufferings and so also participate in His resurrection.