

// / Whose End is Destruction

Philippians 3:15 – 20

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~ This section of Scripture that our Spiritual Safari has been examining in Philippians has brought us into a stark reality concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. Our last two reports clearly revealed how Paul had given up all religious, pious and pretentious claims of being a Pharisee. There are many things that we, as individuals, consider impressive to others – and things that the world considers extremely valuable – but which we might have to give up in order to follow Christ Jesus and glorify Him. Paul has gone from brilliant young rich Pharisee to imprisoned death-row inmate who has, literally, done nothing wrong. We see a man whose future is so absorbed by Christ Jesus that it motivates virtually everything he does and says now.

When Paul says he is *“running for the prize,”* he didn’t mean running for salvation. Salvation is a gift; and all we can do is receive it as such. We can’t win salvation. Rewards and treasures stored up in Heaven, however, are a different story. If you haven’t read our last several reports, I suggest you go back and do so, beginning with our commentary on chapter two of this epistle. Sometimes there is no nice way to say certain things; but there are certain things that must be said, nonetheless. Well, since I am just the person to say what the Word of God says, I am going to teach the Bible as I always do. That should give everyone ample warning against — and reasons not to read my reports. Thank you in advance.

John said, *“....now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming....”* That’s first John chapter two verse twenty-eight. Apparently, some Christians are going to be ashamed when Christ appears to gather His church out of the world in the rapture. So many Christians are talking about how they wish Jesus would return today; but they have no earthly idea what that would really mean for their lives. If they did know what His return to establish His Kingdom meant, I am confident they would actually ask Him to postpone it a little while longer. If you think for one moment you can live a careless Christian life and never answer for your sins, you are

woefully and wholly mistaken. The disobedient child of God is going to be chastened; because whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth and, friends, if God isn't chastening you, then you may want to re-evaluate your so-called relationship with Jesus, because it is more likely than not that you don't have one. Or, perhaps, you have a relationship with the false, American, liberal Jesus that never existed. I'll be nice: you probably never have had one....

15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

~ Some Christians go hopelessly wrong by grabbing “perfect” from verse fifteen and applying it to themselves. Naturally, they talk about being made perfect, but they can't see anyone else in the world as “perfect” through their lens of life. None of us would receive the banner of complete and perfect sanctification if it were left to our friends and family to vote for us. Maybe I should just speak for myself? “Perfect” means “mature” in the Word of God, and it means wisdom, judgment, and discernment — as the Holy Spirit teaches us from the pages of Holy Writ. Babies may be cute and pretty but, if they don't grow and develop, then something is tragically wrong. Most Christians are willfully and woefully underdeveloped in the same spiritual sense, and they are always the ones who think they have attained sinless perfection. All we can do is pray the Lord will avenge His Word — and He will.

Those types of people are as a horse, a donkey and a mule — and we learned about that genre in Psalms. They had to be bridled to keep them under control. God will lead you around like that if that's what you want Him to do, friends — make no mistake. It won't be good for you; in fact, it will most definitely hurt. It will be a bit embarrassing, too. Me, I want to be guided with His Eyes! That's true leading of the Lord. If you do not know the direct will of the Lord for your life, then you are not in touch with the Person of Christ Jesus as you should be. Drawing close to Christ reveals that our purpose in life is to glorify Him. There's no easy little formula to find the will of God; because glorifying Christ will be altogether different for me and you, and the next man. Those who think they can live for themselves until they come to a crises in their life, and then Jesus will suddenly send an

angel to speak to them out of Heaven — or that some sort of holy light will appear in the blackness of their darkness to deliver them from all consequences of their willful disobedience — God says they are entirely wrong. Let this sink in, friends. The direct will of God for your life is a day-by-day endeavor. Once we get correctly on that track, *then* God will place us on the proper hour to hour schedule. Eventually, the Lord will develop a moment to moment application for you on the freeway of life – and it will be personalized exclusively for you. It will be an overwhelming joy to your heart when you discover God’s plan and purpose for your life, too. Oh, if I could only bring you readers closer to the Lord Jesus Christ today....

16 Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

~ Paul wanted the Philippians to get out on the racetrack of life and run for Christ. That’s our calling from Christ, and from Paul, as Christians today, too: to get the Word of God out to the entire world *in sound doctrine*. It seems impossible that the whole world has not heard the Gospel of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Personally, I believe they have. Well, we’re still to run and to be a light to this world. If you want to know how to serve the Lord today, then Paul, Epaphroditus, and Timothy are your examples. This is not something imitators of Christ are going to do; because they are imitation saints that ain’t. When we are in the body of Christ, as the genuine church, then we learn to share the power of the church body.

I understand that I am tough and relentless on the church with all her problems; because the church is deep into apostasy today – no question about that. However, my pointing out certain problems doesn’t mean I am anti-church. I love the true Bible believing and Bible teaching church; and I know there are still some around – because I just happen to belong to one! I believe it is the duty of every believer to locate a local church body of believers - if at all possible - and join them. I feel it is a required function of every Christian to materially produce something for that local church organization — even if it is merely your presence. If you do not identify, associate with, and support like-minded believers in your community, then I can tell you very definitely that you are not in the will of God. Further, too

many missionaries really just do nothing except collect ministry money to pay personal bills – but I’m not going to digress there in this report....

17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

18 (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:

19 Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things)

~ This is absolutely the most severe condemnation the Word of God has to offer regarding those who profess themselves to be Christians when they aren’t genuinely born-again. If you talk about loving Jesus, but contradict Him with your life then, my friend, this section of Scripture tragically and horribly applies directly to you. Some people have an appetite for money in their belly. Those people will usually do almost anything for the almighty dollar. That’s what their minds are engaged in. For others, sex is their god; for others, food, alcohol, or drugs. The list is endless. Covetousness is another idol; and it explains so much of the criticism in social circles today. Strife, envy, jealousy and vain glory run rampant in modern society. These things are soul killers to everyone involved, friends, make no mistake about that.

If you have truly had an experience in your life - such as Paul had on the Damascus Road - and now your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is all-important and all-consuming your heart, in your thinking, and dominates your possessions, time, and talents – then that faith is going to produce good works that genuinely glorify God. There are many Christians today who have absolutely no evidence in their lives that Christ is living through them. Their god is their belly; and that’s an awful statement. What it speaks of is horrible. To see so many so-called Christians given over completely to earthly things that are passing away is sheer Christian Tragedy – and there is a whole bunch of it going on today....

20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

~ We are strangers and pilgrims on this earth. This is not our home – we’re just passing through down here; our citizenship is in Heaven. Heaven is where we belong. We’re talking about a total standard and an absolute new way of life when one becomes a believer. Actually, our manners, mannerisms, and just that look in our eye will change when we love the Lord with all our heart, mind and soul. Paul has already told us to esteem others better than ourselves and consider the welfare of others above our own. There isn’t much of that going on today.

Philippi was a Roman colony, and the laws of Rome were enforced at the local level. The style and fashion was set by designers in Rome. Everyone spoke Latin. The world was doing Roman things when they weren’t even in Rome! Well, just as those colonies were outposts of Rome in Paul’s day, the church is to be like little colonies of Heaven on earth. That means we ought to act down here as we’re expected to act in Heaven. That means we need to learn to speak the language of Heaven; so that we can give the Heavenly message to this earth today. That’s going to entail walking in the Spirit of God. To achieve that, it will require a competent, educated, sincere, and Spirit-filled Bible study; and there is very little of being attained to today. Well, we are to have a goal, and we are to represent those ultimate ends as ambassadors in Christ.

Alright, our Spiritual Safari has witnessed the greatest revolution that could ever take place in a man’s life in the apostle Paul. Paul went from hating Christ to loving and trusting Him; from the Sanhedrin palace to Nero’s Roman Mamertine prison. I don’t know about you, but I have never felt that I could say to someone, “.... *follow me, I’m really living in the spiritual heights.*” I’ve never been the good example. I probably should have been – but – maybe I just haven’t reached that height yet? Maybe you believe you have, but we’re talking about honest and truthful living for God in this safari; and many people wax seriously overzealous, to be sure. The angel said to Joseph in Egypt, “.... *remain there ‘till I come unto you.*” I get the feeling Joseph chaffed under that, and said to himself, “.... *we’ve got to go home and get to work.*” Well, that wasn’t God’s plan at that time — or for

quite some time to come. The most difficult thing to do in life is to stay where God wants us to stay, friends; I hope you will pray and ask God if He wants you to stay with us in this safari as we continue on through the entire Word of God. I'm almost sure He does ~

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