

## Epistle to the Philippians 3:12-21

### Session outline

Doctrinal Polemics (3:1–4:1)  
On being right with God (3:1-11)  
On believing God's call (3:12–4:1)  
    Seized by Christ 12  
    Called by God 13-14  
    Revealed truth 15-16  
    Crucified Messiah 17-19  
    Coming Savior 20-21, 4:1

### Paul's antagonists

Jerusalem authorities  
    Synagogue Jews  
        Christian Judaizers  
        Legalists  
        Mystics  
    Perfectionists  
Roman authorities

### Seized by Christ

<sup>12</sup> I am not saying that I have already become like Jesus, or that I have already reached perfection. But I keep trying to reach the goal for which Messiah Jesus has already reached me.

- Perfection: = 'reached the goal'.
- Trying: Purpose + effort.
- Reach: 'to make something one's own'.

### Called by God

<sup>13</sup> My friends, I myself do not think that I have reached that goal. But I do this one thing: forgetting my past goals, I keep straining <sup>14</sup> towards the goal to win the prize, when God will call to rise upwards those who belong to Jesus Messiah.

- Think: To reason, reckon.
- Forgetting: To forfeit, abandon.
- Straining: Life purpose, no giving up.

### Revealed insight

<sup>15</sup> So then, we who are mature, this is how we should think. And if any among you think differently, then God will also reveal this to you.

- Mature: Reasonable, not reactive.
- Think: To reason, evaluate, choose.
- Reveal: Insight from the Holy Spirit.
- Discuss: How to hear from God?

### Meanwhile

<sup>16</sup> Whatever insight we have attained, we should live by it.

Literally: 'Only, unto which we-have- attained, to-this to follow'? (With textual variants.)

- Attained: Mature faith, insight?
- Live by: Lit., 'line up with' this.
- Variants: Trying to clarify grammar.

### Imitate me

- Imitate: Learn from proven leaders.
- Behave: Daily life habits.
- Have: Lead others by example.
- Model: If they can, then we can, too.

### Crucified Messiah

<sup>18</sup> I say this while weeping, just as I often warned you: there are people who behave as enemies who are opposed to our faith in Messiah crucified.

Anti-Christian messianism

- 'Messiah will come in great power'.
- 'Messiah will destroy Israel's enemies'.
- 'Messiah will make Israel great again'.
- 'Messiah will be the greatest king'.

### Coming destruction

<sup>19</sup> Their 'goal' is destruction. Their own desires are their god. They are proud of their shameful behavior. They only think about things on earth.

- Goal: Destination, without 'end'.
- God: Created in their own image.
- Proud: Glory ... shame.
- Earth: 'Cultural constructs'.

### Coming Savior

<sup>20</sup> In contrast, we possess citizenship in the heavens, from whence we are awaiting a Savior, our Lord Jesus Messiah.

- Citizenship: Where we have rights!
- Contrast: Missionaries from Israel.
- Await: Why must we wait?
- Savior: Save from/to what?

### Glorified bodies

<sup>21</sup> He will transform our weak bodies to be like his glorified body. He will do this by employing his power to subject everything to himself.

- Weak: What are our limits?
- Glorified: What is Jesus like, now?
- Body: Not wisps or ghosts.
- Subject: Enable to enjoy everything.

### 'Evolution' of the human body

- A Created to reproduce and to rule
- B Subjected to physical death at the Fall
- C Shortened lifespan
- D Washed in baptism
- C' Sanctified by the Holy Spirit
- B' Resurrected at Jesus' return
- A' Transformed to be like his glorified body

### Discuss

What abiding belief or principle do you draw from this passage?

- Forgetting past goals/failures, straining forwards?
- This is how we should think?
- God will reveal this to you?
- Imitate me and watch good models?
- Live by what we have attained?
- Citizenship in the heavens?