

ALL THINGS

The Study of the Book of Philippians

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The following study is a compilation of the works of Pastor Frank and Parris Bailey of Victory Church unless noted otherwise. All Scripture is NKJV unless noted otherwise.

Week One

DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE

“Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.” Philippians 1:6

INTRO:

The Philippians were a small group of people that made up the church in Philippi. It was the first church that Paul established in Europe. They supported him from the start, and continued to do so throughout his life. This letter was a letter of affection written by Paul from prison. It was in Philippi that we specifically see the mention of female converts in the book of Acts and how they gathered ^{together} to worship the Lord. It was here that one such woman opened her house for the group to gather and a city was transformed as a result. This is where Paul and Silas were imprisoned and the Philippian jailer asked, “What must I do to be saved?” Philippians is a road map on the Lord’s **“good work”** that has begun in each of us. It will teach us what that **“good work”** is, and the tools on how to accomplish **ALL THINGS** He has placed in our heart.

1. WHAT IS THE “GOOD WORK” IN US WHICH GOD WILL PERFORM?

John 6:29, “Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you BELIEVE in Him whom He sent.”

Mark 9:23, “Jesus said to him, “If you can BELIEVE “ALL THINGS” ARE POSSIBLE TO HIM WHO BELIEVE”.

Pastor Parris Bailey writes, “The Apostle Paul wrote like no other. All throughout his books in the New Testament he kept an underlying theme. God is at work within us and will never stop throughout our lives. So many of us get caught up in “our own efforts” and begin to negate the work of God that happens in redemption. The word “cooperate” means to “act jointly; work toward the same end.” So Yield, Surrender and Abide.

Complete (perform)= “To equip fully”- 2 Timothy 3:16-17, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly “equipped” for every “Good Work.”

2. WHAT IS OUR PART IN THE GOOD WORK BEING ACCOMPLISHED?

_____ and be _____ that what He has started in you and others He will finish it!!!

Gill said, “ *(the good work)* is wrought by the Spirit of God, and has its seat in the spirit of man; it is called the inward man, which is renewed day by day. The apostle was confident both for himself and others, that God who has, and wherever He has begun the good work of grace, will perform, finish it, or bring it to an end.

*Ephesians 2:10, “For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do **GOOD WORKS**, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”*

*Matthew 5:16, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your **GOOD WORKS** and glorify your Father in heaven.”*

*Colossians 1:10, “that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every **GOOD WORK** and increasing in the knowledge of God.”*

*2 Corinthians 9:8, “And God is able to bless you abundantly so that in **ALL THINGS** at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every **GOOD WORK**.”*

“Christ’ work is perfect; He is faithful, and will never forsake the work of His hands, and has power to accomplish it; He has promised His people, that they shall grow stronger and stronger, that they shall not depart from Him, and He will never leave them.” John Gill

3. WHY IS THIS ENCOURAGING FOR US AND FOR THOSE WE ARE BELIEVING FOR?

Pastor Parris Bailey writes, “What a encouraging word my friend! The Trinity has been about their business the moment you received Christ as your Savior. They are endeavoring to finish the work of sanctification in you making you a victorious Christian. This isn’t about us striving and doing feats of purity to win His approval or gain eternity points! It becomes so easy to lose sight of our inheritance with the saints when we begin to strive with others and grow discouraged in the way our lives have turned out. He will finish the work He started in you! He will accomplish this work to the very end. The best thing you can do is to cooperate and listen to _____!”

“The voice of the Lord is like no other. It is filled with power, wisdom, comfort, creativity, and has the feel of a beautiful song. Even with Jesus cloaked in the humble garment of a Nazarene carpenter, the power and beauty of His words were un-mistakeable. No man ever spoke like this man. Somehow when He spoke peace would fill your heart, the unbelievable was now a certainty, and the un-climbable mountain was merely a bump in the road.”

Pastor Frank Bailey

4. WHY DID PAUL DECIDE TO GO TO PHILIPPI?

On Paul’s second missionary journey he had a vision one night of a Macedonian man calling him to come and help him in that region. So he set out to sail for Philippi. There he would meet a group of women praying down by the riverside.

5. READ ACTS 16:11-15 AND LIST WHO WAS GATHERED DOWN BY THE RIVER.

“She did not say "I can read a sermon at home," ... She wished to be where God's people were, however few, or however poor they might be. If we would meet with God, let us seek Him diligently, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." Though you cannot save yourself, or open your own heart, you can at least do what Lydia did: observe the Sabbath, and gather together with God's people.”

Charles Spurgeon

Lydia, a wealthy business woman, gathered with other believers to worship God and pray down by the riverside. After the Lord opened her heart she opened her home to Paul and the message of Jesus Christ. As a result not only were the members of her household saved and baptized but a small group continued in her house and the church in Philippi grew as a result. Lydia is believed to be the first European convert.

LYDIA:

- Originally from Thyatira and relocated to Philippi.
- God worshipper. (“God fearer” rather than a full convert at first.)
- The Lord opened her heart. She **BELIEVED** and was **BAPTIZED**.
- She was wealthy, had social standing in her city, owned her own business.
- She was a seller of purple, probably all sorts of luxury textiles dyed purple. The wealthy wore purple.
- Owned a large home large enough to house Paul, Silas, Timothy, and possibly Luke as well as her household.
- It was in her home that the church in Philippi first gathered together.
- She was brave and hospitable. Those who gathered together to worship in her home worshipped the one Jewish God. After Paul and Silas were thrown into prison and released they went back to stay with her.

5. WHAT WAS THE ADVANTAGE TO LYDIA OPENING HER HOME?

The Lord opened Lydia’s heart, Lydia opened her home and the Lord not only saved her household but changed a city as a result. Lydia would go and tell her family and those who lived in her house. No doubt she told others as well. Soon those in her community, those she sold to, those who lived near by, all heard her story how Jesus changed her life. The Gospel spread as a result. The Lord was equipping her as well as others in Philippi and the church grew. The good work had begun in her life that day down by the riverside and “*All Things*” that was needed was being added to her. *The “Good Work”* that began in Lydia’s life is still bearing fruit today.



1. WHO ARE YOU BELIEVING GOD FOR SALVATION?

2. LYDIA TOLD ALL SHE KNEW ABOUT CHRIST. WHO DO YOU NEED TO TELL YOUR TESTIMONY TO THIS WEEK?

3. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO INVITE OTHERS TO GATHER TOGETHER IN A SMALL GROUP TO WORSHIP AND PRAY?

: **BELIEVE, CONFIDENT, HIS VOICE**

Week Two

SINGING IN THE PRISON CELL

*“Just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are **partakers** with me of grace. For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.” Philippians 1:7-8*

INTRO:

Soon after Paul met the little band of women down by the riverside, the Gospel spread in Philippi. Others joined together their efforts and a church was born. They would continue each day, joining together in prayer and those in the city were being transformed. All was going smoothly until a girl with a “spirit of divination” was set free and saved. Those who profited from “her gift”, now feeling their financial loss had Paul and Silas thrown into prison. Lydia and the other believers would stand by Paul and become **“partakers”** with him. They had a certain **“fellowship”** in the Gospel with Paul from his very first days in Philippi. They supported him in those beginning days and they continued to do so throughout his ministry. Later as Paul wrote this letter, what we call the book of Philippians today, he had found himself in prison again in Rome. They still were sending him gifts and support. Becoming **“a partaker”** is when we join our efforts together the Lord does not only bless us individually He blesses us corporately as well. Miracles happen and rejoicing is always the result. As we worship together chains are broken, prison doors are opened, prayers are answered, whole households are saved and unsurpassing joy is had by all. Paul would never forget those who stood by him in those early days.

1. WHAT HAPPENED TO PAUL AND SILAS AS THEY WERE STAYING IN PHILIPPI? (Read Acts 16:16-24)

A demon possessed girl was healed and the Bible says, *“But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone,”* they had them beaten, arrested and thrown into prison. This is the first time he was imprisoned but it would not be his last. In Philippians 1, Paul will find himself in prison again, his attitude was it’s all a “Win, Win.”

Pastor Parris writes, “If you’ve been around me long enough, you would have heard, “Christianity is a win-win” or “it’s all uphill from here baby!” Well, maybe you weren’t a down in the dump sort of person or a loser like I was, Ha Ha. I am just so glad Christ came when He did! Whew, I was a mess! So when I read Philippians and realize Paul is writing yet another epistle in prison I can’t help but wonder at his frustration. “God, really? **IS THIS REALLY WHAT YOU WANT FOR ME?**” I love how you can see his aggravation turn into praise, just like David did in Psalms. Paul realized “at the end of

the day” Christ will get the glory. We may not like how it’s going down in our lives, but we simply can’t lose and to me my friend that is **HUGE!**

2. HOW DID PAUL AND SILAS RESPOND WHEN THEY FOUND THEMSELVES IN THAT DEEP DARK PRISON HOLE, CHAINED AND BOUND WITH NO WAY OUT?

*Acts 16:24-25, “Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. But at midnight Paul and Silas were **praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.**”*

Pastor Parris Bailey continues, Paul said, “I am going to keep the celebration going?” So ***party in da prison!*** He comes when we feel so confined and brings us freedom and then He gets the glory!

If you read Philippians 1:12-18 you will find that Paul’s attitude would not change even many years later when he found himself in prison again.

3. WHAT WAS THE RESULT OF PAUL AND SILAS PRAISING AND WORSHIPPING GOD IN THEIR PRISON CELL?

*Acts 16:26, “**SUDDENLY** there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were loosed.”*

‘Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together!’ Here are some thoughts from Spurgeon’s ‘Treasury of David’ on this verse. “At all times, in every situation, under every circumstance, before, in and after trials, in bright days of glee, and dark nights of fear. He would never have done praising, because never satisfied that he had done enough; always feeling that he fell short of the Lord’s de-servings. Happy is he whose fingers are wedded to his harp. He who praises God for mercies shall never want (lack) a mercy for which to praise. To bless the Lord is never unseasonable. His praise shall continually be in my mouth, not in my heart merely, but in my mouth too.

4. WHAT DOES THE PHILIPPIAN JAILER ASKED PAUL AND SILAS?

Acts 16:30,21, “What must I do to be saved?” So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.”

Pastor Parris Bailey writes, “I love the Apostle Paul’s answer to the Jailer. He said, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.’ He makes it short and sweet. He didn’t lay down a system of works, or self help theories.... You must grasp the whole revelation of His nature and His power and believe it to flow into your own life. To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ is to lean the whole weight of yourselves upon Him. Just open your heart to wholeness, eternity and freedom. (McClaren)

5. HOW DID THE JAILERS WORLD CHANGE AS A RESULT OF BELIEVING?

Acts 16:32-33, "Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized."

The jailer in the book of Acts just had an encounter with the supernatural and like the most of us, men bow low when they come in contact with God. The spiritual bars were open and Paul calls for the light. Gill goes onto to say, "One day he was groping in darkness, worshipping idols, without hope in the future, and ready in desperation to plunge himself into darkness, when he thought his prisoners had fled. In an hour or two 'he rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.' The outcast jailer changed nationalities in a moment." How our world can change in a moment!

Sometimes it takes an earthquake to bring a spiritual Krakatoa. No need to live in a jail cell groping in darkness, seeking answers to a life in misery. What a precious treasure to know that we can be saved by calling upon Jesus. Any person any moment anywhere can find Christ. Take out your binoculars and spy out the land; by faith call upon the one name that can save you and spend the rest of your life gazing upon an eternity of joy. Isaiah 45:22 says, "*Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth*". A look is a swift act, but it is the beginning of a lifelong gaze." McClarens

6. WHO DID PAUL SPEAK TO WHEN HE FOUND HIMSELF INSIDE THE JAILER HOUSE?

_____ WHO WERE IN HIS HOUSE. See Acts 16:32

7. WHO WERE BAPTIZED AS A RESULT?

_____ HIS FAMILY WERE BAPTIZED. See Acts 16:33

8. WHO REJOICED TOGETHER AND BELIEVED IN GOD?

_____ HIS HOUSEHOLD. See Acts 16:34

9. WHAT IS POSSIBLE TO ALL THOSE THAT BELIEVE?

_____ ARE POSSIBLE TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE!!! Mark 9:23

10. AFTER PAUL AND SILAS WERE RELEASED WHERE DID THEY GO BACK TO ?

Acts 16:40, "So they went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they encouraged them and departed."

Back to Lydia's house, to the ones who had supported him, prayed for them and stood by them even when things got hard. When we gather together in "fellowship, in partnership" a spiritual bond develops that is not easily broken. The Philippian people would stay in partnership with Paul for the rest of his ministry. "***Koineneia***" the Greek word for "***fellowship or partnership***" is the spiritual supernatural bond that develops as Christians join their lives together. To the Philippians he wrote in Philippians 1:3-5, "*I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your **fellowship** in the gospel from the first day until now.*"

11. WHERE IS THE GREATEST PICTURE OF THIS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?

*Acts 2:42-45, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and **fellowship**, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need."*

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, "A supernatural community formed after the initial outpouring on the day of Pentecost. It amazes me that people from all the different countries mentioned in this chapter as being effected by the Pentecostal outpouring were able to become such a close knit spiritual family so quickly. It wasn't their nation they were from or their age or even their gender, even their Jewishness did not come into play. It was the bond of love that they shared is seen in this passage. If I had to boil it down to one word I would say it was the word "***fellowship***." In the Greek New Testament it says "***koineneia***". "***Koineneia***" is at the heart of the true union found in a truly spiritual congregation. This union is not based on being poor or rich, young or old, or even black or white.

Dick Mills says "***fellowship***" or "***koinōnia***" means sharing, unity, close association, partnership, participation, a society, a communion, a fellowship, contributory help, the brotherhood. "***Koinōnia***" is a unity brought about by the Holy Spirit. In "***koinonia***" the individual shares in common an intimate bond of fellowship with the rest of the Christian society. "***Koinōnia***" cements the believers to the Lord Jesus and to each other."

12. WHO IS AT THE VERY HEART OF THIS UNION?

The _____ . This union that is at the very heart of the New Testament community is the work of the Holy Spirit. Our love for the Lord birthed in us by our conversion is what we share in common. The fruit of this is called fellowship. We love the same things now; things like the Bible, worship, sharing our faith, and the preaching of the Word of God. Our former relationships were shaped around natural or cultural things. Our fellowship was controlled by the things we loved then; things like certain types of music and alcoholic beverages. Often times our relationships came out of interests such as fishing, motorcycles, cars, or an endless list of other interests. Today all of that has changed. We have been born again, we have been captured by the love of God. Our love for Him is what produces this incredible *“koineneia”* in our community.



1. WHY IS MEETING IN A SMALL GROUP EACH WEEK SO IMPORTANT?

2. HOW HAS MEETING REGULARLY WITH OTHERS BELIEVERS IN SMALL GROUP IMPACTED YOU?

3. SO HOW SHOULD WE CONDUCT OURSELVES IN THIS LIFE?

(Answer- Read Philippians 1:27)



: ALL. ALL. ALL. ALL THINGS, HOLY SPIRIT

Week Three

LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU

*“Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. **Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus...**”* Philippians 1:1-5

INTRO:

Paul would leave Philippi and move on to Thessalonica. There he would preach Christ and a great multitude of devout Greeks were converted. In Acts 17:4 it says, *“Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women.”* But not everyone received the message. The Jews of that day attacked the house of Jason where Paul and Silas was staying. This is what the angry mob had to say in Acts 17:6... *“These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.”* Paul would move on from city to city. Love for the brethren and desire to see others experience the same joy he received caused him to continue the **Good Work** journeying from town to town spreading the “Good News”. He like Jesus preferred others above himself. Paul would once write, *“beholding His face in a mirror,”* lived His life gazing on the crucified one. He began to have the mind of Christ. “Christ” the One who lived in humility and became a bondservant for the sake of others. Ministry was Paul’s life. ***Becoming unified with other believers and seeing lives changed became his delight and reward.***

1. WHY COULD PAUL CONFIDENTLY SAY, “FOR TO ME, TO LIVE IS CHRIST, AND TO DIE IS GAIN?”

Philippians 1:21, “For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

Because everything changed after he encountered Christ. Pastor Frank Bailey writes, “When we catch a small glimpse of what He is really like everything changes. Suddenly we become aware of what makes heaven so heavenly. It’s not the endless life or the incredible riches that are there. It’s not even seeing our loved ones and Christians from other generations. Heaven is heaven because Jesus is there. Heaven is heaven because of the glorious atmosphere there, which is God Himself in the person of the Holy Spirit. We will breathe in and breath out God. We will be all consumed in His love because heaven is a world of love. Heaven will be heaven because our Heavenly Father is there in all His Glory. It will take eternity (which means it will never end) to explore the ever increasing unfolding of the glory of God in Christ. One taste of heaven in this life through the

outpouring of the Spirit and you will say with Paul, “to depart and be with Christ is far better”

2. SO HOW ARE WE TO LIVE OUR LIVES TODAY ON THIS EARTH?

Philippians 2:2-5 says, have **“the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.... Value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus...”**

Through the **fellowship** of the Spirit we should live together, like-minded, **with the SAME LOVE that God has in heaven living and breathing in our lives today.** This love is seen and manifested in our lives by how we treat others and is only possible by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

3. HOW DID GOD SHOW FORTH HIS LOVE ON THE EARTH?

John 3:16 “For God **SO LOVED** the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

Romans 5:8 says, “But God demonstrates His own **LOVE** toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” **On earth He loved people sacrificially. He moved amongst the people in unity with other believers with a heart of compassion wanting ALL to know Him. This must become our passion as well. Let this mindset be in you!!!** We need to spend our lives like Jesus and Paul did in unity, preferring one another, telling the good news to the poor (those who cant help themselves- the spiritually bankrupt, **THE LOST**), as well as those who are bound up, the blind and the oppressed. (See Luke 4:18-19) What is our message, **THIS IS THE YEAR OF THE LORD’S FAVOR! THINGS CAN CHAGE! THERE IS A BETTER WAY TO LIVE!** When you have Jesus living inside of you **SUDDENLY** everything changes! Go and share the Gospel with someone today. (kb)

_____, _____, _____ is the heartbeat of Heaven.

4. HOW DOES UNITY FORM BETWEEN BELIEVERS?

Unity is produced through _____. Humility is what forges community, together. (cm)

Philippians 2:5-7, “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

Pastor Parris Bailey writes, “It starts by living life where God has placed you in the body. We begin to allow Christ to shape our lives. Matthew Henry says; ” that they may be renewed in the spirit of their minds, wrought into the image of Christ, and more fully

settled and confirmed in the Christian faith and life. That Christ is not fully formed in men till they are brought off from trusting in their own righteousness, and made to rely only upon Him and His righteousness.”

5. HOW DO WE GET THE MIND OF CHRIST?

“Once your eyes begin to open to Christ and His kingdom you begin to be suddenly aware of His greatness. We become awed by His humility *and we get our eyes off ourselves and others.*

How did this great God become a human? How did He suffer and die such an unjust death? What would make Him stop and take notice of this insignificant corner of His creation. His humility contrasted with His grandeur is overwhelming.

It is not so with the natural man, Jonathan Edwards writes, “If one worm be a little exalted above another, by having more dust, or a bigger dunghill, how much does he make of himself! **What a distance does he keep from those that are below him!** And a little condescension is what he expects should be made much of, and greatly acknowledged. **Christ condescends to wash our feet;** but how would great men (or rather the bigger worms), account themselves debased by acts of far less condescension!”

The dung hill thing always makes me laugh. The point is that all our accomplishments are simply a pile of dung. The shocking thing is that people are proud of their pile of #%@&. ‘My pile is bigger than your pile.’ So let’s bask in His greatness and stand amazed at His humility. He is the lion and the lamb and He has prevailed for us.

Jesus said, “If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father”. His entire life was an unveiling of God’s love. We see it in His birth, His life, His ministry, and in His death. We all have different feelings and opinions of what love is and what love may look like. In Christ it becomes blazingly visible. So if you are stumbling through life, maybe feeling like nobody cares or even takes notice of you in your troubles, take heart. Christ loves you totally and finally. If you can’t feel it or see it, have another look at Jesus as seen in the gospels. If you take another look I think you will agree, this is what love really looks like, it looks like Jesus.” (PB)

“Lord, pour out Your love on our hurting world, pour out Your love on us, Your people, that we could love the unlovely with the love of Christ.”
Pastor Frank Bailey

6. WHAT WAS THE RESULT OF CHRIST HUMILITY?

Philippians 2:9-11 “Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

John 3:35 “The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand.”

“He has given us His name , and in “His fullness of the Godhead is our unfailing, inexhaustible treasure- house.”

Charles Spurgeon

Matthew, 28:18-20, “Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Mark 16:17,18, “And these signs shall follow them that believe; **IN MY NAME** shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them, they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.”



1. WHO HAVE YOU SHARED THE GOSPEL WITH THIS WEEK?

2. WHAT REWARD WILL YOU RECEIVE IN SHARING THE GOOD NEWS TO THE “POOR” (SPIRITUALLY BANKRUPT- “THE LOST”)?

(See Proverbs 19:17, 1 Thessalonians 2:19)

3. ACCORDING TO MATT. 28:18-20 AND MK. 16:17,18 WHAT MIRACLES CAN WE EXPECT TO SEE AS WE MINISTER TO & DISCIPLE OTHERS?

 **: SOULS, SOULS, SOULS, HUMILITY**

Week Four
I CAN'T- HE CAN

“For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. Philippians 2:13

INTRO:

Paul figured out real quick that the Christian life is not hard, it is impossible. That is why he would encourage the Christians in Philippi that it is God who works in us the “will” and the “do”. That is the whole point of salvation. There is no way anyone can live the Christian life. Actually there was one who did, Jesus of Nazareth. He was the only sinless man. He was the perfect sacrifice for sinful man and now not only represents us before the Father but He actually works in us Himself through the Spirit to live the Christian life. He not only forgives me, He lives in me to will and to do for His good pleasure. Acts 17:28 says, *“for in Him we live and move and have our being.”* He believes through me, He prays through me, His peace resides in me, and even His holiness is produced in me. Christ lives His life inside me for His glory.

1. WHAT IS OUR PART IN THE WILL AND THE DO?

Philippians 2:13-14, “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, “We don’t hear much about the fear and trembling part anymore. I think we need a good, healthy dose of the fear of the Lord so that we will understand the importance of working out our own salvation. I think many of us have been captured by ‘easy believism’ and think as long as we have ‘prayed the prayer’ everything is okay. Really?! Is that all there is to it or maybe there is quite a bit more. If heaven is real and eternity is real then maybe we need to take a good hard look at our spiritual condition.

You see, when we ‘prayed the prayer’ the **good work** of Christ just began in us as a seed. Spiritual growth takes time. We must spend time in His presence and bathe ourselves in His written word. This is where salvation takes root in us and begins to grow.

The Lord describes someone with this attitude as “the one I esteem ... who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at My word”. The fear of the Lord is not a destructive fear, but a redeeming fear that brings people closer to God by causing them to turn away from all evil. Godly fear leads to blessing, moral purity, life and salvation.” (The Fire Bible)

Holy fear comes from tasting the reality of God. Holiness is more than a doctrine and His power is very real. Standing in His presence like Moses did at the burning bush

drastically changes our perspective of life. It's in that place we begin to work out our salvation, trembling with joy in His presence.

2. WHO THEN BECOMES OUR SUFFICIENCY AND STRENGTH?

_____!

A.B. Simpson wrote, "Let Him also be the sufficiency and strength for all the day. Let us never forget the secret: *I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me* (Philippians 4:13). Let us have Jesus Christ Himself in us to do the works, and let us every moment depend on Him, *both to will and do [in us] of His good pleasure* (Philippians 2:13). Let our holiness be *the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus* (Romans 8:2). Let our health be the life . . . of Jesus . . . *manifest in our mortal flesh* (2 Corinthians 4:11). Let our faith be *the faith of the Son of God, who loves [us]* (Galatians 2:20). Let our peace and joy be His peace and joy. And let our service be not our works, but the grace of Christ within us."

3. WHAT IS THE SECRET TO LIVING LIFE GOD HAS CALLED US TO LIVE?

If this is true it takes the pressure off of me. When I face challenges in my ministry, He works in me. I have always had a difficult time in social situations. Some would say I can be socially awkward. The difficult part is this, I am a preacher. Public speaking was always one of my greatest fears. How did I overcome those fears? I haven't! I am still terrified to speak in front of people. It requires total dependence on Christ in me. Here is the conclusion. When I can't, He can and does. The secret to living the life God has called us to live is recognizing that you can't but He can. I must trust Him for everything.

4. WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE IN ORDER FOR HIS WILL TO BE ACCOMPLISHED IN MY LIFE?

As I experience the hand of God on my life in worship and searching His written Word, I experience this strange and delightful miracle. My _____ begins to change. I can begin to say with the Lord Himself, *'I delight to do your will oh God'*.

Matthew Henry writes, "To will and to do: He gives the whole ability. It is the grace of God which inclines the will to that which is good: and then enables us to perform it, and to act according to our principles. Thou hast wrought all our works in us, Isa. xxvi. 12. Of His good pleasure. As there is no strength in us, so there is no merit in us. As we cannot act without God's grace, so we cannot claim it, nor pretend to deserve it. God's good will to us is the cause of His *good work* in us; and He is under no engagements to His creatures, but those of His gracious promise."

So, did you see it? Henry said it is grace that 'inclines the will'. How does that happen? It is in the area of enjoyment. He changes the things we enjoy. It is the very effect of God on our soul that changes our will or changes the things we love and enjoy.

5. WHY IS IT AN HONOR TO DO THE WILL OF GOD?

Pastor Parris writes, “**AHHHHH REDEMPTION!** I don’t think we can ever fathom Christ in us and what was accomplished on the cross. What an honor for a Christian to see redemption unfold everyday in us and in the lives of others. I never tire of it.

A.B. Simpson writes, So therefore, “***let there be no laxness, no negligence, and no failure on your part to meet Him and afford Him the utmost opportunity to fulfill in you all the good pleasure of His will, and the accomplishment of His high and mighty purpose for your soul.*** This is what the Holy Ghost brings to us, the vision of the Lord, power to see divine things as God sees them. Not only does He give us the knowledge of the truth, but the realization of it. Not only does He reveal to us the promises, but He enables us to appropriate them. . . . Not only does He speak to us; He speaks through us. . . . “working in us to will and to do of His good pleasure.”

6. WHAT COMES TOGETHER IN THIS CHRISTIAN LIFE?

Pastor Frank writes, “The work of _____ and the work of _____ come together in the Christian life. As Paul, said, “***it is God who is at work in you***”. What is this work of God? It is the resurrection power of the Lord infused into our human soul. What about our work? Our part is to work as hard as we can to embrace the power of God. We are not passive, ***we press into God.*** As we do, we begin to touch the unlimited power and resources of our Lord.

A.B. Simpson writes, “But He that gave you the will does not leave you there—He works in you the power to do. The power to achieve the victory. The power to smite down pride. God is equal to all emergencies, therefore fear not. Though your inner life shall be subject to 10,000 dangers, He will give you power to do the right, the just, the lovely and the true. He works gloriously in you. That which He works in you is pleasing in His sight.” He calls it a ***good work!***

7. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN HIS WORK AND OUR WORK ARE JOINED TOGETHER?

When that happens, the supernatural life we all long for begins to erupt into our lives. What will that look like? It looks like Jesus. We begin to experience His peace, love, joy, kindness, generosity, and holiness in our lives. Faith becomes second nature to us. Worship becomes our entertainment. Ministry becomes our food. Compassion for the needy becomes our life. The church becomes our family and Christ becomes our friend. Work out your own salvation in fear and trembling, Christ is working in you for His glory and your enjoyment.

8. HOW ARE WE TO LIVE OUR LIVES ACCORDING TO PHIL. 2:14-16?

*Philippians 2:14-16, “Do “_____” without murmurings and disputing, that you may be blameless and harmless, children of God, without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you **SHINE AS LIGHTS** in the world;*

holding fast the Word of Life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.”

“Why, that we may, “shine as lights in the world in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation.” ...“shine as lights in the world, **holding fast the Word of Life**”! Giving light to those who come within the range of our influence. How can they shine unless there is some radiance proceeding from them, and how is this possible if they live in secret, and if they are never understood to be Christians at all? But then, where does the text say they are to shine as lights? In their house? No, in the world. “*You are a city set on a hill which cannot be hid. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your **good works**, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.*” A.B.S.

Pastor Parris Bailey writes, “Have you ever asked yourself what is your ministry? I believe it is offering your whole life in service to God. It is devoting all that you have to serving people for His glory. It is using all of your talents, gifts, training, and opportunities for the building up of His church and living every moment for His purposes and glory. This must be supernatural!”

“Spiritual growth flows through our lives through discipleship that flows out of a spiritual relationship.” Pastor Frank Bailey

True ministry then is when we allow the Holy Spirit to flow through us in discipling others on a consistent basis. This is a sign of spiritual maturity. Pastor Frank Bailey writes, “Discipleship was a major part of the life and ministry of Jesus. The disciples of Jesus learned from observation. They watched Jesus as He prayed, taught and preached the word of God, healed the sick, and cast out devils. They were with Jesus constantly for three years. They learned about life and ministry by observing and mimicking His life.



1. WHAT MINISTRY HAS GOD CALLED YOU TO?

2. WHAT IS STOPPING YOU FROM STARTING?

: **JESUS CHRIST, WILL, MAN, GOD, ALL THINGS**

Week Five
TO KNOW CHRIST

*“Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of **ALL THINGS** and count them as dung, in order that I may gain Christ.” Philippians 3:8*

INTRO:

Today’s verse was written by the Apostle Paul from a prison cell toward the end of His life. Paul had “known the Lord” from that first encounter with Jesus on the Road to Damascus. That experience, and the many others that were to follow, was never enough for Paul. He knew there was more, there was way more. It’s important to know what you believe. In Acts 17:32-33 there were those who had heard about the resurrection of our Lord and mocked Paul, but there were others that believed. What Paul taught was not just head knowledge it was something he had experienced. He had tasted of the Lord and it sustained him all those years of preaching and through all the ridicule and persecution. It had not only sustained him, it had awakened him to the height, the depth, the length, and width of God’s great love. In one sense Paul would say He “knew the Lord” but in another sense, he had only touched the very outskirts of the glory of the knowledge of Christ our Savior. At the end of the day that is what eternity will be, an unveiling of His eternal love. We will spend eternity pressing on to know The Lord.

1. WHAT IS THE VERY HEARTBEAT OF OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH?

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, “This is the very heartbeat of our Christian faith, that _____ . It is in knowing Him that I am changed. It is in knowing Him that I am satisfied. Everything else seems to end up in some sort of self-help maneuver or, as Paul called it, the mutilation or the false circumcision. Every new teaching has some sort of angle. Somehow it turns into me doing something and at the same time justifying my carnality. The message of the cross annihilates both. Our darkest sins are covered by His blood and at the same time calls us and holds us to a higher standard of holiness.”

2. WHAT DID PAUL COUNT AS “DUNG”?

Philippians 3:4-7, “ If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.”

Paul counted his past accomplishments as “dung.” The word “dung” means the vilest dross or refuse of any thing; the worst excrement. The word shows how utterly

insignificant and unavailing, in point of salvation, the apostle esteemed every thing but the Gospel of Jesus. With his best things he freely parted, judging them all loss while put in the place of Christ crucified; and Christ crucified he esteemed infinite gain, when compared with all the rest.” Everything we used to have, even the greatest of our accomplishments, turns into filth in comparison to the new life purchased for us in Christ. Have you seen the value of this life for yourself? If so, you too are pressing on to know Him in the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering.

3. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO KNOW THE LORD?

Paul’s terminology is quite interesting, he talks about “knowing” Christ. Today we live in a far different time, a time of cheap grace and recited prayers. All a person has to do is just repeat these words and now you are saved, now that you have prayed, you “know” the Lord. Do you really know the Lord in the way Paul was talking about? Paul seemed to be describing a lifetime of pursuit with increasing degrees of knowing the Lord.

Do you have an experiential knowledge of Christ? Is that relationship increasing as time goes on? If so, you are on the journey Paul was describing. The first time you called out to the Lord, this relationship began, today it continues as you press on to know the Lord. When will this process end, actually never. In eternity it will change as we step into the fullness of His Presence, but heaven is the eternal unfolding of this infinite God. We will be growing in the knowledge of God throughout the ages.

4. WHAT DID PAUL GIVE UP TO GAIN?

He suffered the loss of _____, in order to gain Christ. Pastor Parris writes, “I love the Pauline Epistles! Christ had indeed grabbed hold of Paul and Paul lost all contact with the love of this world. Paul had chosen the best part!!! Jesus even told Martha that Mary “chose the best part” when Martha went to Him complaining about being overloaded and Mary praying too much.”

“I count everything as loss compared to the possession of the priceless privilege (the overwhelming preciousness, the surpassing worth, and supreme advantage) of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord and of progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him [of perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more fully and clearly]. For His sake I have lost everything and consider it all to be mere rubbish (refuse, dregs), in order that I may win (gain) Christ (the Anointed One)...

Philippians 3:8 AMP

John Gill writes, “Knowing Christ it is not of ourselves, it is from God the Father of lights; it is Christ, the chiefest among ten thousands; who made the heavens, earth, and seas, and all that is in them are, the sun, moon, and stars, men and beasts, birds and fishes, fossils, minerals, vegetables, and everything in nature; and therefore the knowledge of Him must be superior to the knowledge of everything else; it makes Christ

precious, engages faith and confidence in Him, influences the life and conversation, humbles the soul, and creates in it true pleasure and satisfaction; when all other knowledge fills with self-love, pride, and vanity, and just increases sorrow.”

5. AS WE BEGIN TO KNOW CHRIST WHAT WILL WE BECOME?

2 Corinthians 3:18, “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”

Pastor Parris Bailey writes, “As we see Him, we become like Him. Our Gaze upon Jesus transforms us each day. And in doing so we too will choose the best part. **We will see Him in the man cleaning the gym floor, or the child that needs a little extra help with homework. No longer will someone sit alone in church or in your work place, unnoticed or unloved. For our eyes of compassion will be opened and our heart of love longing to be shared.** For in that moment that we become like Him, He will give us grace to go about our day knowing that it’s all for Christ, and He will make _____ indeed precious.”

6. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE GRASPED BY GOD?

*Philippines 3:9-12, “And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, **that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.**”*

Barclay translates this verse this way, “Not that I have already obtained this, or that I am already all complete but I press on to try to grasp that for which I have been grasped by Jesus Christ.” I love Barclay’s translation of this verse, especially using the word “grasped”. Do you know what it means to be grasped by the Lord? Grasped means **“to seize hold of.”** I feel like that is exactly what happened to me at my conversion and calling into the ministry. I was grasped by His hand and literally stopped in my tracks. He had a different purpose and direction for my life than the aimless one I was involved in. He not only snatched me out of my ungodly lifestyle and world but He thrust me down a new path that has continued until this day. (F.B.)

7. WHAT DID PAUL SAY HE WAS PRESSING ON TO GRASP HOLD OF?

Paul spoke about pressing on to grasp whatever it was that the Lord had grasped him for. That is what the rest of our life is, the joyful pursuit of God and His plan. Barclay writes, “He says that he is trying to grasp that for which he has been grasped by Christ.... **Paul felt that when Christ stopped him on the Damascus Road, He had a vision and a purpose for Paul; and Paul felt that all his life he was bound to press on, lest he fail**

Jesus and frustrate his dream. Every man is grasped by Christ for some purpose; and, therefore, every man should all his life press on so that he may grasp that purpose for which Christ grasped him....but in doing so we must not miss this moment today. Grasping Him, pressing through the obstacles, grabbing the hem of His garment, embracing Him and His plan; that's the way I want to spend my life.

8. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO LIVE IN THE PRESENT?

Psalm 31:15, "My times are in your hand; rescue me from the hand of my enemies and from my persecutors!"

There are two enemies of recognizing the Lord present in our life today; these enemies are ***the past and the future***. Often, when someone's relationship with the Lord cools off, they think of the good old days when "the Lord was really moving". I have often run in to old friends who reminisce about what the Lord used to do in our church back "in the day". I also am grateful for what the Lord has done over the years but I am also aware of His working right now. ***That other enemy is our hope about future revival or other prophetic events***. Remember when Martha told Jesus she knew Lazarus would be raised up at the last day? His response ? "*I am the resurrection right now.*" Too often we put our expectation on some future event when the Lord is present and working today. So we love the past, we have some precious memories stored up there. We also know His coming is going to be quite amazing. What I want to focus on is this; He is present today. Our today is in His hands. He is doing above what any of us can even conceive.



1. WHAT DO YOU FEEL IS HIS VISION AND PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE?

2. WHO IS PRESENTLY IN YOUR LIFE RIGHT NOW THAT YOU NEED TO SHARE CHRIST WITH- "WHAT YOU BELIEVE"?

3. RECONSIDER "THE VISION AND PURPOSE OF YOUR LIFE" AS SOMETHING THAT WILL HAPPEN "IN THE FUTURE." WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO LIVE OUT THAT VISION TODAY IN THE PRESENT?

 ***: I MAY KNOW HIM, ALL THINGS, ALL THINGS***

Week Six

PRESSING TOWARD THE MARK

*“I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”
Philippians 3:14*

INTRO:

Paul was always on the move. He went from Philippi, Thessalonica, to Athens, to Corinth, to Antioch, to Ephesus and beyond. He would stay longer at some places less at others. If people didn't receive the message of Christ he would *“shake the dust from his garments”* (Acts 18:6) and move on. In those cities he made a lot of converts in his time, but he also had a lot of enemies. Whether he attained success or suffered loss Paul knew how to press on. He learned the art of forgetting and keeping his eyes on the upward call. And so it is in the small groups that we find ourselves. Not everyone is going to like the message that we share. We must always be moving forward. Preaching the Gospel, the good news of Christ the Crucified One, the Baptizer in the Holy Spirit. We must always be making disciples and expanding our sphere of influence to other people groups. To concern ourselves only with our four and no more will not advance the kingdom of God. We must press on always passing the baton to the person behind us and running towards what is next.

1. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO PRESS?

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, “I know what pressing is, most guys do. It's what we do when we really, really want something. Whether it's that job or new position at work, or maybe that new motorcycle or new set of golf clubs, or maybe the girl that grabbed your eye; pressing is what we do when we want something desperately. It's something you just can't get out of your head. Paul knew about that from his old life. He had climbed to the very pinnacle of the ranks of the world of the Pharisees. He had pressed for that spot for years. We learned last week that his former ambition was pure rubbish.”

2. WHAT IS THE UPWARD CALL, THE PRIZE OF THE HIGH CALLING?

“_____ is the prize of the high calling; —the prize we fight for, and run for, what we aim at in all we do, and what will reward all our pains.” Heaven now being Paul's prize had replaced all of those other prizes that had crowded his life before. In light of the power and beauty he experienced in the presence of Jesus the prizes of ambition and riches faded away into nothing. So how about you? Is your life crowded with pressing for those other things or have you been struck by the heavenly goal like the Apostle Paul?

3. WHY SHOULD WE BE EAGERLY AWAITING HEAVEN?

*Philippians 3:20-21, “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue **ALL THINGS** to Himself.”*

Because our citizenship is in _____. Psalm 2:4 says, “*He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision.*” I am convinced that heaven is an exceedingly happy place. As a matter of fact there is no sorrow at all, only joy found in that place we call heaven. Paul told us that **the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a foretaste of heaven**, experiencing the power of His presence is the most joyful experience anyone can taste in this life. In other words, the more full of the Spirit you become, the happier you will be. In His presence is absolute fullness of joy.

The apostle Paul also wrote, “*For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face.*” I love the writings of Paul. Just think about what he was saying, “*we now see through a mirror dimly*”? Paul was talking about his own experience, you know, seeing Jesus on the Damascus Road, multiple visitations by Jesus to Paul, visions, trances, countless miracles. All of that is through a mirror dimly? Really? **If that is true, heaven is going to be beyond our greatest hopes and dreams.** We will see Jesus on the other side and none of us are quite ready for the incredible experience that will be.

4. WHY IS HEAVEN DESCRIBED AS “A WORLD OF LOVE”

Jonathan Edwards described his vision of heaven in one of his sermons, **HEAVEN IS A WORLD OF LOVE**. He writes, “There dwells God the Father, who is the Father of mercies, and so the Father of love, *who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* There dwells Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, the Prince of peace and love, who so loved the world that He shed His blood, and poured out His soul unto death for it. There dwells the Mediator, by whom all God’s love is expressed to the saints, by whom the fruits of it have been purchased, and through whom they are communicated, and through whom love is imparted to the hearts of all the church. There, Christ dwells in both His natures, His human and divine, sitting with the Father in the same throne. There is the Holy Spirit, the spirit of divine love, in whom the very essence of God, as it were, all flows out or is breathed forth in love, and by whose immediate influence all holy love is shed abroad in the hearts of all the church. There in heaven this fountain of love, this eternal three in one, is set open without any obstacle to hinder access to it. There this glorious God is manifested and shines forth in full glory, in beams of love; there the fountain overflows in streams and rivers of love and delight, enough for all to drink at, and to swim in, yea, so as to overflow the world as it were with a deluge of love.”

5. WHY DO WE HAVE TO STOP LOOKING BACK?

Philippians 3:13,14, “Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

A.B Simpson wrote, “There is an illusion here undoubtedly to the Grecian races. One running to secure the prize would not stop to look behind him to see how much ground he had run over, or who of his competitors had fallen or lingered in the way. He would keep his eye steadily on the prize, and strain every nerve that he might obtain it. If his attention was diverted for a moment from that, it would hinder his flight, and might be the means of his losing the crown. So the apostle says it was with him. He looked onward to the prize. He fixed the eye intently on that. It was the single object in his view, and he did not allow his mind to be diverted from that by anything—not even by the contemplation of the past. He did not stop to think of the difficulties which he had overcome, or the troubles which he had met, but he thought of what was yet to be accomplished.”

That pretty much tells the tale. People make incredible sacrifices to win sporting events. How much work goes in to winning an Olympic medal or a Super Bowl ring? Paul teaches us what really matters, get your eyes on the eternal reward, everything else will get sorted out.

6. WHY DO WE NEED TO FORGET THE PAST?

“Forget the past! Forget it all and go forward since there is yet very much land to be possessed! And so with all the work for Jesus which we have done. Some people seem to have very good memories as to what they have performed. They used to serve God wonderfully when they were young! They began early and were full of zeal! They can tell you all about it with much pleasure. In middle life they worked marvels and achieved great wonders. But now they rest on their oars. They are giving other people an opportunity to distinguish themselves! Their own heroic age is over. Dear Brothers and Sisters, as long as ever you are in this world forget what you have already done and go forward to other service!” A.B.S.

7. WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE ABOUT PASSING THE BATON TO OTHERS?

2 Timothy 2:2, “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

In a relay race passing the baton at the right time is crucial if the race is to be won. Giving others an opportunity to use their gifts is pivotal. Paul taught in certain cities for a season but learned the importance of “entrusting other faithful men to the task along the journey.” In the early days in the church in Philippi, Luke and Timothy and others helped to grow the church. Timothy would eventually move on and establish the church in Ephesus and so forth and so on. Discipleship is _____ to the advancement of the

kingdom in our city. Entrust others to do the work of the ministry. But don't stop running yourselves. Staying in community with your core group and reaching out to others in this city is essential and imperative. Just think if Paul thought it was too far to travel from Philippi to Corinth. Imagine if he had a car and could simply travel across town. (kb)

8. WHAT ARE WE RUNNING TOWARDS?

“Paul, having put the present and past into their right places, goes on to the future, “reaching forth unto those things which are before.” Here he gives the picture of a runner? He reaches forth. The man, as he runs, throws himself forward, almost out of the perpendicular. His eyes are already at the goal. His hands are far in advance of his feet. His whole body is leaning forward—he runs as though he would project himself to the end of the journey before his legs can carry him there. That is how the Christian should be—always throwing himself forward after something more than he has yet reached—not satisfied with the rate at which he advances.

“May none of us ever say, “I have reached my ideal, now I am what I ought to be, there is nothing beyond me.” “Be you perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.” “Shall we ever reach it?” asks one. Thousands and millions have reached it—there they are before the Throne of God—their robes are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb! Let every Believer be striving that in the details of common life, in every thought, in every word, in every action, he may glorify God. ... Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we should do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. **This is what we are to seek after, praying always in the Holy Spirit to be sanctified wholly, spirit, soul and body.** “It is a wonderfully high standard.” (A.B.S.)

9. WHAT WAS PAUL'S ONE AIM?

He says, “***This one thing I do,***” as if he had given up all else and addicted himself to one sole object—**to aim to be like Jesus Christ!** He didn't try to be the best speaker or the best tent maker...! He did all these things...! But all these were a part of his pursuit of the one thing—he was laboring to serve his Master perfectly and to render himself up as a whole burnt offering unto God.

The Apostle saw his crown, the crown of life that fades not away, hanging bright before his eyes. “What,” said he, “shall tempt me from that path of which yon crown is the end? Let the golden apples be thrown in my way, I cannot even look at them... Let the sirens sing on either side and seek to charm me with their evil beauty to leave the holy road, but I must not, and I will not. **Heaven! Heaven! Heaven!** Is not this enough to make a man dash forward in the road there? The end is glorious, what if the running is laborious? When there is such a prize to be had, who will grudge a struggle?”

He longed to grasp the crown and hear the, “Well done, good and faithful servant,” which his Master would award him at the end of his course. Brothers and Sisters, I wish I could stir myself and stir you to a passionate longing after a gracious, consistent, godly life! Yes, for an eminently, solidly, thoroughly devoted and consecrated life. You will grieve

the Spirit if you walk inconsistently. You will dishonor the Lord that bought you. . . .But to be always going onward, to be never self-satisfied, to be always laboring to be better Christians, to be aiming at the rarest sanctity—this shall be your honor, the Church’s comfort and the glory of God! A.B.S.

“Our greatest days are definitely ahead of us. Our greatest memories on earth will be insignificant as we are caught up in the wonders of His love. If what we taste of His love in this life is just that, a taste, I say let the feast begin. I can’t wait to drink and swim in this bottomless ocean of love.” Pastor Frank Bailey



1. SO WHO IS ON YOUR TEAM?

2. WHO IS RUNNING BEHIND YOU, “DISCIPLESHIP”?

3. WHAT TERRITORY CAN YOU EXPAND IN TO ADVANCE THE KINGDOM?

4. WHAT OTHER “FAITHFUL MEN AND WOMEN” ARE YOU CHEERING ON?

 **: HEAVEN, HEAVEN, VITAL**

Week Seven

BE ANXIOUS FOR NOTHING

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians.4:6,7

INTRO:

Throughout our study in the book of Philippians we have been also tracing Paul’s journey’s in and out of Philippi recorded in the book of Acts. Today we see him in Asia desiring to return to Philippi. Acts 19 says, *Now God did unusual miracles by the hands of Paul...* He purposed in the Spirit to return to Macedonia but instead stayed in Asia. He sent Timothy and Erastus instead back to Philippi. During this time there was a great uproar about “the Way” in Ephesus. A riot broke out in a theatre and there was much to be worried about. Then in Acts 20 it says, *“After the uproar had ceased, Paul called the disciples to himself, embraced them, and departed to go to Macedonia. Now when he had gone over that region and encouraged them with many words. From there he would spend time in Greece preaching the Gospel, but when the Jews plotted against him he found himself once more in **Philippi**. Paul serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”* The days were volatile, there was much to be concerned with. But Paul lived his life “anxious for nothing.” Instead he took all his worries to God in prayer.

1. WHAT DOES THE WORD ANXIOUS MEAN?

Merriam Webster defines “anxious” **adjective**·ious | \ 'aŋ(k)-shəs

: characterized by extreme uneasiness of mind or **brooding** fear about some

contingency : **WORRIED** : characterized by, resulting from, or causing **anxiety**

Synonyms: worried, concerned, apprehensive, fearful, uneasy, perturbed, troubled, disquieted, bothered, disturbed, distressed, fretful, agitated, nervous, edgy, tense, overwrought, worked up, strung out, jumpy, afraid, worried sick, with one’s stomach in knots, on pins and needles, stressed, in suspense.

2. WHEN YOU FEEL THIS WAY WHAT ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO DO?

Philippians 4:6,7, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, “I learned some of my greatest spiritual lessons working at B&C Egg Ranch near Kerman, California back in the 1970’s. I was a new Christian attending Bible school in Kerman, I had a lot to learn. I can remember be overwhelmed with anxiety many times. I would spend many hours everyday alone with God (except for all the chickens). In those moments of solitude, the Lord would meet me.”

“What kind of troubles did I have in those days? Just the ordinary variety, worrying about finances was one of my struggles. I was making minimum wage, a pregnant wife at home, tuition, rent, you know the drill. I was in a battle for survival. One of the greatest tools that I received in those days was scripture memorization cards. I would memorize and meditate on a scripture every day as I pushed chicken manure. What a life! On one particular day, today’s scripture was my memorization verse. That verse of scripture was a game changer for me. Wow! Don’t be anxious but _____. Not just any prayer, a petition, a very specific prayer. **After bringing your request to the Lord, then you begin to pray the prayer of thanksgiving. Giving thanks to the Lord by faith for the answer, thanking Him before the circumstances changed. This kind of prayer moves into worship, not just any worship, but Holy Ghost extended worship.**”

“I have a fond memory of what happened that day. As I prayed about my circumstances and began to give thanks to the Lord, His presence came down on me. I began to sing, shout, and dance before the Lord. Sounds like church! I wasn’t at church, I was pushing chicken mess, singing to the Lord, shouting in other tongues, dancing in the poop. I was all alone, except for several thousands of chickens. I think even the chickens joined in that day, they were adding their songs to the Lord.”

3. WHAT HAPPENS AFTER WE PRAY FOLLOWED BY GIVING THANKS?

After this spiritual encounter, I realized something. The worry was gone. My circumstances hadn’t changed. I had been changed. I went back to the verse of scripture and then I saw it. *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”* Did you see it? Did you see what happens after the prayer, after the supplication, after the thanksgiving? What happens? ***The peace of God that passes all comprehension guards your heart and your mind.*** The Lord actually sets up a guard post over your mind and heart. That is what I needed. I needed that peace more than money. That is what I needed then and that is what I need today. If you are troubled, don’t be. Pray a specific prayer, begin to give thanks for the answer, and watch God begin to take over.

4. HOW DOES GOD’S PEACE COME TO US?

Philippians 4:7, “The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds.”

The presence of God can have some strange effects on us. He comes in so many different ways. Sometimes, there is an uncanny awareness of peace when He comes. Not just the peace that comes from knowing everything is going to be okay, not even the awesome peace from being right with God. I'm talking about a different kind of peace, the peace 'of' God, the peace that God Himself enjoys. Jesus prayed for us that we would enjoy the relationship with the Father that He has enjoyed for eternity. Think about it, the nature of that relationship is entirely spiritual. We can enter into this life, the very life of God, as we draw near by the blood of Jesus. God's peace, the peace that He enjoys, comes to us in the person of the _____.

“It is not peace with God, but the peace of God that [keeps our] hearts and minds. The peace which passeth all understanding is the very breath of God in the soul. He alone is able to keep it, and He can so keep it that “nothing shall offend us.” A.B. Simpson

5. SO WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

Has your day to day grind or maybe an unusual situation in your life taken away any sense of peace in your life? Stress and anxiety can lead to all sorts of other problems. Your solution is not a vacation (that often leads to more stress), not a toddy, or not even a shopping spree. There is a place of rest that remains for the people of God. As David said, “Today, if you hear His voice, don't harden your heart”. _____ ! It often begins with a scripture, one stands out to you, God is speaking. Then it moves into pondering the verse. Finally, it spills over into thanksgiving and worship. That is the place where peace moves in. You step into God's arena, you begin to experience His peace. So today could be a really great day. Your circumstances may or may not change, but God's peace is calling you in.

6. HOW DOES HE SPEAK TO US?

1 Kings 19:12,13, “And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. So it was when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entrance of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What are you doing here, Elijah?”

A.B. Simpson writes, “There is, in the deepest center of the soul, a chamber of peace where God dwells, and where, if we will only enter in and hush every other sound, we can hear His still, small voice. So the Holy Ghost loves to begin in “the day of small things.” He loves to speak to us in “the still, small voice,” to show us that we are not very far off. There is no sweeter expression of confidence than a whispered secret. The blessed Holy Ghost comes to us with the faintest touches of His breath; and if we do not recognize Him in these small beginnings, we shall not see their growth and development, and we shall wonder all our days why we did not get the blessing. We are looking for wind and rain, for a cyclone of power, for electric storms, when the air is full of divine

electric fire. We have only to make the connection, to take it as we need it, and to turn it on to all the machinery of our life.”

7. WHERE WAS PAUL’S CONTENTMENT FOUND?

Philippians 4:10-11, “But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.”

The most amazing thing about the Lord to me is how He can change the most unpleasant circumstances by just being there. Paul was describing being content in whatever circumstances he found himself in. Those words were written during his imprisonment, these are not the kinds of words we normally associate with imprisonment. Paul had a Friend who was with him everywhere. Actually, when Paul was saved from a mob and imprisoned in Jerusalem, Paul said that the Lord “stood with him” while he was incarcerated. Paul was content because his contentment was found in **Christ Himself**.

8. WHAT PRACTICAL WAYS CAN WE BE STRENGTHENED?

*Philippians 4:13, “I have the strength for **ALL THINGS** in the One strengthening me.”*

Pastor Parris writes, “Have you ever fallen into the honey pot of Gods word. Do you ever listen to God’s word by audio for hours on end? So often I love to turn off the worship songs and turn on the audio bible. It seems it almost wraps me in His presence. I love to work outside in the gardens or paint inside with the Word being played. Have you ever dug around in the endless commentaries available on your phone? Have you driven around listening to sermon audio of the great Jonathan Edwards. It feeds my soul, straightens me out, and helps me cool my jets. I love the fact that **ALL** of God belongs to me.”

9. WHAT DOES THE PHRASE “I CAN DO ALL THINGS IN CHRIST THAT STRENGTHENS ME” MEAN?

McLaren states – Paul here lets us catch a glimpse of the inmost secret of his power. He is conscious of a living power flowing through him and making him fit for anything, and he is not afraid that any one who studies him will accuse him of exaggeration even when he makes the tremendous claim ‘*I can do all things in Him that strengthens me.*’ The Revised Version shows, **it literally is “IN” and “NOT THROUGH”**, and so suggests again his familiar thought of a vital union with Jesus, but also because he uses a compound word which literally means ‘*strengthening within,*’ so then the power communicated is breathed into the man, and in the most literal sense he is ‘strong in the Lord and in the power of His might’. Then, **ALL THINGS** of God belongs to me, and the whole wealth of His perfections are available for stopping the crannies of my heart and filling its emptiness. He waits to fill and satisfy me. There is no limit really to what a man may have of God The whole riches of God’s glory are available for us, but only so much of the boundless store as we desire and are at present capable of taking in will

belong to us now. What is the use of owning half a continent if the owner lives on an acre of it and grows what he wants there, and has never seen the broad lands that yet belong to him?’



1. HOW CAN PRAYING AND WORSHIPPING WITH OTHERS BRING PEACE TO YOUR SOUL?

2. WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU HEARD HIS STILL SMALL VOICE?

3. IF I AM IN CHRIST WHAT BELONGS TO ME (see #9)?

_____!

4. WITH CHRIST IN ME WHAT CAN WE DO?

_____!



: PRAY, HOLY SPIRIT, OPEN YOUR HEART

Week Eight

MY GOD SHALL SUPPLY

*“And my God shall supply **ALL** your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:19*

INTRO:

So here we are at the end of our study of the book of Philippians. As we have learned the church in Philippi was very special to Paul. It was here that he first established a church in Europe through a group of women that he met down by the riverside. That day a **good work** began in the region of Macedonia. It was here that he and Silas were thrown in jail and kept “da party going” through singing praises in the prison cell and worshipping together with others. How amazing it was to watch whole families come into the kingdom together and to see a community of believers form. For these believers **ALL THINGS** were possible. As he and his followers moved to other cities we saw that they turned the world upside down. They did so by having the mind of Christ and valuing others above themselves. He encouraged others to do **ALL THINGS** without murmuring or complaining but instead to be shining lights. To know Christ was Paul’s highest aim, the reason he pressed on. The high calling beckoned him to run forward to seize the reward of heaven. He learned the art of forgetting his past accomplishments and entrusting other faithful men. Times were not easy but Paul wrote that he was content in **ALL THINGS** and in in **ALL** circumstances. Prayer followed by thanksgiving would always calm his anxious soul. He would say unashamedly, I can do **ALL THINGS** in Christ who strengthened me. **ALL THINGS** of God belonged to him and he lacked nothing for he said “my God shall supply **ALL** your needs.” He would write this letter of affection to the Philippian people because they stood by him in the beginning when no one else did and continued to do so throughout his ministry. To his supporters he picked up quill and parchment and wrote to them this declaration in 2 Corinthians 9:8, “*And God is able to bless you abundantly so that in **ALL THINGS** at **ALL TIMES**, having **ALL THAT YOU NEED**, you will abound in every **GOOD WORK**.” So “*Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say, rejoice!*”... “*And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*” Philippians 4:4,23*

1. WHY DID PAUL WRITE THIS LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIAN CHURCH?

Part of the reason Paul wrote this letter was to thank this church and encourage them about God’s supernatural supply for their own lives. Here is a quote from Wuest, describing the supernatural nature of God’s provision:

“Paul hastens to assure them that they have not impoverished themselves in giving so liberally to the cause of the gospel. The word “supply” is the translation of the same Greek word translated “I am full.” That is, God’s treatment of the Philippian saints will correspond to their treatment of Paul. They filled full Paul’s every need to overflowing. God will do the same for them. The measure of the supply which God the Father has is

determined by His wealth in glory, which wealth in glory is in Christ Jesus, an infinite supply. Translation: *But my God shall satisfy to the full all your need in accordance with His wealth in glory in Christ Jesus. Now to God even our Father, be the glory forever and ever.*”

I love what Wuest said about the Lord’s infinite measure of supply. Are you a supporter of the work of God? If so, this promise is also for you. My God shall supply all of your need according to His riches in Glory. If you are not a tither why not start today? Unlimited resources will support you all of the days of your life.

2. HOW DOES THIS EFFECT OUR PERSONAL LIVES?

Philippians 4:19, “And my God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

What would it look like to have all of my need; my spiritual need, my emotional need, my financial need, absolutely everything met by my relationship with Christ? That is what Paul is talking about in this verse, a kind of overflowing of God’s goodness effecting every part of me. He uses a powerful Greek word, “*pleroo*”, in this verse translated in English as “*supply every need*”.

3. WHAT ARE THE DEFINITIONS OF THIS GREEK WORD “PLEROO”?

“Pleroo” is a verb infinitive meaning “to fill to the full.” It might be defined as “to cram the net,” “to fill up a hollow place,” “to cause to abound,” “to load down,” “to fill the stomach,” “to fill the void,” “to pay off a debt,” “to complete a person so that there is no lack in him.” By consulting certain key lexicons and translations, we could translate this verse to read: “But my God shall [liberally, fully, gloriously, amply, abundantly] supply all your need [by imparting richly and furnishing abundantly, in a lavish and magnificent way]....” Dick Mills

4. WHO IS MORE THAN ENOUGH TO SUPPLY EVERYTHING YOU NEED?

Try reading out loud as one composite verse all the above amplifications and I believe you will be quickened by the Holy Spirit to discover the immensity of God’s provision. What a powerful verse of scripture, loaded with revelation and insight into God’s goodness revealed in His multi-faceted provision. What kind of need are you facing today? Is it family related or maybe financial? Or maybe you have troubles haunting you from the past or even worries about tomorrow. Regardless of what your facing, the answer is always the same. _____ Himself is more than enough to remedy every situation. He is all sufficient, all knowing, all powerful, ever present, and infinitely generous and kind. One encounter with Him and you will need no definition of fullness or sufficiency, you will see for yourself the fullness of God revealed to us in Jesus Christ. Christ Jesus will meet all of your need, fill to the full, furnish abundantly, by imparting richly, amply, abundantly in a lavish and magnificent way Himself who is more than enough.

5. WHAT IS OUR PART IN ALL OF THIS?

2 Corinthians 9:6,8, "But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in ALL THINGS, may have an abundance for every GOOD WORK."

We must march to the music of the spheres. We must be a _____ if we expect to receive. God loves a cheerful giver.

Charles Spurgeon writes, "Why, there is not a tree that grows but is giving forth perpetually! There is not a flower that blooms but its very sweetness lies in its shedding its fragrance in the air! All the rivers run into the sea, the sea feeds the clouds, the clouds empty out their treasures, the earth gives back the rain in fertility and so it is an endless chain of giving generosity! Generosity reigns supreme in nature! There is nothing in this world but lives by giving except a covetous man, and such a man is a piece of grit in the machinery. He is out of gear with the universe. Man is a wheel running in the opposite direction to the wheels of God's great engine. He is a jibbing horse in the team. He is one that will not do what all the forces of the world are doing. He is a monster! He is not fit for this world at all! He has not realized the motion of the spheres. He keeps not step with the march of the ages. He is out of date. He is out of place. He is out of God's order altogether. But the cheerful giver is marching to the music of the spheres. He is in order with God's great natural laws and God, loves him, since He sees His own work in him."

6. WHAT WAS REMARKABLE ABOUT THE CHURCH IN PHILIPPI?

They gave when they had nothing to give.

*2 Corinthians 8:1-5, "Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and **their deep poverty abounded** in the riches of their liberality. For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and **beyond their ability**, they were freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God."*

A.B. Simpson writes, "There are some souls that always seem to be kept on scant measure. Their spiritual garments are threadbare, their faces pinched, and their whole bearing that of people who are poverty stricken, and kept on short allowance.... To use the vivid figure of Job they come through by "the skin of their teeth." They sing sometimes, but it is generally a sad song. And when they go to the prayer meeting their usual cry is, "Pray for me." They are always begging, always hungry, always waiting for somebody to help them, and seldom looking for a chance to help. They eat everything in sight, but still they are always half starved. They are loved, cared for and saved but many who look at them will say, "If that is Christianity, save me from it."

There is another type of Christian character that lives "life more abundantly." It is a life which overflows in thankful joy and unselfish blessing to others. Its faith is full assurance. Its love "heareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things," and "never faileth." Its patience has "all longsuffering with joyfulness." Its peace "passeth all understanding." Its joy is "joy unspeakable and full of glory." **Its service is so free and glad that duty is delight and work a luxury of love.** Its giving is not only cheerful but "hilarious." Its sacrifice is so willing that even pain is joy, if borne for others and for God. It has enough and to spare, and its love and joy find their outlet in giving the overflow to others and finding that "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

This Life More Abundantly

7. DID PAUL LIVE LIFE MORE ABUNDANTLY?

Paul knew what it meant to live the overflowing life... He said "I am full," he cries, "and abound." Was there ever such a paradox? A prisoner chained between two soldiers in a cheerless Roman barracks! A man who says, "I have suffered the loss of **ALL THINGS.**" A hated, persecuted outcast, even now awaiting a trial in which his very life hung by a thread on the will of the Roman tyrant! A man who bore in his body the scars of beating, scourging's, shipwrecks, and privations of every kind, and who, only a few days before had received some scanty offerings of clothing, food, and perhaps a little money, from his congregation in Philippi. It is this man who cries, "**I have ALL and ABOUND.**" A.B.S.

8. IN PAUL'S LIFE HOW DID HE EXPRESS THIS LIFE TO OTHERS?

Paul's life was an overflowing life, and that always means a life that reaches out to bless others. It has enough and to spare for a suffering world and "grows rich in giving." Paul said "*I long to see you,*" he wrote in anticipation, "*that I may impart to you some spiritual gift.*" His prayers are all for others. Rarely do we find him asking anything for himself. His life was all given away in _____He was so filled with the Spirit of the Master that he could just pour out His life into every empty and open heart.

How blessed to find, how blessed to live such lives. How delightful it is to come in contact with hearts that are not preoccupied with their own needs, but are at leisure to lift the burdens of other hearts, and help men to touch His garment.

Beloved, have you this glorious fullness? Have you got beyond your own self-consciousness, your own prayers, your own little circle of friends and family ties, until your heart is in touch with the Savior? This is the crowning glory of the sweetest Christian life. A.B.S.

9. WHO WAS THE SOURCE OF THIS LIFE IN PAUL?

It all came from the revelation and conception he had obtained of God. He was but drinking at a higher fountain, and pouring out the fullness he received. He had found a heavenly spring, and he was but leading others to the same fountain. A.B.S.



1. DO YOU HAVE A TESTIMONY ABOUT HOW GOD PROVIDED FOR YOU AFTER YOU GAVE OUT OF YOUR LACK?

2. IS YOUR LIFE DEFINED AS ONE LIVED IN MINISTRY TO OTHERS ?

3. ARE YOU DRINKING FROM A HIGHER FOUNTAIN AND LEADING OTHERS TO THE SAME?

4. CAN YOU SAY, MY GOD HAS SUPPLIED ALL MY NEED ACCORDING TO HIS RICHES IN GLORY?

 ***JESUS, GIVER, MINISTRY FOR OTHERS***

HOLIDAY LESSONS

Week Nine

HEARTS FILLED WITH THANKSGIVING

“O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.” Psalm 95:1-2

INTRO:

There is no holiday quite like Thanksgiving. So far, it has been impossible for the world to steal it. Easter has the Easter bunny, Christmas has it's Santa, but Thanksgiving? At the end of the day the thing left unsaid is crying for our attention. There has to be someone to be thankful to. To those of us who have been born again have come to understand that it is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who is to be the recipient of our thanks and our praise. Thanksgiving is a truly an American holiday. It has been part of the conscience of America from our country's inception. Jonathan Edwards preached a Thanksgiving message to his church every year. In 1740 he preached about singing a new song to the Lord. It was called “They Sing a New Song” In this message he preached about how this new song of praise and Thanksgiving comes from a heart that has been reconciled to God.

1. IN ORDER TO SING THE SONG OF THANKSGIVING WHAT MUST WE LEARN?

Here is a short excerpt from Jonathan Edwards Thanksgiving sermon: “In order to learn the new song, you must hear the melody of the voice of Christ in the gospel. You have heard that the glorious gospel is that out of which this song is to be learned, and that 'tis Christ that must teach it. And this is the way that he teaches it: by causing the soul to hear the melody of his own voice in the gospel. 'Tis Christ that speaks to us in the gospel. Many hear His words, but they perceive no sweetness in them. They perceive no pleasantness in His voice, in the doctrines and invitations and promises of the gospel. 'Tis all an insipid thing and dead letter to them. But to the godly, Christ's mouth is found to be most sweet. You must perceive the sweetness of the voice. You must see the glory of those doctrines, and the sweetness of those invitations, and the exceeding preciousness of those promises.”

Edwards related giving of thanks to singing a new song or in other words songs birthed by the Spirit in revival. He said they were connected to the sweetness of the Savior's voice. Personal contact with The Lord is at the center of spiritual awakening. You begin “to hear The Lord's voice” and you are drawn into this new life characterized by the new song.

2. HOW CAN OUR HEARTS BE FILLED WITH THANKSGIVING?

Before we came to Christ our hearts were not thankful. It seems that most of our time was spent wondering (or complaining) about why we didn't have certain things that we wanted. Our hearts were not filled with thanksgiving and praise, they were obviously filled with something else. How can you worship God when your heart is polluted? How can you be thankful when we are poisoned with ungratefulness? How can we sing a new song when we are consumed with the song of this world? Yep, Thanksgiving is not only an American holiday, it is a Christian holiday. Since the Lord has washed us from our sins, filled us with His love, and baptized us in His Spirit; what else can we do? Our hearts are filled with thanksgiving. He has blessed us. Not only with the blessings in this world, He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the love of His Son.

3. WHAT DOES "THANKSGIVING" ALWAYS FOLLOW AND WHAT FLOWS AS A RESULT?

*Psalm 100:4-5, "Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name. **For the LORD is good; His loving-kindness is everlasting and His faithfulness to all generations.**"*

Thanksgiving always follows _____ and _____ flows out from our love to God. Nothing like fervent, corporate worship. Once you taste His incredible love that He has for you worship will be your response. One of the places we see this is in Luke where Luke describes a woman of questionable character who had tasted the love and forgiveness of Christ and could not pull herself away from His feet. She was caught up in fervent thanksgiving, washing His feet with her tears, her hair, and some expensive perfume. She was worshipping from her heart, responding to God's love for her. Once you glimpse His love for you clearly demonstrated at the cross, your heart will overflow with the fervency of **giving thanks**. So are you ready for Thanksgiving this year? It's a good opportunity to clear our heads and get back to what really matters in life. Determine this year you will enter His gates with Thanksgiving and His courts with praise.

4. WHAT IS TRUE SPIRITUALITY ALL ABOUT?

Psalm 116:17, "I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD."

True spirituality is all about the heart. The world is filled with religious activities that really mean nothing to God. One of the most terrifying passages of scripture is found in Amos 5. It says, "*Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them, nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings. Take away from Me the noise of your songs, for I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments.*"

I think the Lord gets really tired of religious observances that have nothing to do with the heart. Now don't misunderstand, the Lord loves worshippers. He even says He is looking for worshippers. The truth is He is only looking for one kind of worshipper; the authentic kind. He is looking for worshippers who worship in Spirit and in truth.

5. HOW DOES ONE RECEIVE AN AUTHENTIC HEART OF WORSHIP?

Actually it is connected to _____ . When we recognize the kindness and mercy of God our hearts are filled with thanksgiving that spills over in worship and praise. This is the work of God's grace in our souls. So that's it, true religion by definition is a religion of the heart. It is not so much about the outward performance but the thankful heart poured out to God. Give thanks to the Lord, offer Him a sacrifice of thanksgiving, the offering of your heart.

*It's so enjoyable to come before you
with uncontainable praises spilling from our hearts!
How we love to sing our praises over and over to you,
to the matchless God, high and exalted over all!
At each and every sunrise we will be thanking you
for your kindness and your love.
As the sun sets and all through the night,
we will keep proclaiming, "You are so faithful!"
Melodies of praise will fill the air as every musical instrument,
joined with every heart, overflows with worship.
No wonder I'm so glad; I can't keep it in!
Lord, I'm shouting with glee over all you've done,
for all you've done for me!
What mighty miracles and your power at work,
just to name a few.
Depths of purpose and layers of meaning
saturate everything you do.
Psalm 92:1-5 TPT*



1. HOW CAN GATHERING TOGETHER IN WORSHIP CULTIVATE AN ATTITUDE OF THANKSGIVING?

2. TAKE TIME TODAY TO HEAR HIS VOICE AND THE MELODY OF HIS SONG, JOIN IN ON THE SINGING. IT JUST MAY CHANGE YOUR HEART!

 : **LOVE, WORSHIP, GIVING THANKS**

Week Ten

O FOR A THOUSAND TONGUES TO SING

*“I heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands.”
Revelation 5:11*

INTRO:

Pastor Parris Bailey writes, “Allowing the Lord to bring thankfulness into our lives to some is like yanking an old tooth out of our mouth. Learning to be “filled continually filled” is a lifetime challenge. Call it whatever you want, drinking His presence, praying in the Holy Ghost, letting it bubble up from your belly, living supernaturally is possible and is a must!”

“Years ago, on my search for true joy I came across this passage concerning John and Charles Wesley. “Part of Sunday my brother (Charles) and I then used to spend in walking in the meadows and singing psalms. But one day, just as we were beginning to sing, he burst out into a loud laughter. I asked him, if he was distracted; and began to be very angry, and presently after to laugh as loud as he. Nor could we possibly refrain, though we were ready to tear ourselves in pieces, but we were forced to go home without singing another line.” I was so taken back with this! To think the presence of the Lord could be so strong to overtake someone with such joy. I knew then that I had blockages as a Christian and the “cares of this world” were stealing my joy. Normal life to me was just mundane and depressing. Thank God joy came and paid me a visit!”

1. HAVE YOU ALLOWED YOURSELF TO BE TOUCHED BY JOY?

“Digging deep into the mine and seeking out treasures of life divine” is what Charles Wesley wrote and experienced. Going down deep inside and allowing the gospel to shine in those dark areas isn’t a cake walk. But when we let Christ come and change our garments of mourning into praise, we too will find ourselves overcome with laughter. Charles Wesley spent the rest of His life overflowing with praise; His life was touched and changed by Christ. He even prayed for a 1000 tongues to express this!

“Oh for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer’s praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of His grace!
My gracious Master and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad
The honors of Thy name.”

“Learning to use our mouth to continually praise Him out of a **“heart of _____”** means we let go. We trust that He “has the ball” and as I say to myself in any given day- “He’s got this”. Walking in joy brings liberty and freedom and helps us face defeat, death and loneliness supernaturally.”

“JOY BECOMES THE AFFIRMATION OF THE TRUEST THINGS IN THIS LIFE - The joy of the Lord is rooted in the now and the not-yet of the Kingdom of God.” (Sarah Bessey) I pray you too can join in with the angels and ask for a language that will guide you through life into deeper joy and revelation. Oh God give me a thousand tongues to express my love to you!” PB

2. HOW DO WE AS A CHURCH GIVE THIS THANKSGIVING LOVE AWAY?

1 Corinthians 13:1-3, “If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.”

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, “I love Thanksgiving. As a child Thanksgiving rivaled Christmas in my heart. I think it must be the simplicity of the day that I love; family, great food, football, and a few days away from the daily grind. There is also something else I love about Thanksgiving, it is the Thanksgiving meal for the least fortunate that our church sponsors every year. There is a different kind of excitement as church members cook their favorite dishes and make preparations to host several hundred people for a great Thanksgiving feast.

3. WHY IS THERE AN UNUSUAL EXCITEMENT IN THE AIR AS THE PEOPLE IN OUR CHURCH GATHER TOGETHER FOR THAT GOSPEL FEAST?

Could it be that there is something inside of every born again Christian that longs to serve others? Could that be the love that Paul shares about in his famous love chapter in 1 Corinthians 13? I think it probably is. There is an incompleteness in our hearts until we pour out what we receive on others. It is in the giving away the love we receive from the Lord that our joy is completed. That is really our purpose for being here on this earth, we live to glorify God by pouring our love on someone else.

When I think about that event, several pictures stand out in my mind. I think of the families, mom and dad with a table full of small children all dressed in their best clothes to come enjoy a free meal. I wonder what they do the rest of the year? I also think about the widow that I saw, she too sat at a table full of children, some she had adopted, with the empty seat where dad should have been standing awkwardly empty. Then there was the hundreds of homeless men, some with the stare of hopelessness, somehow they lost their way along the road.

Thanksgiving can be a humbling day. I am blessed beyond measure and sometimes I don't walk in thankfulness. Maybe this Thanksgiving can spill over into the rest of the year, maybe this love can flow out of us more often.



1. THIS YEARS THANKSGIVING DINNER SERVING THE COMMUNITY WILL BE SUNDAY NOVEMBER 24TH AFTER THE MORNING SERVICE. ASK YOU SMALL GROUP LEADER WHAT TO BRING?

2. WHO CAN YOU INVITE TO JOIN YOU IN SERVING THIS HOLIDAY SEASON AT CHURCH?

3. TAKE TIME TO ENJOY YOUR FAMILY THIS THANKSGIVING!

: **THANKSGIVING**

Week Eleven

CHRISTMAS PROMISE

“But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.” Micah 5:2

INTRO:

All of us have experienced broken promises in our lives. Promises of friendship that ended in betrayal, promises of faithfulness that ended in heartbreak, and promises of gifts, jobs, or better days that only awakened our hopes to end up crashing to the ground. What is the bottom line of a promise? Good intentions are never enough. Fulfilled promises come by the integrity of the promiser and his ability to fulfill the promise. At the end of the day there is only One that can always come through and He is the very promise of Christmas. Christmas is a celebration of the promise of God. Notice I said promise and not promises. All of God’s promises flow out of His great promise. What promise is that? He promised to send a messiah, His only Son to be the Savior of the world. The birth of Christ, the fulfillment of the promise of God, is our guarantee that all of the promises in the book are sure. His promises are always fulfilled.

1. WHAT WAS MICAH’S POINT CONCERNING THE PROMISES OF GOD?

Here are some thoughts from John Piper on God’s promise seen in Micah’s prophesy: “Micah’s point was this: the coming of Christ was the confirmation of the promises of God. Here’s the way Paul put it in Romans 15:8: *“Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God’s truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs.”* Or as he said in 2 Corinthians 1:20, *“All the promises of God find their Yes in him.”* If you are “in him” by faith, you will inherit all the promises of God. Micah’s prediction came true in Jesus. And thus all the promises were confirmed. God has told the truth. Christmas is God’s great confirmation of all His promises. If Christ has come, God is true. And if God is true, all the promises will come true for all who trust him. Receive this unspeakable gift.”

Let’s celebrate this Christmas, celebrate the coming of our Savior and His promise of life with Him forever. Looking at God’s track record I would have to say all of the other promises God has given to you are certain.

2. SO WHAT ARE WE TO DO CONCERNING HIS FUTURE PROMISES?

Psalm 27:14, “Wait on the LORD; Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the LORD!”

Do you remember counting the days until Christmas as a child? It seems like the Chipmunks captured that whole drama, “I can hardly stand to wait. Please Christmas

don't be late". I wonder if there is something spiritual about that joyful anticipation for Christmas as a child? I think maybe there is. All of us are waiting, we are waiting for the unseen and the unknown. We are all waiting on God. Just as Israel had been waiting for a Savior for hundreds of years when Christ finally appeared, we are waiting again. We are waiting on the coming kingdom. We may not be totally in touch with that but inside of all of us is a longing; we are longing for the 'kingdom come'.

3. WHAT PROMISE ARE WE GIVEN ABOUT THE FUTURE KINGDOM?

Here is an excerpt from Louie Giglio's book on waiting for God. It is followed by one of our beloved Christmas hymns. "God is not slow. He is merciful. He has come in the person of Christ, extending His open arms to all. Every day in which He waits to blast the final trumpet is a day of extended grace. It is a day for more people to hear of His love, for others to trust in His promise, for more people to forsake evil ways, for you to put your hope in Jesus.

The day is coming when sin will be done away with and the earth will be restored to its perfect fullness. But God is patient, waiting for all those He loves to find their way to Him. But, make no mistake. God is coming. The enemy will be cast out. _____ will be made new."

"O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.
O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,
Who orderest all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And teach us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel"

So like the Chipmunks, we are waiting. We are waiting for redemption to be on full display. We are waiting for the end of poverty, and sickness and loneliness. We are waiting for His promises to be fully realized. We are waiting for the promise of Christmas. "I can hardly stand to wait. Please Christmas don't be late".

4. WHAT ATTITUDE SHOULD WE HAVE AS WE WAIT?

*Psalm 27:13-14 AMPC, "What, what would have become of me had I not believed that I would see the Lord's goodness in the land of the living! Wait and hope for and **expect** the Lord; be brave and of good courage and let your heart be stout and enduring. Yes, **wait** for and **hope** for and **expect** the Lord."*



1. WHAT PROMISE ARE YOU WAITING FOR TO BE FULFILLED IN YOUR LIFE?

2. WHAT PROMISES HAVE ALREADY BEEN FULFILLED IN YOUR LIFE?

3. ASK YOUR SMALL GROUP LEADER HOW YOU CAN BE A BLESSING TO A CHILD THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON.

: ***ALL THINGS***

Week Twelve

SO THIS IS CHRISTMAS

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:14

INTRO:

“So this is Christmas
And what have you done
Another year over
And a new one just begun”

Those are some of the words from HAPPY CHRISTMAS by John Lennon. It is actually a beautiful song but leaves you with the taste of hopelessness. Christmas without Christ, nothing could be emptier. It's like singing without words, baseball without a ball, or a family feast with no food; what's the point? Christ is the very substance of Christmas and actually the very substance of life itself. Just as Christmas without Christ has no meaning, life without Jesus is just as empty. Today's verse speaks to us about the very essence of Christmas. Jesus, the very essence of God, became human. He took on human flesh for the first time in the womb of Mary from Nazareth. When Christ was born in Bethlehem the first Christmas celebration was birthed, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!” The un-seeable attributes of the invisible God became visible in this glorious person; Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

1. WHAT BECAME VISIBLE WHEN GOD BECAME A MAN?

John Piper writes, “So the eternal Word of God took on human flesh, and in that way the divine Son of God—who never had an origin, and never came into being, and was God, but was also with God—became man. And in doing this, he made **the _____ of God visible** in a wholly new way. And this divine glory, uniquely manifest in the Son of God, was full of grace and truth. And from that fullness we receive grace upon grace. That is the meaning of Christmas in John's Gospel. God the Son, who is God, and who is with God, came to reveal God in a way He had never been revealed before. And in that revelation, the dominant note struck is grace: from the fullness of that revelation of divine glory, we receive grace upon grace.”

Your celebration of Christmas will say a lot about your life. Trying to have a Merry Christmas, or even worse, Happy Holidays, without the adoration of Christ is a real waste of time. Christ is the very author and substance of life, Christmas Day is our opportunity to acknowledge that He alone is our source of life.

2. WHAT DID JESUS BECOME WHEN HE CAME DOWN?

2 Corinthians 8:9, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich."

Charles Spurgeon writes, "Oh, how surprised angels were, when they were first informed that Jesus Christ, the Prince of Majesty, intended to shroud himself in clay and ***become a babe***, and live and die! We know not how it was first mentioned to the angels, but what great wonderment there must have been. What! Was it true that He whose crown was all bedight with stars, would lay that crown aside? What! Was it certain that He about whose shoulders was cast the purple of the universe, would become a man dressed in a peasants garment? Could it be true that He who was everlasting and immortal would one day be nailed to a cross? Wanting to see... when He descended from on high, they followed Him; for Jesus was "seen of angels," and seen in a special sense, for they looked upon Him in rapturous amazement, wondering what it all could mean. "He for our sakes became poor."

3. WHAT DID THE ANGELS SING THAT GLORIOUS DAY?

"Do you see Him as on that day of heaven's eclipse He did un-gird His majesty? Oh, can ye conceive the yet increasing wonder of the heavenly hosts when the deed was actually done, when they saw the tiara taken off, when they saw Him unbind His girdle of stars, and cast away His sandals of gold? Can ye conceive it, when He said to them, "I do not disdain the womb of the virgin; I am going down to earth to become a man?" Can ye picture them as they declared they would follow Him! Yes, they followed Him as near as the world would permit them. And when they came to earth they began to sing, ***"Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men."*** Nor would they go away till they had made the shepherds wonder, and till heaven had hung out new stars in honor of the new-born King."

"And now wonder, ye angels, the Infinite has become an infant; He, upon whose shoulders the universe doth hang, hangs at His mothers breast; He who created ***ALL THINGS***, and bears up the pillars of creation, hath now become so weak that He must be carried by a woman! And oh, wonder, ye that knew Him in His riches, whilst ye admire His poverty! Where sleeps the new-born King? Had He the best room in Caesar's palace? Hath a cradle of gold been prepared for Him, and pillows of down, on which to rest His head? No, where the ox fed, in the dilapidated stable, in the manger, there the Savior lies, swathed in the swaddling bands of the children of poverty!"

"Oh, for words to picture the humiliation of Christ! ...And on that cross so long ago He says "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." C.S.

4. WHY DID THE SAVIOR COME TO BE POOR AND DIE?

The Scripture says, "*For your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be made rich.*" **For your sakes.** *The reason why Christ died was, "that we through His poverty might be rich."*

Brethren, we have now a joyful theme before us—those who are partakers of the Savior's blood are rich. All those for whom the Savior died, having believed in His name and given themselves to Him, are this day rich. But you say no I am so poor..... and yet if you be a child of God, I do know that Christ's end is answered in you; *you are rich.*

You are rich in possessions; you have in your possession now things more costly than gems, more valuable than gold and silver. ... "But," thou sayest, "I have nothing." Man, thou hast ***ALL THINGS.*** Knowest thou not what Paul said? He declares that "things present and things to come, and this world, and life and death, ***ALL*** are yours and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." The great machinery of providence has no wheel which does not revolve for you. The great economy of grace with ***ALL*** its fullness, is yours. Remember that adoption, justification, sanctification, ***ALL*** are yours. Thou hast everything that heart can wish in spiritual things; and thou hast everything that is necessary for this life." C.S.



1. HOW CAN YOU SHARE THE LOVE OF CHRIST WITH SOMEONE THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON?

2. DECEMBER 22 IS THE GREAT BIG TOY GIVEAWAY. ASK YOUR SMALL GROUP LEADER HOW YOU CAN HELP OUT?

3. CHRISTMAS CANDLELIGHT SERVICE, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24 AT 7:00 P.M. BRING YOUR FAMILY AND LET US CELEBRATE TOGETHER.



**HAVE A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND
A HAPPY NEW YEAR**

