

Think on These Things—The Mature Mindset— February 13th and 16th, 2020

Scripture: Philippians 3-4

Philippians 3.4-21 (NIV)

If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

⁷ But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. ¹⁰ I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

¹² Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

¹⁵ All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. ¹⁶ Only let us live up to what we have already attained. ¹⁷ Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. ¹⁸ For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹ Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

Philippians 4.1,4-9

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such

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things. ⁹Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Read and Discuss

Introduction

Pastor Jacob picked up in Philippians 4 by backing up to Philippians 3. Working his way backwards, Jacob noticed that Paul got to his “Finally” (4.8), from his “Therefore” (4.1), which points back to his ultimate goal of knowing Christ—the power of his resurrection, and to participate in his sufferings (3.10). After walking this back, we can see that the mind set to “think on these things” is doing so as part of this pursuit of the power and participation in Christ.

Engage the Scripture

- Read Philippians 3.4-14. Identify the section where Paul seems to be bragging. Not that you would, but what could you brag about in your own history?
- Starting in verse 7, what does Paul do with these gains he was boasting about? What does that tell you about Paul? Would you be able to see your gains and consider them loss?
- Read Philippians 3.15-21. This is a speech to inspire Christ followers who could be brought down by a world that doesn't point to the cross of Christ—a world that thrives by boasting in its own glory. But Paul isn't saying to do away with the “enemies of the cross of Christ”, rather he weeps over them. Like Paul, we can weep for them but retain hope because we know something of heaven—we know that our citizenship is there. How could your interactions at work or on social media be effected by this viewpoint?
- Read Philippians 4.1,4-9. As we considered the last three “Think on these” in the list starting in Philippians 4.8, these questions were proposed as ways to assess our words and actions—
 1. Are my motives pure?
 2. Is this lovely in the sight of God?
 3. Would I be admired for this?

How do you know if your motives are pure? How do you know if something is lovely to God? How might history judge your actions?

When in the last several days could these questions have potentially changed your response to a situation? How might you put these three questions into daily practice?

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Pray

Pray these words together:

God help me to think about that which is:

*TRUE
NOBLE
RIGHT
PURE
LOVELY
ADMIRABLE
PRAISEWORTHY*

Amen.