

Where Is My Passion?

Philippians 3:7-14

By Dr. Edward Watke Jr.

In Revelation 22:12 we read, “*And behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.*” Then in II John 3:18 we read, “*Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.*” In the book of Philippians we find in our text how we can press onward toward the goals the Lord has for us. If we are to receive the rewards God desires to give us, then we will need to heed the testimony of the Apostle Paul as he shared his heart’s desire in Philippians 3:7-14.

How can we press toward the mark of God’s will, power, and direction for a New Year? How can we enter into Paul’s personal goal “to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” ? (Phil. 3:7-14) For what do we have passion? For what do we live?

By Counting Unworthy -- the Things of the World:

“But what things were gain to me, those I count loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.” 3:7,8

In verses four through seven, Paul gives a list of the things in which he could boast. It is an awesome list for if anyone could boast in his own ability -- what he received through heredity, circumstances, training and position -- Paul could. By birth and by training he stood head and shoulders above most all of the Jews in leadership in that day. Paul had an undaunting resume of achievements that stood him in good stead among the spiritual leaders of the Jews. And he had kept the law blamelessly before men.

In the first part of the chapter Paul was warning the believers about the Judaizers. These had confidence in the flesh and were constantly rejoicing and boasting in man and his attainments, but Paul said he would glory only in the Lord Jesus. (See Gal. 6:12, 14) Now Paul rejected personal ability, position, etc., and rejected have “*confidence in the flesh*” which prior to his conversion probably was his chief boast.

Paul counted all the things of this world that had been gain to him -- wisdom, ability, position, power, possessions, name, education -- as but refuse, as loss. So often the very things that we count gain Paul looked upon as something to be rejected, as dung. We so readily rely on the flesh -- our education, knowledge, who we know, what strings we can pull to gain our ends, or our wealth, fame or abilities. These things are weights to us, for when they become our source from which we draw to serve the Lord -- they are traps, impediments, and destructive for we are leaning on the things that bring pride and failure. We must be willing to lay aside the world and its charms, its religiosity, its offerings, etc. By the flesh Paul was writing about the “*old nature*” we received at birth. ***God has nothing good to say about the flesh.*** (Gen. 6:12; Rom. 7:18; John 6:63)

By Counting Worthy -- My position Of Righteousness In Christ. (3:9)

When Paul met Jesus Christ on the Damascus Road (Acts 9), he trusted Him and became a child of God. It was an instantaneous miracle of the grace of God, the kind

that still takes place today whenever sinners will admit their need and turn to the Savior by faith. Paul met Christ and he realized how futile were his good works and how sinful were his personal claims of righteousness that he could claim as listed in chapter 3:4-6.

Now he was "*found in Christ.*" Having no righteousness of his own, now the righteousness of the Lord Jesus was imputed to him. We have no righteousness in ourselves, (Rom. 3:9-12, 23; Isa. 64:6; Jer. 17:9) nothing but filthy rags.

Praise the Lord for a righteousness that is by God's grace through faith. (Rom. 3:19-21; Rom. 10:1-3) In salvation we are indeed ***made righteous by faith*** (Phil. 3:9) and it is unto all who believe (Rom. 3:19-21). This is ours because Christ is made unto us righteousness. In Him we have both a ***positional*** and a ***practical righteousness***. (I Cor. 1:30). We have literally been "*made righteous*" through the merits of Christ's death on the Cross as He was made sin for us. (II Cor. 5:21; I Pet. 2:24,25)

Also many portions of the Word of God lead us to understand the importance of a ***practical righteousness***, that is, a righteous walk or life. Consider studying Proverbs chapters 10-13 and note all that is given there about a walk in righteousness. Such a life can only take place by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, a renewed nature through the New Birth, and by our drawing ability, strength, and direction by the power of the indwelling Christ. Titus 2:11-14 is my favorite portion of Scripture dealing with the practical walk in righteousness. Here --

1. The grace of God teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts.
2. That we live soberly, righteousness, and godly in this present world.
3. As we look for Him to come we also must understand the powerful truth that He gave Himself to redeem us, and to purify unto Himself a peculiar (set apart) people, zealous of good works.

By Counting Christ -- Worthy of My Passion. (Phil. 3:10)

Ah, here we read of **Paul's great passion** -- "*that he might know Him, and the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.*" Ministry, Christian living, service, and a godly daily walk must come out of this passion as set forth in Paul's burden. It is too easy for any saint of God to walk in the flesh, (Gal. 5:16-17, 24) to not even see the extent to which one leans on personal ability and all that goes with it.

Paul's desire was to Know HIM: To know Christ is to know the Lord, after our salvation, in a very precious, intimate way which would necessitate:

1. *A heart of worship*, spending much time at the Savior's feet. (James 4:6-10; II Chron. 7:14)
2. *An overwhelming love to Christ*. (I Cor. 5:14-15; John 14:21-23; Eph. 3:16-21)
Do we love the world? Its enticements, offerings, goods, recreation, etc., can easily become gods to us. Keep yourself from idols, saith the Lord. (I John 5:21)
3. *A life of abiding in Him*. (John 15:1-8) To be at home in the Lord, how awesome!

His desire was also to know the power of Christ's resurrection.

1. Paul wrote to the Ephesians believers about this as found in Eph. 1:19-20. The very power that brought Christ out of the tomb is at our disposal.
2. We are to experience what it means to be dead to sin, and alive unto Him by the power that belongs to the saint of God and according to the position we have in Him. (Rom. 6:1-14; Gal. 2:20)

Paul desired to enter into the fellowship of His sufferings.

1. The word fellowship here means a joint participation. Paul is not speaking of Christ's death and sufferings on the cross for our sin, but His suffering for righteousness sake while here on the earth. (Col. 1:24)

2. We need to be willing to go outside the camp, bearing His reproach. (Heb. 13:13-16). Moses is a good example of such suffering. (Heb. 11:24-27)

Then Paul stated his desire to be made conformable unto Christ's death.

1. Christ's death was the result of His self-emptying, of setting aside His glory and thus having no will of His own. He came to do the Father's will, and could say He always pleased the Father. (Cf. Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 5:7-9)

2. Paul's concern was that he might enter into this same surrender, dedication and death to own will. (II Cor. 5:14-15) Paul could say that he died daily and that his ministry was to glorify Christ only. (I Cor. 15:31; 2:1-5)

Why not memorize these few verses -- Philippians 3:7-10? Then make 3:10 the motto, the directive for your life!