

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage you to worship God each day.

God tells us that Ezra read from the book of the Law day after day and that the people of God were filled with joy!

Let's Worship God

Philippians week four





Let's Worship God

Philippians

Day 19 - Philippians 3:9 - False Righteousness

Paul says in verse 9 that he wants to be found ‘in him’, in Christ. Earlier Paul writes that the Lord Jesus Christ was “found in human form”. This means that to any observer, Jesus presents a human appearance and is judged to be a man. Paul’s desire to be found “in Christ” means the same: he wants whoever looks at him, to see him as a man in Christ; whatever his experiences should turn out to be, he wants to face them as a man in Christ.

In Christ there is one particular treasure - righteousness. Righteousness means being right with God. Paul describes two different kinds of righteousness. Righteousness that does not satisfy what God requires (‘a righteousness of my own’), and a righteousness that does meet God’s requirements (a ‘righteousness from God’), and there is only one way that we can get the righteousness that we need - through faith in Christ.

Paul doesn’t want a righteousness of his own, based on the law. This is a ‘do-it-yourself’ righteousness, based on how many good things you’ve done. Paul used to boast about this kind of righteousness back when he was a Pharisee. The Pharisees pride themselves on obeying every little thing they think God commands. But Paul says this righteousness is worthless. Why can’t we get in God’s good books through doing everything He tells us to? Well, first of all, no one is perfect. We’ve inherited sin from Adam - we’re born sinners. Secondly, even if we are living a perfect life, we still have to keep it up till the judgement day, and one sin is enough to ruin all the ‘good’ we’ve done. Finally, this kind of righteousness is self-conferred. We’ve looked at ourselves, we’ve examined our lives, and we’ve decided that we’re good. How do we know that our standards are God’s? A certificate of good behaviour that we’ve awarded to ourself is not enough to face God with. We need something more.

Let's Worship God

Philippians

Day 20 - Philippians 3:9-11 - True Righteousness

Paul has written about the righteousness he doesn't want, but he goes on to describe the righteousness he does. First of all, this is a righteousness that comes from God. If God pronounces us right with Him, then we are secure for ever. There can be no salvation unless God is satisfied; sin might be cleansed a thousand times, but if God is not satisfied with what has been done, then it is all a waste of time, effort, and suffering. But here is a salvation for sinners with which God is satisfied. It comes from Him, so it is certain from the start. This righteousness is offered on condition of faith. Faith means that we abandon works and efforts, and God promises His righteousness to those who will stop trying to save themselves. But this is not any old faith. This is faith in Jesus Christ. We rely on the Son of God to make us acceptable to God. Christ is the Mediator, He goes between us and God. He is our Substitute, paying for our sins. But He also is our righteousness, perfectly doing all that God asks, and His perfect righteousness is credited to our account. This is the righteousness Paul wants.

Because of what Christ has done for Paul, he wants to live for Him. Paul wants to know Christ, and this doesn't just mean know about Him. Paul is talking about a knowledge that is put into practice in his life, and he is also talking about having an intimate relationship with Christ. Paul knows that in order to have this intimate relationship with Christ he will have to share in some sense in Christ's experiences - which means suffering. If we truly want to be like Christ, we should expect suffering. But Paul encourages us by reminding us that we have the risen power of Christ to strengthen us, keep us, and lead us through, and that we have the companionship of Christ. We are not copying a dead model but walking in fellowship with a living Saviour towards the goal of eternity with Him.



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Philippians

Day 21 - Philippians 3:12-14 - Paul's Example

Once upon a time Paul thought he was perfectly righteous, but now he knows the truth, he sees himself with new eyes. Paul knows that he is not perfect, but he knows he has a responsibility to press on. Christ has made him His own, and because of this he has the desire to live for Christ.

Paul sets out his own example for Christians to follow, not to blow his own trumpet, but to lead and guide the way. But while doing this, he calls them his brothers, making it clear that the things he is calling them to are things he must be doing as well. They all have the obligation to pursue perfection, and they are all imperfect sinners. Gone is the pride of Paul's Pharisee days, and in its place is the humbling realisation of the Christian of how far he still has to go in his Christian life. This humility is the springboard to progress. There is no room for laziness in the Christian life. Paul makes it clear that to grow as a Christian we need to get on with the job at hand. Paul also emphasises concentration on the goal that lies ahead. We are not to dwell on past sins, past hurts, past sorrows. Yes, these things are not erased from our memory, but they should not absorb our every moment. All of this requires determination and zeal. What holds Paul's gaze as he turns from the past and looks to the future? He calls it the goal or the prize. It is eternity with Jesus Christ. This is the prize that belongs to those who are called by God in Christ Jesus. This prize is guaranteed by God's saving work in Paul.

So what is the example of growing in Christ that Paul sets out for us to follow? It is one of humility, recognising who we really are; it is one of hard work and single-mindedness, not allowing our circumstances or our past to wreck our concentration; it is one that is fixed on the goal; and it is rooted in the saving power and grace of Christ.



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Philippians

Day 22 - Philippians 3:15-19 - A Bad Example

Paul is telling the Christians to follow his example. Is he being arrogant? No. He is an apostle, he has been chosen by God to teach the early church the things of God. God has inspired Paul to write what he has in this letter. So, what Paul is saying is what God is saying. Paul is confident that if any of the believers aren't sure, God will show them that what Paul is teaching is true. Where does God tell us how to live today? In His Word. The Bible is where we should go when we aren't sure of what someone is teaching or when we don't know what to do. Paul tells the Philippian believers that they are to hold true to what they do know. Whatever we have learned and understood from God's Word we are responsible to put into practice in our lives. We will be held accountable for what we know about God and what we have done with what we know. But we have the promise that where we are weak in our knowledge and ability, but desire to be strong, God will help us.

Paul again tells the Philippians to imitate, not just him, but all of those who are living a Godly life. He contrasts this with those whose lives they are not to imitate. Who is he warning us against? Those who are on the path to eternal destruction; those who worship themselves - their own desires come first; those who rejoice in things they should be ashamed of; and those whose minds are set on the things of the world. The Philippians are daily faced with this contrary example. There are two ways to live - as a soldier of Christ or as an enemy of Christ. Paul lovingly urges them to live for Christ and warns them against giving in to the world around them.

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Philippians

Day 23 - Philippians 3:20-21 - Christ's Return

Paul has been contrasting the example of the Christian life with the example of those who are enemies of Christ. Now he turns to talk of the hope that is common to all Christians, but he still paints a contrast between the enemies of Christ and those who follow Christ. The enemies of the cross are heading for destruction, but we are waiting for a Saviour from heaven. They are devoted to the body, making an idol of their desires. But Christians look for the transformation of their lowly body. Enemies of Christ glory in shameful things, but we are to glory in Christ. They are earth-bound, but our citizenship is in heaven.

Paul describes the believers as waiting for Christ's return. The second coming of Christ is the end of all God's saving work. After Christ's death, God raises Him from the dead and exalts Him as Lord over all and one day all will submit to Him as Lord, willingly or unwillingly. Christ's Second Coming is completely linked to His work on the cross. It is the final expression of what God thinks of His Son.

Because Paul sees the return of Christ as a central Christian belief, he expects that all Christians will be one with him in looking for it expectantly. What kind of expectation should we have of Christ's return? Well, for one thing it will bring a great blessing. It will change our lowly body with all of its frailty, illness, sinfulness, and weakness into a glorious and perfected body. We will have the perfect means of living the whole, full life of Christ. We will be like Christ. But that is not all, and we will look at what else we have to look forward to at Christ's return tomorrow.

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Philippians

Day 24 - Philippians 3:20-21 - Our Hope

The blessings which Christ's return brings are very great, but they aren't the primary thing we are to long for. Our first longing should be for the Lord Himself. The Lord Jesus Christ is the supreme attraction to the Christian. We can look forward to a lot of things: deliverance from sin and temptation, meeting great Christians from the past, being reunited with those we love, and the glory of heaven. But beyond all these things there is one thing that gives meaning and focus to heaven, that one Person without whom we would not be there, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We have an assurance that what we hope for in Christ will happen. Paul offers no dates for the return of Christ. It is an immediate possibility for which the Christian must be in constant readiness, and it may not come for thousands of years. But nothing can stop it happening at the moment which God the Father has foreordained for it. How do we know? Because Christ has all power to subject all things to Himself. His power is effective and invincible, nothing can stand in His way.

The promise of Christ's coming is given without date so that we can live daily preparing to meet our Lord. We are, even now, citizens of heaven. We belong to a far-off homeland, and we are waiting for the King of that land to come and fetch us. Does this mean we do nothing? No, we are to live for our King here; we are to carry out the work He has given us here; we are to colonise earth for our King in heaven. So, what happens when our King returns, does all that work go to waste? No, it becomes part of the new heaven and the new earth, where we will be with Christ for all eternity.