Philippians

Part 4

Speaker	H. Nunn
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Note: This text is a computer generated transcript of the sermon. In some cases it may contain errors.

[00:00:00] 3. Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me, indeed, is not grievous, but for you it is safe. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision, for we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh, if any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more circumcise the eighth day of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, and Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law a Pharisee, concerning zeal persecuting the church, touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless. But what things were gained to me, those I [00:01:06] counted 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 down, that I might gain Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, are being made conformable unto his death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which [00:02:03] also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore as many as be perfect be thus minded, and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, where unto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, and let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example. For many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even [00:03:05] weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.

For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body according to the working, whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. What wonderful words we were reading last night, weren't we? But as we come to this third chapter of Philippians, the apostle says, now I want to tell you something about myself. Now he was a man of joy, and if he desired those in Philippi to be joyous, surely [00:04:02] he should show them how he was that man of joy. Now here he's going to tell us something about the sacrifice that he gave, so that he might know something of that joy, because I don't think that joy is known apart from sacrifice. Don't you think that with regard to ourselves today, in so many ways we are not willing, as we come to the Lord Jesus Christ, to fully give him our hearts and our lives? We want to save back in our lives many things that we have, and

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we don't give him the whole of our hearts and our lives.

Isn't it that with regard to our lives it's just like a house, and as we see the house we say with regard to it, well there are rooms, Lord Jesus, that I want you to enter, but there are those rooms that I've always had and I want them for myself. And if we think that we're going on in that way, and have joy in our lives, well it's going to be a very very sad time, because we will not have the fullness of that joy unless we're willing [00:05:05] to give sacrifice, just as this man sacrificed. Now, as we think of him sacrificing, do you think for a moment that he was a poor man beforehand? He'd got much to give up, and as we think of the man giving up here, I want you to think of him naturally just for a little while. We'll go on to what he was and what he said he was later on. But naturally, I would say with regard to him, he was, at the beginning, a younger man when he came to the Lord Jesus. He was a man that was very intelligent, he was very well read, there were so many things concerning him that made it appear that he was right on the threshold of a wonderful life. Beside that, I would gather, because he could have the education that he did have, that he came from a wealthy family. And as I think of him naturally, you know you'd say, well you've got nothing to lose, have you? Go on as you are, because [00:06:04] look what a wonderful life you have. No, but as he turns into this scripture, he says some words that he, well he gives words, I'll put it that way, he gives words right at the beginning to show where true rejoicing comes. It doesn't come through what we have or what we are naturally, but he says, finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. Now again, I say with regard to the words that he uses, for those Philippians, he really meant them, he really meant them that they were his brethren, as he was a great man, a great apostle writing to them and had the authority of apostles so to write. They're his brethren, he loves them, he loves them. As we were speaking concerning that agreeable man Epaphroditus last evening, here he says, my brethren, my brother, my brethren, what a wonderful word. But rejoice [00:07:02] in the Lord. Now wherever else could the apostle Paul rejoice in? When I think of all that he had previously, I don't think for a moment that he fully rejoiced in those things. There are people today that have thoughts with regard to their rejoicing for this world, thoughts with regard to happiness that they might have, but have you noticed that in the word of God, the word happiness, although it's mentioned, it's not mentioned so much as that word joy that's something deeper, something more profound, something more serene and the apostle so often uses the word joy and rejoice and he really means it. And the only rejoicing can be found in the Lord. Now when I think of the words that follow, I wonder what he really meant them for. Was it that he meant them with regard to the rejoicing? He says, to say the same things unto you is not, indeed to me is not grievous, but for you it's safe. Is it about [00:08:02] the dogs that are following or is it about the rejoicing in the Lord? I feel that we could take it in either way because of the very fact that people, believers on the Lord Jesus Christ, don't always find their rejoicing in the Lord. And as here he would speak to them and maybe the last time in speaking to them, we realise that he says, if you're going to rejoice at all, it's going to be that your rejoicing will be in the Lord and what a wonderful rejoicing that will be. But straightway he says concerning those that would hinder that rejoicing because our rejoicing can be hindered by things that come into our life, he says beware. Beware. So on the one hand we have the rejoicing and he says to say the same things unto you is not grievous, but for you it is safe. Beware of dogs. Now as he would say these words to them, I would gather by what we read later on in the chapter [00:09:05] that he'd warned them before with regard to evil workers in their midst. He'd continue to speak in the same vein concerning that same thing, but he says to say the same thing unto you, to me is not grievous, but for you it is safe. Now as I look through the scripture I find that the word is a word of repeat. Have you ever read through the book of Deuteronomy and seen how many times that wonderful man Moses spoke concerning the duties of the children of Israel, what they should do to be blessed and what they should not do so that they might still have that blessing? Have you ever thought as well of that man that forgot, that man Peter who lost the joy, lost his joy

because of the fact that he forgot and there after that when he wrote those two epistles he wrote so that other people might remember and he said I'm going to write, I'm going to speak to you, I'm going [00:10:04] to write and not only am I going to bring these things to your remembrance now, but after I've gone there they will be so that you'll remember. And don't you think that we need this? As we think of the children in the school they are so often in their lessons they have one lesson concerning a certain subject but there it comes again perhaps the next day brought up in a different way but the same lesson. And I mention again tonight with regard to these two things, to write the same thing unto you is not grievous but for you it's safe. We need these warnings, we need this instruction with regard to our rejoicing and if we don't take notice of either of these warnings we're not going to have the joy in our hearts that we might have. But he says beware, beware. There they were a little assembly no doubt going on with the Lord, how pleased he was to be able to write that love letter to them as he was and yet he had to say beware, beware, beware on three [00:11:07] occasions. Beware of the dogs, of the dogs. He knew who they were, he'd had so much experience with these that were outwardly Christian, professedly Christian and yet seeking to bring the law in and therefore mar the finished work, the full work of the Lord Jesus Christ. He knew what they were and he knew that if they had the opportunity of working among these Philippians then it would be they would lose this joy. They were troublemakers and you know I feel that we have to be warned of troublemakers today, don't we? I know that we haven't got Judaising teachers today but we've got to be very, very careful of people who will not give the Lord Jesus Christ his right and proper title, his right and proper place, who will not give him that which is suitable to him with regard to the truth concerning his [00:12:05] person and his work. Beware, beware, beware because if we do not give him that high position that's his and if we do not see the fullness of that which he has done and the fullness of his person then it will be that we will lose our rejoicing. He saw and he looked upon these Jewish teachers and he says with regard to them, yes, and as I think of these things that these men will bring forth they further those things according to themselves, according to the flesh and as I see that which they would bring before you if there are any that would boast concerning the flesh well I can boast more. Why did Paul bring something in this way of boasting before them? Why was it that Paul was going to speak concerning himself? Because he says on one occasion but God forbid [00:13:01] that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wasn't it that he was going to show that all those things that he might have gloried in in time past were things that were according to the flesh and there was no joy in glorying in them? He'd left them behind and counted them but but he says I can glory I have these things I've had these things. They are of the circumcision. They are of the concision. He said we are of the circumcision. Let's think of that for a moment firstly. We are of the circumcision. We are the circumcision. Reminding me of the very fact that here he says we have no confidence in the flesh. We have no confidence in the flesh. It was that these men had flesh before them but now with regard to those of whom he speaks he says we are the circumcision. We have that circumcised life, that consecrated life. It is with regard [00:14:04] to ourselves firstly we have no confidence in the flesh. That's where we begin when we come to the Lord Jesus. But we have a consecrated life because it might be certainly with regard to ourselves that we say yes we have no confidence in the flesh and we wouldn't do this and that to pamper to the flesh and then leave things just like that and it can't be brethren. It is that we live a consecrated life. It means that although we have no confidence in the flesh that our hands are filled for him. Ever was it with regard to the Apostle that his hands were filled. He lived that consecrated life as we see him living down here whether it be on his missionary journeys or on the other hand where whether it be in the prison there he was and his hands were filled for the Lord. As we think of him with his hands filled for the Lord what a wonderful man he was. He lived [00:15:02] that consecrated life. Do we? He lived that Christ-centered life because he said to me to live is Christ as we mentioned the other night and to die again he lived this Christ-centered life. Christ was his center but the flesh was before these men and now he says now I will turn to you and

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I'll tell you with regard to what I can boast in and you can imagine there Paul coming out and adorning himself with those things that had been his in former years and he said are they circumcised? Yes I was circumcised. I have the mark of circumcision. I was circumcised the eighth day not as an adult. Maybe among many of those that had pressed for these various things they had been circumcised as an adult and he had been circumcised at the proper time at the eighth day. Yes of the stock the true stock the stock of Israel yes I come from the true stock the stock [00:16:04] of Israel and of the tribe of Benjamin and when we think of that little Benjamin it's spoken of in the scripture of little as little Benjamin he knew his tribe. Now if you turn back to the first chapter of Numbers there it was that people that were in Israel had to declare their pedigree and here he was and as a Jew he was able to declare who he was. He says I come from that tribe the tribe of Benjamin the faithful tribe and the favorite tribe that's the tribe I come from. Can they say that they come from that tribe and now again I'll tell them something else I am a Hebrew of the Hebrew see I'm true-blooded a Hebrew of the Hebrews and then with regard to my life it isn't that my life my education has been neglected as touching the law I'm a Pharisee is it that they can say that they have been under Gamaliel as their teacher as touching the law I'm [00:17:07] a Pharisee and I have not neglected in any way my education in Jewish things. Concerning zeal persecuting the church and as we see the Apostle Paul with the zeal that he had as there he would be among those Jews at the time how zealous he was for the Lord. We must say as we see the life of the Apostle that during the whole of his life he was a zealous man but firstly he as others had a zeal but not according to knowledge and therefore we see him concerning zeal persecuting the church. Touching the righteousness which is by the law blameless and as we see that young man there he could stand in Jewish circles and no one could point a finger at him because he was above those his equals in age what a wonderful man he was and you'd say naturally speaking that with regard to [00:18:05] him having all these things as a Jew and having those things naturally that I mentioned earlier well whatever does he want otherwise to make him happy yes but he says but you know there's lots of buts in people's lives and here that but comes in but whatsoever things were gained to me there were those things that he may have counted gain and as we think of these things that were before the Apostle at this time he looks back on them there was the time when he had greatly appreciated the fact that he was an Hebrew of the Hebrew there was the time when proudly he'd walk along the road among those people but now he says but whatsoever things I counted gain I counted gain those I count loss what for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my lord yes Paul but [00:19:01] that was a long while ago wasn't it that was before you were put in prison wasn't it how do you feel about it now because in those years long ago you had that enthusiasm as a young a convert has and you may have felt like that in that day but how about today how about today here it is you're in prison and it may be that you'll never leave this prison again you've been beaten in your lifetime so many things have happened to you you had that zeal at the beginning but what about it now and I do count I do count so here we see that there's a man that's founded wonderful joy and that wonderful joy has meant that that previous life of his is gone and he wants it to be gone there he is as he thinks of all those wonderful things that that had made up his life and as he had adorned himself with those wonderful garments he takes them off one by one and he doesn't want to wear them again he doesn't want to wear them again for the knowledge of Christ [00:20:04] Jesus my lord as I think of him and as I think of him firstly looking upon the Lord Jesus Christ in the glory and saying who art thou Lord he says now I count all those things but loss that I might gain Christ not he was going to win him he couldn't do that could he there's not one of us that can win Christ but the one thing he did in turning his back on all those things and coming to the Lord Jesus Christ and knowing him as his Savior he's gained Christ he's gained Christ and in gaining Christ how much he has in Christ that I may gain Christ and be found in him in him that's the word that we were reading the first evening we came together because we were speaking of those wonderful Philippians and we were saying that they

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were in Christ and it was such a wonderful thing and he says now and they are the words that I use and to be found in him I was found in him at [00:21:04] the beginning of my pathway when I left these things and when I turn the put them aside now I'm found in him and I want to be found in him not having mine own righteousness I don't want it to be that when that time comes that I leave this world I'm found in my righteousness I want to be found in him and in him alone you know there's a time coming I don't know whether there is anybody unconverted here tonight but there's a time coming when we'll all we've all to be found before him if we have our own righteousness then it's going to be a very sad thing for us but to be found in him not having our own righteousness but the righteousness that comes alone through the finished work of Christ on the cross then it will be that we should be found in him and be known to him in joy what a wonderful word this is to us tonight yes and as we see these words [00:22:03] let's just look a little farther he says be found in him not having mine own righteousness which is of the law but that which is through faith in faith of Christ the righteousness which is of God by faith that I may know him do you remember the time right at the beginning of his pathway when the Lord arrested him when he said to the person in the glory who are thou Lord it was just at that moment that the one that spoke to him from the glory he just didn't know who that one is was and he said I am Jesus whom they'll persecute ist and now he says that I may know him now Paul had been on the road many many years at this time and he says that's one thing that I want to do and that one thing is that I may know him do we know him yes you say I know him as my Savior but I [00:23:02] don't think for a moment that the Apostle meant that because he'd known him as his Savior so long and hadn't it been with regard to him he'd spoken words so that others might know him as Savior and therefore I don't think that he means that that I may know him I feel that it means something more than that and I feel that it doesn't mean that as we gather together to read the word and as so often we read that word concerning him that we know him as we read that word we get to know something about him don't we as we get to get together reading the word or on the other hand if we get together as we are tonight and the word is brought before us we get to know about the Lord Jesus Christ but we don't get to know him do we that I may know him don't you think that there was something deeper in this than that which we have as we gather together in this way that I may know him I feel [00:24:01] that there's something altogether different here and don't you think that it was that as the Apostle Paul so often went on his journeys that he got to got into the company of the Lord you know there's one occasion in the Acts of the Apostles when it says that he has said to go on foot by himself I wonder why don't you think that he wanted to be alone with the Lord Jesus and to know him more don't you think that there were so many things that he wanted to speak to the Lord Jesus about and don't you think at that time as he was a servant of the Lord there were many things that the Lord wanted to tell him about and he has said to go on foot are we going to know the Lord Jesus Christ if we don't get into his presence I don't think we are that I might know him it was that the Apostle Paul desired to get a constantly more acquainted with him and he was constantly more acquainted with him in the fact that there even where he was in the prison it was that the [00:25:06] Lord Jesus could speak to him and he could speak to the Lord Jesus he got to know him but something more and the power of his resurrection and as I think of that resurrection being mentioned here what a wonderful word that resurrection is to us when we think of the resurrection we see that the Lord Jesus Christ was raised for our justification and that's a wonderful thought but I think that as we read concerning the power of his resurrection here this evening it's something that goes more deeply as I think of the Apostle and now thinking of the Lord Jesus in the glory and being commissioned from the glory because he was wasn't he being commissioned from the glory I realize what he meant by the power of his resurrection that there that ascended Lord was able to give him the power that he needed able to uphold him in his pathway so that he could know that power working through [00:26:06] him as he went from place to place testifying to the glory and the name of our Lord Jesus Christ as I was thinking of these words a little before coming in I thought of the time when Elisha said to that man

Elijah you know when you go I'd like a double portion of your spirit now that's a firstborn portion of course but he said well if thou shalt see me when I'm taken from thee then it shall be and we see that there as Elijah's taken from him so the mantle falls down and so Elisha goes in the power of that mantle there's the man that goes ascends and there's the mantle there's the power that comes down to him a wonderful power isn't it and that power was going to work through him the power of his resurrection and then it says and the fellowship of his sufferings now do you see the absolute perfection of the scripture because it didn't [00:27:08] say that I might suffer for him that I might know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings because there's wisdom in the fact that if we know the Lord Jesus Christ and if we know the power of his resurrection working in us then we're willing to suffer for him it is that we must know him first it is that we must know something of that power working in us and then we'll be willing and ready to suffer for him you remember in the first chapter he said it's given unto us on their behalf not only to believe but to suffer for him and here the Apostle Paul brings that suffering here again that I might be conformable unto his death what does that mean to be conformable unto his death as I think of him being conformable unto his death it means to me that because of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ that now the [00:28:06] Apostle changes his thoughts with regard to himself he changes his thoughts with regard to the world that crucified the Lord Jesus Christ and in every way he's a changed man he's made conformable unto his death yes because he said I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live and as we think of the Apostle walking after that time when he realized that Christ had died for him and now conformable unto his death well he there realizes what he must be in this world and he has such a different attitude to the world and why is this the reason being because of the very fact that now he has before him a prize and as we look into this scripture we see that he has before him a prize and as we think of the prize that he sat before him he says not that I have already obtained [00:29:04] not attained obtained I haven't obtained that neither were already the word says in their version perfect but that word is used in so many ways well several ways in the scripture isn't it and in one sense it's used when we're mature to be perfect but it's not so in this case it's perfected not that I have already obtained the prize and neither were already perfected but this one thing I do forgetting those things that are behind now as I think of the Apostle I think of the fact that there were many things that he couldn't forget there was the time when the Lord Jesus Christ called to him choosing him and calling him from the glory he never forgot that day and in fact as we read concerning that day it gets more brighter before him doesn't it if you look at the [00:30:06] first story that's written concerning him meeting the Lord Jesus and then if you turn to the 22nd chapter of the Acts and see him speaking concerning meeting the Lord Jesus and then again if you turn to the 26th chapter and see what he says then you see that he hadn't forgotten that day he that was one thing that he didn't forget in fact the day was more bright to him as he lived on in this world he hadn't forgotten that and he never forgot the people of the Lord we read concerning him that he had the daily care of all the churches and when you think of all that that was on his mind there were so many things that he didn't forget he remembered of the Thessalonians their work of faith and their labor of love and their patience of hope there were so many things that he did remember that were important that he should remember but I wonder what these things are that [00:31:04] he forgets forgetting those things that are behind now those things that he forgot are things that so often are in our minds and as we think of them we make much of them of what we've done and what we've been used in as I did see the Apostle during that previous part of his life before he was put in prison as Nero's prisoner I see him doing so many wonderful things there he went from place to place people were being converted by the words that he spoke and what wonderful days they must have been day after day he preached the word the people were blessed and then he gathered the people together he spoke the word of the Lord to them they were encouraged they were built up and they formed the assemblies here and there and no doubt these were the things that he kept in their right perspective he forgot them in that sense he forgot

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them don't you remember a man that remembered the [00:32:06] things that he'd done do you remember Obadiah meeting Elijah and he said to him don't you remember that what I did with regard to the prophets how I fed them by fifties see he couldn't forget what he'd done for the Lord the Apostle Paul he could forget these things he could leave them there just where they were he could forget his pains and his sufferings that had been his hadn't it been that the Lord said I will show him what great things he will suffer for my namesake he forgets those things forgetting those things that are behind and reaching forward yes I feel that here the Apostle as he's speaking he's showing that he puts every fiber of his being in what he's going to do reaching forth to those things that are before I press toward the mark for the prize of the whole high calling of God in Christ Jesus there a man that can forget the things that are [00:33:03] behind because of the prize that is before and I wonder what that prize is don't you think that it is the Lord Jesus Christ don't you think that the Apostle here with the joy that was in his heart for the Lord Jesus don't you think that his prize was the Lord Jesus Christ he looked forward and he looked on to that day when he should see the Lord Jesus because doesn't he say toward the end of this scripture for our citizenship is in heaven our citizenship is in heaven I want you to think of those words a moment because here is the center of the joy that was the Apostle Paul's he said you know really if you'll take notice of the words that I'm telling you we don't belong down here there are those earthly things that you might have appreciated those things that now these false teachers will bring before before you but these things of the earth well they don't connect with [00:34:04] us anymore because we don't belong here anymore our citizenship is in heaven is it yes and as the Apostle Paul was sitting there no doubt chained between two soldiers now he said I don't belong down here you'd say well you're chained down here Paul what do you mean you don't belong down here I don't belong here anymore our citizenship is in heaven from whence also we look for the Lord Jesus Christ the Savior of the body now there was a time when he was the Savior of our souls wasn't he don't you remember the time when we came to him we needed him as a Savior we needed him as a Savior from the consequences of our sins but you know we've still got these bodies haven't we and these bodies that we have are not suitable for the glory the Apostle Paul as we see him and as so often we think of him as Paul the aged I wonder what his body was like at this time it had been [00:35:07] beaten it had been torn it would be worn out but when we think of him here he says our citizenship is from heaven from whence also we look for the Savior who will change these bodies of humiliation yes he's the Savior of the body here and he's going to change the body that we have those poor old bodies that we have here so creaking and groaning and so painful at times he's going to change them and what's the reason of him changing these bodies now when we think of ourselves down here you know we've appreciated haven't we to a certain extent those things that pertain to the Lord Jesus Christ over the years when ministry has been brought before us it has been that we've appreciated many things concerning him but you know we can never appreciate him in the body that [00:36:03] we have here and if it be if it be that we are left in this body it would not be that we could be found in the glory and know so much concerning that person whom we are going to admire later on no he changed this body of humiliation and fashioned it like unto his glorious body now won't that be a wonderful thing I'm speaking simple and I want to be simple won't it be a wonderful thing for those of us that are here tonight to know that they are poor old bodies are going to be changed like unto his own glorious body so that having that glorious body we will be able straightway to appreciate to the full his person we shall be able to gaze upon him now with regard to our eyes how could they focus upon the glory that accrues to the Lord Jesus Christ however could it be possible that we as we are could appreciate what he is and who he is but now [00:37:07] having our bodies changed and having eyes that are able to focus upon him you know we shall be able to look into his blessed face won't we well might it be that when we look at this apostle he tells these people in this a chapter what how his joy has been obtained he shows them now that there had been that sacrifice for this joy that he had it so greatly appreciated but you'd say to Paul just at this time now Paul what were the words you said I

count I do count and as the Apostle Paul at that great age says those words he says it's been worth it hasn't it when I think of the very fact that he's done so much for me now I'm going to see that blessed face I'm going to be with him and as he turns to the Philippians as they might have been in some senses just a little [00:38:02] bit wavered by these false teachers that came in there is the example for them and that's the joy that they can have if they're willing and ready to sacrifice as he sacrificed

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