

Pressing on in the Gospel

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[0 : 00] Okay. Please turn with me to Philippians chapter 3, verses 12 to 21. Let me seek God's help as we read and preach.

God, we ask you again, we seek you, because without your power, without you speaking to us through your word, I myself can accomplish nothing.

Lord, we want to, in just the same way that immigrants, foreigners, when they just arrive to this country, stand out.

It's obvious they're not from here. Lord, we want to be Christians who are so heavenly-minded, who live according to our citizenship in heaven, so it is obvious to the world we're not from here.

This is not our home. We belong to another kingdom. God, with your word, our charter, our constitution, our founding document, we pray that you would reorient us this evening.

[1 : 50] and fix our minds, our eyes, on Christ Jesus, our heavenly price.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Philippians chapter 3, verses 12 to 21. Not that I have already obtained this, or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own, but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead.

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.

Only let us hold true to what we have attained. Brothers, join in imitating me. And keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.

[3 : 15] For many of whom I have often told you, and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction.

Their God is their belly. And they glory in their shame with minds set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

This is God's holy and authoritative word. After winning his fourth NBA championship and his fourth finals MVP trophy last season with the Los Angeles Lakers, LeBron James, one of the greatest basketball players of all time, entered his 18th season as a 36-year-old, which makes him ancient by professional athlete standards.

And what's amazing is that he is still arguably one of the best players in the NBA. His feats of athleticism are incredible, but his longevity, his endurance is what's even more impressive.

And this is because of the way he completely dedicates himself to the sport. He spends \$1.5 million per year in order to maintain his body and prevent injuries.

[4 : 54] He regularly uses cryotherapy, meaning he intentionally subjects his body to freezing temperatures in order to relieve muscle pain, sprains, and swelling. He also uses hyperbaric oxygen therapy, where he intentionally subjects himself to high atmospheric pressures in order to oxygenate his body and reduce inflammation.

And he also adheres to a... I mean, I don't know the merits of all those therapies, but he does these things. He also adheres to a strict diet, avoiding sugar and dairy altogether, and following the lowest possible carb diet.

And of course, he subjects himself daily to the grueling workouts. And all of these are unpleasant, uncomfortable, even painful experiences.

And yet LeBron James subjects himself to these because to him, winning an NBA championship and becoming the greatest basketball player of all time outweighs these pains, these expenses. His eyes are set on a greater prize. And that focus is the key to his perseverance. And in this passage, Paul uses the metaphor of an athletic competition, a race, one of his favorite metaphors, which he uses in at least six places to teach us that, like a runner in a race, we should press on with our minds set on the heavenly prize in Christ Jesus.

[6 : 28] So first, we're going to talk about setting our minds on our heavenly prize, verses 12 to 16. And then we'll talk about keeping our eyes on heavenly people. We'll just go to the end of the chapter, chapter 3, verse 17 to 21.

So let's first talk about setting our minds on our heavenly prize, verses 12 to 16. In the preceding passage, Paul just said that he was, he has suffered the loss of all things and counted them as rubbish in order that he might gain Christ.

So in order that he might know Christ and the power of his resurrection, Paul says he's forsaken all things in order to do that. Now he's qualifying that statement in verse 12. He says, Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

This is the already but not yet reality of the Christian salvation. On the one hand, Paul says Christ Jesus has made me his own. It's already happened.

But on the other hand, he says, Paul's Christ, I have not yet obtained this. So he presses on to make it his own. Already, but not yet. If you are a Christian, then you know Christ truly, but you do not yet know him fully.

[7 : 45] We know the power of his resurrection truly, but we do not yet know it fully. So let this be an encouragement to you. If you have lamented that you do not know the Lord as you ought to, if you have wept at the slow progress of your own sanctification, if you have longed to see Christ face to face and not as in a dim reflection, then you can take heart, because you have not yet arrived.

What you have in your possession now, what you experience now, is not all there is. There's so much more in store. And so we ought to press on to make it our own.

But for those of us who are complacent, for those of us who are living like we have already attained the fullness of Christ, let this be a warning. You have not arrived.

If you're coasting now like you're on a victory lap, you are badly mistaken. You're like the Slovenian cyclist, Luca Pibernic, who raises his arm and pumps his fist in celebration at the Tour of Italy when there's still one lap left to go.

And consequently loses the race going from first place to 148th place. The race isn't over. We have not yet arrived.

[9 : 15] And Paul was motivated to press on by this great reality. He says in verse 12, Because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

That's the reason why Paul presses on. He says something similar in 1 Corinthians 6, 19. You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. 1 Peter 2, 14-19 says, Do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things, such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ.

You establish ownership over something by paying for it. Christ owns us because he purchased us with his own blood.

This was Paul's reason for pressing on. He's saying, I was worthless, a damaged good, an undeserving sinner, incapable of fulfilling my God-given purpose, and yet for some inexplicable reason, Christ paid the highest price to make me his own.

Me, the chief of sinners. I'm his own. I'm no longer my own man.

[10 : 46] I belong to another. If Christ died to make me his own, I will live to make him my own. He is my master, and I shall do his bidding until the day I die and eternity thereafter.

That's Paul's mindset. We don't strive in order to belong to Christ. No, we strive because we already belong to Christ. He has paid the highest price for us.

And this is very important because if you strive in your own strength, out of your own willpower and character, you will surely fail. Paul was able to press on till the very end only because he was spurred on by what Christ did for him.

Christ was his impetus and his goal. We are not our own. We are Christ's. But we have not yet fully made Christ our own. And that's our lifelong pursuit.

As those who already belong to Christ, we press on toward that day when Christ will be our all in all. And so Paul says in verses 13 to 14, brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own, but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

[12:11] Paul lived with this singular focus in his life. He was only concerned about one thing. Paul accomplished many things during his time on earth, as we know.

He was instrumentally in establishing or helping to establish more than a dozen churches. He says in Romans 15, 19, from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum, I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ.

That's from modern-day Israel up north through Lebanon and Syria across Turkey and westward toward Greece all the way to Albania, where our, where Mr. Bishop, our resident missionary, is serving.

That covers a distance of more than 1,500 miles in days before cars and planes. Paul wrote 13 of the 24 books in the New Testament, more than half.

And he did all of this as a bivocational minister while working as a tent maker in order not to be a financial burden to those whom he ministered to. In short, Paul was a man of prodigious productivity, and yet Paul says, one thing I do.

[13:30] In his mind, Paul wasn't doing a hundred different things. He wasn't busy doing a lot of different things. Paul was doing one thing in a hundred different ways.

He made tents so that he might preach Christ. He ate and drank so that he might preach Christ. He planted churches so that he might preach Christ.

He wrote letters so that he might preach Christ. For him to live was Christ and to die was gain. And his goal was Christ and nothing else. What will people put on your epitaph?

What will people say on your gravestone? When people examine your life, what will they say was your purpose, your calling?

For the Christian, the answer should always be Christ. And this entails forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead.

[14:35] In a race, all that matters is what's ahead of you. It doesn't matter how far you've come or how little you've come if you don't finish the race.

It doesn't matter what kind of blistering pace you have kept up. It's all for nothing if you don't finish the race. Early in chapter 3, Paul spoke of all the things that he used to put his confidence in.

Circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, Hebrew of Hebrews, as to the law of Pharisee, as to zeal, a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

But, he said in verse 8, he counts all those things as trash. In order that he might gain Christ. We must forget all that we used to put our confidence in for our right standing with God.

We must forget about them. Being successful, beautiful, intelligent, rich, or famous gets us places in this world, but not with God.

[15:46] We must put our former ways behind us. This is good news for those of us who have been struggling also. No matter what kind of sin is in your past, no matter what kind of pain, brokenness, hardness, is in your past, in your life now, you can forget it.

Leave it behind and strain forward toward what is ahead because of what Christ has done. 2

Corinthians 5, 17 says, If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come. A little earlier, a little before that in the same chapter, it says, Christ died for all that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

Before Christ called us and purchased us, we live for ourselves. We follow the rebellious patterns of this world. We gratify the sinful desires of the flesh.

But now that we belong to Christ, we must forget what lies behind and strain forward to what lies ahead. One of the most famous races in modern history was the One Mile Race at the 1954 British Empire Games in Vancouver, Canada.

[17:08] Earlier that year, England's Roger Bannister had become the first man to run the mile under four minutes, which previously seemed to be an impossible barrier.

But just 46 days later, his great rival, the Australian John Landy, beat his world record by 1.5 seconds, which is not a small amount in a mile race.

And this drama created a great buildup toward the 1954 British Empire Games where Roger Bannister and John Landy would compete together. The race between world's two fastest mile runners was billed by the press as the race of the century or the miracle mile.

Over 100 million people tuned in by radio and millions more saw it on TV. You can actually see the whole race on YouTube. By the third of the four laps, it became a two-man race between Roger Bannister and John Landy who were far outpacing the rest of the field.

John Landy had been ahead of Roger Bannister for the entirety of the race and for most of the final lap remained about eight feet or so ahead. But there's a dramatic moment in that final stretch of the final lap where Bannister starts to make his move trying to pass Landy.

[18 : 25] And at that point, the crowd is roaring and as they see that both men are on pace to break the four-minute barrier again, second time, and no longer able to hear the footfalls behind him due to the crowd, Landy looks over his left shoulder to see how close Bannister is behind him.

And during that exact moment, to his great dismay, Roger Bannister passes him on his right. And there's a perfect, iconic picture of that exact moment with John Landy looking back and Roger Bannister looking straight ahead and soaring past him.

It was made into a statue. And looking at the bronze sculpture of that moment, John Landy said one time, while Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt for looking back, I am probably the only one ever turned into bronze for looking back.

At least he was a good sport. In his later recollections, Bannister said that seeing Landy glance back gave him great confidence that he could beat him because it exposes uncertainty and doubt. When you're running the race as a Christian, you're not supposed to look back. Jesus says in Luke 9, 62, no one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.

[20 : 08] If you're looking back, you cannot press on. You cannot strain forward. Twice, Paul says, I press on. I press on.

Verse 12, verse 14, the word means to pursue, run after something. And in verse 13, he speaks of straining forward to what lies ahead. that word recalls how the runner lurches forward at the finish line with all his might to get ahead, cross the line before everyone else.

There should be a direction in the Christian's life. Our lives should be directed heavenward. Every aspect of our lives should be stretched out toward the heavenly prize that lies before us.

And Paul describes that heavenly prize in verse 14, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul's talking about the day when his knowledge of Christ, his union with Christ will be consummated. When having shared in Christ's sufferings, he will finally get to share in Christ's resurrection glory.

[21 : 17] It's tragic that many Christians live like the rest of the world, trying to make this life last forever.

We live in a culture that is perpetually trying to defy age and delay death. We pluck our white hairs, fill in our wrinkles, get facelifts.

We exercise, eat organic. Some call millennials, those born between 1981 and 1996, the wellness generation, because so many of them claim that health and wellness are an important factor in their lives, one of the most important factors in their lives.

And because they eat healthier and exercise more than previous generations. Of course, it's good for us to eat healthy and exercise, but our goal in those things shouldn't be to perpetuate this life.

That's like wanting to stay in the race without ever finishing the race. Why would you want that? Our lives should be characterized by straining forward toward eternity.

[22 : 32] That's where our prize is. But Paul understands that not everybody has the same level of spiritual maturity. He says in verses 15 to 16, let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.

Only let us hold true to what we have attained. Mature Christians, Paul says, think this way. Paul repeats that verb twice in verse 15.

This is the same word that Paul used earlier in Philippians chapter 2, verse 2, when he exhorted the Philippian believers to have the same mind, one mind. It's the same word that he used in chapter 2, verse 5, to say, have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.

Namely, the mindset of Christ in which he endured humiliation and suffering in obedience to his Father and was subsequently glorified because of it. Paul uses the same word in verse 19 to denounce those who have their minds set on earthly things.

In short, then the mindset that Paul is commending to us is the mindset of Christ, the mindset that embraces sharing in Christ's suffering, sharing in the death of Christ, dying to ourselves daily in order to attain to the resurrection of the dead.

[23 : 57] The mind that is set on the heavenly prize, Christ Jesus, and not on earthly things. This is very important, our mindset, not what we claim to think.

There are many things we claim to think, but Paul's talking about what we actually think, what we actually believe. We might say what we believe in our hearts.

If you actually have this mindset, it governs, it controls the way we live. That's why Paul says in Romans 12 verse 2, do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.

Paul trusts that even for believers, however, who have not attained a mature mindset, that God will eventually reveal that also to them. Paul's faith in God here is exemplary.

It's very helpful and instructive for me. If you have ever tried to disciple someone or minister to someone, you know what it feels like to be disappointed, and even exasperated by a person's dullness, slowness, or lack of progress.

[25 : 08] But Paul has an incredible capacity for patience because he really believes what he said earlier in chapter 1 verse 6, that, and I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Not only in his own life, but also with regard to the lives of other believers, Paul had the long view, a lifetime of discipleship in light of eternity. That's an encouragement, that should be an encouragement to us, brothers and sisters, you have not yet arrived, but you will arrive because Christ promises to take us there.

You just need to hold on, stand firm, persevere. Brothers and sisters, I am burdened daily as I think about some people who might not persevere to the end.

We need to hold on. what matters is that we hold true, Paul says, to what we have attained.

Whatever the level of faith God has granted to us, we should live in proportion to that faith, following the pattern of Christ's death and resurrection, dying to selfish, sinful desires and living to Christ.

[26 : 47] The phrase hold true is a translation of the Greek term that originally meant to be drawn up in a line, especially in a military context. It's used here in a figurative sense.

We are to hold the lines, so to speak. However far along we have advanced in our Christian walk, make every aspect of your life down the line conformed to that line.

We are comrades in arms. And whenever by God's grace we advance another step in our knowledge of Him, in our faith in Him, then we bring every aspect of our lives once again into conformity with that line.

Hold true. Then take another step. Then take another step until that day when finally we arrive in our heavenly kingdom.

Until that day when we're finally home. that's the first half of our passage, setting our minds on our heavenly prize.

[27 : 58] In the second half, Paul tells us to keep our eyes on heaven-minded Christians, keeping our eyes on heavenly people. He says in verse 17, brothers, join in imitating me and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.

many Christians are uneasy about such language of imitation. It strikes us as brash and boastful perhaps. Imitate you?

Why should I do that? Why should I imitate you? But this attitude simultaneously exposes one, our ignorance, and two, our lack of humility and teachability.

First, it exposes our ignorance of the fact that whether we like it or not, we are already imitating someone. We're social creatures.

We are always imitating somebody in one way or another. There's not a single person on earth who is not influenced by other people. If you say, well, I'm going to be my own person, I'm going to be different, unique, a non-conformist, well, then you're imitating thousands of other non-conformists that have gone before you.

[29 : 14] It might be our parents, siblings, colleagues, professors, celebrities, politicians, or friends, but we are already imitating someone.

Second, it exposes our lack of humility and teachability. We don't like the idea of imitating someone because we think more highly of ourselves than others.

our pride expresses itself in rugged individualism and self-sufficiency. But imitation is an essential part of discipleship that we find all over Scripture.

Paul says this no less than seven times throughout his letters. 1 Corinthians chapter 4, 15 to 17, he says, I urge you then, be imitators of me. 1 Corinthians 11, 1, be imitators of me as I am of Christ. Philippians 4, 9, what you have heard and seen in me, practice these things. 1 Thessalonians 1, 6, you became imitators of us and of the Lord. 2 Thessalonians 3, 7, and 9, you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us.

[30 : 24] Whenever Paul says imitate me, he is saying, imitate me as I imitate Christ. He is concerned with making Christ followers, not Paul followers.

And that is why he adds, keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. Paul is just one example among many. And he wants the Philippian believers to imitate those whose lives follow the pattern of Christ and his gospel.

Like Timothy and Epaphroditus that Paul commended earlier in chapter 2. This pattern of instruction and imitation was modeled by Christ himself.

In Mark chapter 3 verse 14, perhaps a paradigmatic verse for discipleship, when Jesus chooses his twelve disciples, it says that he appointed them so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons.

This verse encapsulates what we might call the three ingredients of discipling. One, presence. Two, preaching. Three, power.

[31 : 46] Jesus teaches them to preach the word, to proclaim the gospel, but he also imparts them with spiritual authority, spiritual power. But that's not all.

he spends time with them. They do life together. He offers them his presence and invites them to watch and imitate his life.

To put it another way, discipling requires three things, the church, the word, and the spirit. God is the God. The church, the gathering of Christians, supplies the presence, the body of in the flesh believers who are covenanted together and accountable to each other, whose examples we can imitate.

The word of God is what we must be taught to obey and proclaim. Then the spirit of God is the one who imparts the authority, the power necessary for us to fulfill God's, the commission that God has given.

So the church, the word, the spirit, the presence, the preaching, the power, and I want to challenge all of our members to be involved in discipling someone.

[33 : 03] You can call it beating together, you could call it accountability, you can call it discipling, whatever you call it. You need to be in intentional relationships with other members of the church in which you are being helped and helping others to follow Jesus and become more like him.

On the one hand, if you don't think there is anyone mature enough or suitable enough to disciple you, remember that there is no perfect discipler and that God uses imperfect human vessels to fulfill his perfect purpose.

The more mature and humble you are, the more you will find that you can learn from others. I'm regularly challenged by men I disciple and I learn from them. On the other hand, if you think you're not mature enough to disciple people, remember that any true follower of Christ can disciple because at the very least you know the gospel of Jesus Christ.

That's what it means to be a Christian. So that means you can share the gospel with unbelievers around you and you can disciple them. And when it comes to other church members, you can initiate spiritual conversations instead of just talking about the latest TV show or the NFL playoffs, talk about last week's sermon.

Ask them about what God has been teaching them. Share what you have been learning from God. Ask them how they are doing spiritually. What has been hard in their lives.

[34 : 36] Ask them how you can pray for them. Our own discipleship following Christ entails discipling others. So if we're not following Christ well, we're not doing our own discipleship if we're not discipling others.

You don't have to be perfect in order to disciple others. Paul himself says, I have not obtained this. I'm not already perfect. The important part of discipling relations is confessing your own sins and weaknesses.

And showing people that you can lean on Christ through them. So then another helpful practice is to invite correction and feedback. Usually it will be the case in these discipling relations that older believers will disciple younger believers.

That's usually the case. 1 Timothy 5, 1-2 says, Do not rebuke an older man, but encourage him as you would a father. Younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters in all purity.

But scripture also has numerous examples in the Old and New Testament of the younger teaching the older. And the older we get, thankfully, most of us have long ways to go.

[35 : 56] The older we get, the more we will also have to grow in humility and learn from our peers and those who are younger than us. Because if we don't, we won't have any teachers left.

Let's try to make verse 17 more common in our church. Brothers, join in imitating me and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. We're a small and young church, but there's still plenty of people here who are carrying their cross and following Jesus, whose examples you should aspire to.

Since we're in the process of evaluating our deacon candidates, let me just highlight some of the deacon candidates. You will, you probably will not be able to imitate John So's dry sense of humor, but you should imitate the way he invests intentionally in relationships, in people, pours into their lives with the word of God.

You might not be able to imitate Lauren Miller's delicious cooking, but you should imitate the way she uses her home as a base to integrate people into the church, bring them into the fold, welcome them, to counsel them.

You should imitate that. you might never give birth to and raise six children like Cheryl's doing, but you should imitate the humility, the gentleness, and the warm, nurturing love with which Cheryl has showered many people in her church.

[37 : 52] imitate such people. There are many others in the church I can point to.

Keep your eyes on heaven minded Christians. Good godly examples of others are especially important because sometimes well not sometimes all the time we are bombarded by the world with bad examples.

Paul says in verses 18 to 19 for many of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears walk as enemies of the cross of Christ their end is destruction their god is their belly and they glory in their shame with minds set on earthly things.

Paul implores the Philippians even with tears because he's concerned for them because there's so many bad examples that might lead them astray so that people don't make it to the end.

Don't follow such people. he says they live as enemies of the cross of Christ because their lives contradict the pattern of Christ's death and resurrection instead of modeling a cross shaped life a life characterized by sharing in the suffering of Christ dying to our sinful desires counting what the world considers gain as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ instead of doing that these enemies of the cross of Christ considered worldly and fleshly things their gain this is a broad description that fits many people the Judaizers that we talked about last week were such people Paul uses very similar language to describe them in Galatians 6 12-15 he says it is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of

[40 : 12] Christ for even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh but far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world for neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision but a new creation don't follow those who would take your eyes off of the cross of Christ don't follow those who would tell you that there's another way to be saved don't follow those who would say that there's this other criteria you have to meet apart from Christ the description of these enemies of the cross of Christ in verse 19 is intentionally contrasted with verse 20 and 21 which describes Paul and the Philippian believers they are the bearers of the cross of Christ verse 19 says of the enemies their end is destruction the end of the enemies of the cross stand in stark contrast to the word goal

Paul used in verse 14 to describe how he's pressing on toward the goal the end the price the end of those who oppose the cross and the cross shaped life will be destruction ironically but the end of those who embrace the cross and the suffering the cross shaped life will have eternal life and glory with Christ it says in verse 20 from it we await a savior the Lord Jesus Christ verse 19 says of the enemies of the cross their God is their belly Paul uses that same word belly in Romans 16 17 to 18 I appeal to you brothers to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught avoid them for such persons do not serve our Lord Christ but their own appetites the same word literally belly and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive their

God is their belly that means that they do not submit to the lordship of Christ but live instead selfishly to indulge their own appetites and to advance their own interests this is contrasted again with verse 20 we await a savior the Lord Jesus Christ we do not serve our bellies we serve the Lord Jesus Christ verse 19 says that the enemies of the cross glory in their shame this is contrasted with verse 21 which says that the Lord Jesus Christ will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself all that the enemies of the cross glory in their confidence in the flesh their worldly accomplishments their reliance on religious credentials rather than on Christ all of these things are actually their shame because they are cut off from

Christ on account of these things that they put their trust in as John Tillerson an Anglican bishop from the 1700s once said he who provides for this life but takes no care for eternity is wise for a moment but a fool forever but Christians who have shame in this world because of their lowly bodies because of their infirmities because of their weaknesses because of their sufferings because of their deaths to self those who put no confidence in the flesh but put all their trust in Jesus Christ they will be conformed to the suffering in the future they will be conformed to the glorious body of Jesus Christ they will be transformed and finally verse 19 describes the enemies of the cross as those whose minds are set on earthly things in contrast verse 20 says our citizenship is in heaven Philippi was a colony of Rome but the Philippian church was a colony of heaven and they needed to live appropriately in accordance with their citizenship Paul uses very similar language in Colossians 3 2 5 he says set your minds on things that are above not on things that are on earth for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God when Christ who is your life appears then you also will appear with him in glory put to death therefore what is earthly in you sexual immorality impurity passion evil desire and covetousness which is idolatry worldly success money fame sex these are all earthly things only the enemies of the cross of Christ fix their eyes on these things but we are citizens of heaven we are aliens we're foreigners the way we study the way we work the way we spend our money the way we treat people the way we relate to people of the opposite gender the way we do marriage the way we raise our children all of these things should make the people of this world raise their eyebrows and say you're not from here are you the word savior was commonly used in the greco-roman world to refer to

[46 : 20] Caesar but Paul declares here that our only savior is Jesus Christ the Philippians ultimate citizenship was not in the Roman empire and likewise our ultimate citizenship is not in the United States of America or any other kingdom this is why even when kingdoms totter even when democracies falter we are not shaken because our king is still on the throne we need to press on with our minds set on the heavenly prize in Christ Jesus brothers and sisters we march by the head of Christ our king our battle is not yet over our race is not yet over so let's set our minds on our heavenly prize and keep our eyes on heavenly people lord it belongs not to my care whether

I die or live to love and serve thee is my share and this thy grace must give if life be long I will be glad that I may long obey if short yet why should I be sad to welcome endless day Christ leads me through no darker rooms than he went through before he that unto God's kingdom comes must enter by this door come lord when grace hath made me meet thy blessed face to see for if thy work on earth be sweet what will thy glory be then I shall end my sad complaints and weary sinful days and join with the triumphant saints that sing my saviour's praise my knowledge of that life is small the eye of faith is dim but tis enough that Christ knows all and I shall be with him amen so man to have to him