

BECOMING LIKE CHRIST

Realizing the Surpassing Value of Knowing Jesus Christ Our Lord

Becoming Like Christ: The Journey

Philippians 3:12-16

Introduction: From his imprisonment in Rome Paul has shared with the Philippian congregation his singular motivating passion: *That I may know Him and be found in Him not having a righteousness of my own.* The desire to know Jesus Christ and be like Him is what drives Paul, it is his goal. But what is his method? What has he learned about this pursuit that will give us insight into the way he lives the journey? As we study further what he has to say we discover that it is not so much a methodology that we can copy, but rather an attitude that we can adopt by faith.

Sermon Outline

I. Paul's Confident Expectation of a Good Outcome (v.12)

Paul runs the race every day fueled by his passion to know Jesus Christ more and more. He is confident that this is an attainable goal because it is the very purpose for which Jesus Christ has laid hold of him. The resurrected and omnipotent Savior has laid claim on Paul and has purposed for him to grow in the knowledge and likeness of Himself. (See Romans 8:29-31)

II. Knowing and Becoming Like Christ is a Journey of Measured Progress

- A. It is a journey and a process; it does not happen overnight. This implies two very important things that should aid our faith:
 - 1. We cannot expect to be instantly transformed into spiritual maturity
 - 2. We can, and should, expect discernable growth and progress
- B. That there are stages of development that can be identified is evident in Scripture
 - 1. I Cor. 3:1-3 describes the difference between spiritual and carnal believers and distinguishes between spiritual men and infants.
 - 2. Hebrews 12 describes spiritual discipline which God administers to all His children and warns of the possibility of rejecting the process and path that leads to holiness.
 - 3. I John 2:12-14 identifies three distinct stages of spiritual development and describes the characteristics of each period of growth
- C. The specific stages of development can be named:
 - 1. Infancy & Childhood: new birth, introduction to God the Father and spiritual adoption
 - 2. Adolescence: growing strong, filled with God's Word, overcoming the evil one and abiding in victory
 - 3. Adulthood: walking in an ever increasing, intimate, personal knowledge of Jesus Christ

III. Paul's Key Attitude for Forward Progress

- A. Every day, every moment, is a fresh start in Jesus Christ:
- B. A conscious humility of not having arrived at complete perfection
- C. A refusal to grovel in yesterday's failure or to relax in yesterday's success
- D. A determination by faith to begin everyday with fresh passion for the goal

Conclusion: The journey toward knowing Christ and becoming like Him is a lifelong passion. It has measureable stages of growth and maturity that allow us to test our progress. Failure and disappointment cannot be permitted to deter us from realigning our vision and pressing anew toward the goal; in Jesus Christ we can always begin again. Where are you in this journey? Are you lagging behind (*by this time you ought to be teachers, Heb 5:12*), or even off the path. Look up to Jesus, and by faith engage again in the fight to victory and the prize: *That I may know Him!*

Philippians 3:12-16 ¹² Not that I have already ^aobtained it or have already ^bbecome perfect, but I press on ¹so that I may ^clay hold of that ²for which also I ^dwas laid hold of by ^eChrist Jesus. ¹³ Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: ^aforgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I ^apress on toward the goal for the prize of the ^bupward call of God in ^cChrist Jesus. ¹⁵ Let us therefore, as many as are ^{1a}perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a ^bdifferent attitude, ^cGod will reveal that also to you; ¹⁶ however, let us keep ^{1a}living by that same standard to which we have attained.

1 John 2:12-14 ¹² I am writing to you, ^alittle children, because ^byour sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake. ¹³ I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him ^awho has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because ^byou have overcome ^cthe evil one. I have written to you, children, because ^dyou know the Father. ¹⁴ I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him ^awho has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are ^bstrong, and the ^cword of God abides in you, and ^dyou have overcome the evil one.

