

Commentary on Philippians 3&4 by Chuck Smith 4.21.24

Pastor John Donovan, cell phone 508-380-0471

Pastor Terry Gerlarneau, cell phone 603-455-4399

Web site todbc.org email us at opendoorbiblechurch@todbc.org

March & April memory verses

Ephesians 3:20 (NKJV) Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,

Ephesians 3:21 (NKJV)

to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Commentary on Philippians 3&4 by Chuck Smith 4.21.24

Again, remember that the background of this epistle, Paul is chained to a Roman soldier in Rome, in prison, writing to the Philippians. The keynote of the epistle is rejoice, and he said,

Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord ([Phl 3:1](#)).

You know, oftentimes it is extremely difficult to rejoice in circumstances. In fact, I think sometimes it is impossible to rejoice in circumstances. I just did a dumb thing, I ran through a red light and hit somebody and I am being sued for a million dollars. It is hard to rejoice in circumstances. But you can always rejoice in the Lord, because He is above circumstances. So, the exhortation in the scripture is always that of rejoicing in the Lord. And Paul writes,

To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous ([Phl 3:1](#)),

In other words, "Here I am, I am chained in prison, but I don't find it hard to write this to you. I am rejoicing here, in the Lord." I am sure he wasn't rejoicing in the circumstances themselves. They were rather miserable, but that does not stop you from rejoicing in the Lord. There is always cause to rejoice in the Lord.

but for you it is safe. Beware of dogs ([Phl 3:1-2](#)),

Now, immediately after telling them to rejoice in the Lord, he is warning them about the false teachers. Paul had certain people that seemed to follow him wherever he went, trying to pervert that which he taught of the grace of God, especially the Jewish legalizers who sought to bring the people back to a legal relationship with God, putting them under the law. They demanded that they be circumcised and they keep the law of Moses in order to be saved, which Paul called the perversion of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Commentary on Philippians 3&4 by Chuck Smith 4.21.24

It is interesting that these people usually referred to the Gentiles as dogs. That was a common name by which the Jews referred to the Gentiles: the gentile dogs. It was not a reference to a kindly family pet, but it was a reference to those mean wild dogs that roamed Israel. Barking and snapping at everybody, and belonging to nobody. And they were a sort of a hated animal. And thus the name *dog* the Jews began to apply to the Gentiles. It is interesting that Paul turns it around and uses it of those teachers that would seek to put the believers back under the law.

Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision ([Phl 3:2](#)).

The word *concision* comes from a Greek word, which means *mutilators*. Paul is talking about their demands that the Gentiles be circumcised to be saved. And then he uses a contrasting Greek word, and it is a play on Greek words. If you read any Greek, you can pick up on the play on words. "Beware of the concision."

For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit ([Phl 3:3](#)),

Paul was constantly emphasizing that the physical rites had no value except there be a corresponding spiritual experience, that the circumcision of the flesh accounted for nothing. What God was interested in is that my heart was circumcised, that I had the heart after the Spirit, and not after the flesh. And though I may have a fleshly rite, if my heart was after the things of the flesh, then what happened to me physically has no bearing upon my relationship with God at all.

The same can be said of any of the other rites that we have within the church. The rite of water baptism is really not a physical rite, but a spiritual experience. It is not the physical experience that saves, it is the spiritual: the death to the old nature and the old man in my heart, the reckoning of myself to be dead, and living that new life in the resurrected Lord. And so Paul says, "Beware of those who would mutilate your body, for we are of those who are circumcised in the spirit." We worship God in the spirit.

Jesus said, "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus ([Phl 3:3](#)),

And that is in the glorious liberty that we have in Christ Jesus, that relationship that we can now have with God apart from the law.

and have no confidence in the flesh ([Phl 3:3](#)).

Now, Paul said in his Roman epistle, "I know in me, that is in my flesh, there dwells no good thing." I have no confidence in the flesh. Paul said,

Commentary on Philippians 3&4 by Chuck Smith 4.21.24

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 [If anyone might have something to boast in the flesh. I am the one who would]: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless ([Phl 3:4-6](#)).

Hey, this is a pretty good pedigree. I mean, if you can be saved by works, if you can be saved by your own efforts, if you can be saved by keeping the law, then Paul said, "Hey, I am ahead of the pack. I more than anybody else. I had everything going for me as far as righteousness from the law."

You remember Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, chapter 5 of Matthew, said, "Except your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven." Now, Paul was a classic example of what Jesus was referring to. As far as the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, Paul had it. He had done everything that he was supposed to do according to the law to be righteous. In fact, he had gone beyond. He was a Pharisee. He persecuted the church. As far as his zeal and according to the righteousness that is in the law, he was blameless. But still, that is not enough to bring a man an entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

Now, here they were going around and trying to tell the Gentile believers that you had to keep the law to be righteous. Paul said, "No, I came out of that. I had it made as far as the law was concerned." But then this monumental statement,

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ ([Phl 3:7](#)).

All of this background that put me in a high standing as far as the law is concerned I counted loss for Christ.

Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord ([Phl 3:8](#)):

Paul the apostle is on his way to Damascus to persecute the church. He had papers from the high priest that empowered him to throw in prison those who believed in Jesus Christ. And as he headed out towards Damascus, he was going out with threatenings of murder against the believers. But while he was on his way, just before arriving in Damascus about noontime, there came a light from heaven brighter than the noontime sun. Paul fell on the ground, and there the Lord spoke to him and said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" And he answered, "Who art thou, Lord that I may serve thee?" And He said, "I am Jesus. It has been hard for you to kick against the pricks." And there Paul was converted. He met Christ on the Damascus road. Suddenly upon meeting Christ, all that he counted as important to him up to that point in his life, all of his religious credits, all of the religious background, he said lost for Christ. Because this is

Commentary on Philippians 3&4 by Chuck Smith 4.21.24

going to bring him an estrangement from his cronies back in Jerusalem that he has been going around with.

Paul is writing this epistle to the Philippians some thirty years after the Damascus road experience. He is referring to it, "The things which were gain to me, I counted loss for Christ, thirty years ago, on the road to Damascus." But then Paul updates his experience. And he said, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus." In other words, "I experienced it thirty years ago, and I had a turn-around in my life, and all of the past legalism and legal relationship with God, and all of those endeavors in my own flesh, the works of my flesh, I counted loss. Now I do count them, thirty years later, I still count them loss."

A lot of people testify of an experience that they had in Christ years ago. "Oh, I had such a glorious experience, the Lord met me in such a powerful way. And I just dedicated my life completely to the Lord. I was so moved, I was so touched by the Spirit of God upon my life." But unfortunately, since then, a lot of those things that they counted loss at that point, they picked back up, so that they are encumbered again. You see, past experience is only valid if it is translated into the present. If the past experience has not been translated into the present, then it really has no value at all. There is really no value to say I counted those things loss for Christ thirty years ago, if in the meantime I have picked them back up and I am encumbered with them again. Always, we must be able to translate the past experience into the present relationship if it is to be a valid experience at all. Otherwise, the experience is invalidated.

I really am not so much interested in what happened to you thirty years ago, twenty years ago, or ten years ago. I am interested in what is your relationship tonight with the Lord. That is what is important. Experiences are good. Thank God for the experiences, but they are not valid unless they are translated into the immediate, present relationship, and I do count them but loss. It is still going on. The past is translated into the present. "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." I love that phrase. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.

I think that we have to be the most blessed and privileged people in the world. You know, there are many people in the world tonight who have never had the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. People lived and died without ever having heard of Jesus Christ our Lord. Not only do we have the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, but we have the privilege of gathering together and studying the word of God together. What some people wouldn't give for the opportunity of gathering with us.

He said,

For whom I have suffered the loss of all things ([Phl 3:8](#)),

Indeed Paul did. He was totally, completely ostracized by those who were once his compatriots, those whom he once shared with. When he received Jesus Christ, as far

Commentary on Philippians 3&4 by Chuck Smith 4.21.24

as they were concerned, he was dead. He no longer existed. But he said those things which were so important to me, those things for which I lived,

And do count them but dung [as refuse], that I may win 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 ([Phl 3:8-9](#)):

Now, Paul had excelled in the righteousness in the law. He said he was blameless. But he said he cast that over for the knowledge of Jesus Christ. He counts all of the works of the past just wasted effort, refuse. "My desire is to know Him, and to be found in Him." Not having my own righteousness, my works through the law, but now the righteousness which is of God by faith, that righteousness which is imputed to those who believe, that righteousness that Abraham had when God imputed his faith for righteousness.

Now, I can endeavor to be righteous before God by my own works and efforts. I must, first of all, set the standard: what constitutes righteousness? What is right and what is wrong? And having determined then what is right and what is wrong, I may then seek to always do that which is right. Work hard at doing that which is right. And, at best, I can develop a self-righteousness. The effect of it usually on the individual who has obtained such a thing: I keep the rules; I never do anything wrong; I always do what is good; I am a doo bee; I am just living by these righteous standards. The effect upon the individual is usually pride and the developing of a judgmental attitude.

As the Pharisee who went in before the Lord and said, "Father, I thank you that I am not as other men. I am not an extortioner, and the other things. God, I thank you that I am so good," that pride and self-righteousness. But then, worse than that, this judgmental spirit. Because suddenly, you see, I am on a little spiritual pinnacle, and I can begin now to judge everybody else who doesn't live by the same standards of holiness by which I live. "How can they say they are a child of God? How can they say... " and here I am in my little pompous righteous throne, judging everybody else who isn't living by my standards. It can be a very dangerous thing.

On the other hand, I can recognize that I have a problem with sin, with myself, with my flesh. I can be honest with myself. When I have been upset (because that is against my rules, never be upset) and so I am upset, I have to lie to myself and say, "I really wasn't upset, I was just indignant." And you can become a phony, because, you know, you set your own standards; you live by your own rules. But when I take the righteousness which is by Christ, it is an honest life, I can say, "Hey, I am not perfect, but I believe in Jesus Christ with all my heart. He is my Savior. He is my Lord." And God then imputes to me, or accounts to me, righteousness. On my account, God writes *righteous*.

Now, the problem of being righteous by my efforts, by my works, I may be doing right, I may have lived all of my life up to this point by the rules, having never violated, sailing along in good shape, and there is written across my name, righteous. But tomorrow,

Commentary on Philippians 3&4 by Chuck Smith 4.21.24

some nut pulls in front of me on the freeway and then blocks and traps me, and I may shake my fist and honk my horn, and say, "Get off the road, you fool." And all of my good record down the tube and the righteousness is erased. I blew it. Oh, what a shame. Here, my entire life I have never done anything wrong, have been going by the rules, up till now. You see, there would be no security in that kind of righteousness at all. And any moment I could lose it. But not the righteousness which God has accounted to me through my faith in Jesus Christ. Because I may blow my horn and shake my fist, but the Spirit will say, "Hey, don't you remember you have got a fish emblem on the back of your car? What are you going to do when you pass the guy?" And I may pull over to the side of the freeway and decide not to pass him so that I won't be a bad witness, and bow my head and say, "God, I am sorry. That isn't a real representative of You. Forgive me, Lord."

You see, the angel doesn't have to erase the righteousness and then rewrite it, or whatever. It stays there. The righteousness through faith in Christ, my faith in Jesus doesn't waver. My actions they may, but not my faith in Him. And the righteousness is accounted to me by my faith in Him. And so, it is an established righteousness. No wonder Paul opted for the new righteousness, though he had done pretty good up until this point. "Don't know what is going to happen tomorrow, so hey, I will jump this ship and get on this one and I will gladly throw overboard the old life, with the struggle and the effort in my flesh, in order to live this new life after the Spirit, believing and trusting in Jesus Christ, to do for me what I really can't do for myself. And to be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of God, through faith."

Paul goes on,

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection ([Phl 3:10](#)),

And at this point we also say, "Ya, ya, power, I want power. I would like to know Him in the power of His resurrection. Give me the power," and we are so power-hungry. But Paul didn't stop there did he?

and the fellowship of his sufferings ([Phl 3:10](#)),

Hey, wait a minute, Paul; I want to get off at the last stop. I don't know about this suffering bit. I like the power, but I don't like the suffering. Don't you know that Christians don't have to suffer? The fellowship of His sufferings.

Our flesh always rebels against suffering. The disciples found it difficult to handle when Jesus started talking about the suffering that he was to experience, and Peter cried out, "Lord, be that far from thee." And Jesus said, "Get thee behind me, Satan, you offend me." It was the natural cry of man, "Spare yourself from suffering." But Paul is willing to follow Jesus to the cross. "I want to know him; I want to know him completely." Yes, the power of the resurrection, but you know, you can never know the power of the

Commentary on Philippians 3&4 by Chuck Smith 4.21.24

resurrection until you have, first of all, know the cross. Jesus wasn't resurrected until he first went to the cross. The resurrected life always follows the crucified life. The power of the resurrection follows the fellowship of the suffering and the cross. And so yes, I want to know the power of the resurrection, but if I am to experience that, I have got to, first of all, experience the fellowship of the suffering, the death on the cross, the death to my old self, my old nature.

being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead ([Phl 3:10-11](#)).

But how can you attain the resurrection of the dead unless you, first of all, have died? You see, Jesus could not experience the power of the resurrection until the cross. The cross was essential and necessary for Him to experience the power of the resurrection. So it is true with us. I am crucified with Christ, now I can experience the power of the resurrected life. And many people have never experienced the power of the resurrected life, because they have shied away from the fellowship of the suffering and of the crucified with Christ life. "I want to hang on to the flesh. I don't want to see it nailed to the cross. I want to hold on to the things of the flesh." But you will never know the life of the resurrected Christ until you have experienced the fellowship of the sufferings.

If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect ([Phl 3:11-12](#)):

It is sort of sad that so many people seem to feel that they have attained, or they have achieved their spiritual walk, and they sort of sit on little pedestals, little ivory towers. "I have attained, I have achieved. Here I am, you know, come and I will teach you. Sit at my feet and learn." But Paul the apostle said, "Look, I don't consider that I have attained; I don't look at myself as being perfect, the work of the Lord is not yet complete in me."

but I follow after [I am pursuing], if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus ([Phl 3:12](#)).

Now, Paul recognized something that is very important for all of us to recognize who have been apprehended by Jesus Christ. When the Lord apprehended us, and you can all look back in your own life to that point where the Lord apprehended you, where He said, "I have chosen you and ordained you that you should be my disciple," and we turn to follow Jesus Christ. Now, when the Lord apprehended us, He had in His mind a plan and a purpose for each of our lives. The Lord knew exactly what He intended for you to do. He had a work for you to fulfill. Paul said, "I have not yet apprehended that for which I was apprehended. The Lord apprehended me, but when He did, He had a purpose in mind. I have not yet accomplished that purpose."

Now, the fact that we are sitting here tonight, we can all say the same thing, "I am not yet apprehended that for which I was apprehended." The reason why we can all say it

Commentary on Philippians 3&4 by Chuck Smith 4.21.24

tonight is because we are all here. Why did the Lord apprehend you? So that you could share with Him the eternal glories of His kingdom. And so, when He is finished with me here, this robe of flesh I will drop and rise to seize the everlasting prize and shout while passing through the air. Farewell, farewell, sweet hour of prayer. And one day when I am sitting, looking up in Jesus' face, just overwhelmed by His glory and love, I will turn to the fellow next to me, and I will say, "I finally have apprehended that for which I was apprehended. This is what the Lord intended for me, to be with Him in His kingdom, to share with Him His glory. Father, I would that those who You have given to me, to be with me here, would also share with me in the Kingdom."

That is why God apprehended you; He has a glorious plan and a purpose for your future. He has a plan for your life now, and we should be as Jesus, who said, "I must be about my Father's business." Anything I do for myself is a waste of time and effort. I am forestalling the plan of God. So what do I do? I forget those things which are behind.

A lot of people make the mistake of trying to live in the past. And with a lot of people, there is just a lot of bad experiences in the past. And the problem is that they are constantly going back and going over those bad experiences. And they are not really going ahead in life at all, because they are so involved in the past. "They really did me wrong. I can't get over that. I can't believe what they did to me. I just can't rise above it. I just..." And living in the past, and being destroyed in the past, and can't go ahead because they are looking backward. Living in the past, there is always that danger of discouragement, which shuts off initiative for the future. The Lord may inspire you to some good work that He wants you to do. Many times the worst thing you can do is share with your friends what the Lord has laid upon your heart to do. Because so many times, they say, "Well, you really can't do that. You see, someone else already tried that and it just doesn't work." And so they go back to the past, and they pick up the failures of the past, and they are discouraged to try anything in the future. And so looking back to the past, oftentimes, we look at our failures and we are discouraged from trying to go on. "Hey, I tried it before. I tried it for so long. It just doesn't work. I just can't do it. If I could, I would have done it a long time ago," and looking back I am discouraged of trying to go ahead.

Or, on the other hand, a person looks back and glories in their victories of the past, and they are resting on their accolades. "You know, it is what I used to be, what I used to do. I hold the record and my name is on the record books, and all." They are always looking at their past and doing nothing now. They are stagnating now. They go to the bars and drink lite beer and talk about the touchdowns they use to make. They are living in the past, the past glories. Television would cause you to think that that is all retired baseball and football players do is just hang around the bars drinking lite beer, talking about the past. And it is sad when a person is resting in the past, not pressing ahead. The past has been glorious, it has been exciting to see what God has done, but you know, I am more excited about what God is going to do.

So,

Commentary on Philippians 3&4 by Chuck Smith 4.21.24

forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before ([Phl 3:13](#)),

Paul said, "Don't you realize that they that run in a race run all, only one receives the prize, so run that you may obtain." There are a lot of people running the race just to say, "Well, I ran in the race." "Well, where did you place?" "Well, I didn't finish it, but I ran in it." Paul said, "One receives the prize, and you run to obtain." In other words, "Give it all you have got."

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 [would be complete], be thus minded [let this be in your mind] ([Phl 3:14-15](#)):

Let this be the same rule for your life. Forgetting the things which are behind, reaching forth for those things which are before, pressing towards that mark, be thus minded.

and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, [and] let us mind the same thing ([Phl 3:15-16](#)).

Let this be your mind, let's walk by these rules. And so the rule of the Christian life is: forgetting those things which are behind, and pressing for those things which are before, or reaching for those things which are before, pressing towards the mark.

Brethren, be followers together of me ([Phl 3:17](#)),

So, let this be your mind, let this be your attitude, follow me.

and mark them which walk so as ye have us for your ensample [example]. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are [really] the enemies of the cross of Christ ([Phl 3:17-18](#)):

You know, there are a lot of people who talk a lot about Jesus Christ but are enemies of the cross of Christ. That is, they want still to live after the flesh so bad, that the idea of being crucified with Christ, the death of the old life, the death of the old man, the death of the old flesh life, is irritating to them. They don't want to hear it; they are enemies of that message. They want to tell you that you ought to be prosperous, you ought to be successful, you ought to be living in luxury, you are God's child, you ought to be indulging your flesh. Whatever you desire, just ask God, insist on God, command God. Because you can drive a Cadillac, and you can live on Lido Island. You can have these things of your flesh, you know. And it is an interesting period in church history where those who are indulging their flesh look upon it as spiritual superiority. "You know, if you only had enough faith, you could be jetting across the United States also in your own Lear Jet." So, it is rather tragic, because these people are opposed to the life of

Commentary on Philippians 3&4 by Chuck Smith 4.21.24

sacrifice, self-denial, and yet, that is the first step that Jesus said was necessary to be a disciple of His; you have got to deny yourself and take up your cross and follow Him.

And Paul said, "Follow me; you have me as your example. The old life, you know, I accounted loss. I want to know Him, I want to know the power of the resurrection, but yet, I want to know the fellowship of the sufferings and the cross. So, those things which we once gained, those things which were once so important to me, I counted loss, and I forget those things which are behind, because I am pressing forth for those things which are before. And now, follow me as an example, live by this rule, because there are those who don't live by this rule. There are those who are living after their flesh. They are enemies to the cross of Christ, not to Christ Himself, but to that aspect of suffering with Him,"

Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things [because their minds are always on earthly things] ([Phl 3:19](#)).

They are out there, there are many of them. In front of people they can act very holy and sanctified and excited and exhilarated in the things of the Lord, but when they get away from the stage, they can have filthy mouths; they can tell dirty jokes, they are living a two-faced life. They exist; they are there. Paul warns that they are there, they were there in Paul's day; they are there today. They really mind the earthly things. Their mind isn't after the Spirit and after the things of the Spirit, they are more concerned and interested in the types of cars they drive and the things of the flesh and the earthly things, than they are the things of the Spirit. But Paul said,

For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body [or our body of humiliation], 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 ([Phl 3:20-21](#)).

Our citizenship. "Let's not get too," Paul said, "involved in the world. Let your every contact with the world be just as light as possible." Our citizenship isn't here. Abraham and those saints of the Old Testament, the scripture said, confessed that they were just strangers and pilgrims on this earth, that they were looking for the city which hath foundations whose maker and builder is God. They were looking for the eternal kingdom of God. They weren't looking for a place, and so they roamed the earth, as outcast, not possessing of the earth.

Chapter 4

Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for ([Phl 4:1](#)),

What a beautiful words by Paul to the church, expressing his heart, just bearing his heart to them, "Dearly beloved, I long for you. My brothers, who I dearly love and I long for,"

Commentary on Philippians 3&4 by Chuck Smith 4.21.24

[You are] my joy and [you are] my crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved ([Phl 4:1](#)).

The heart of the apostle. He is bearing his heart now, his love for those who he ministered to and those who ministered to him. Now, there were a couple of women in Philippi who were having an argument, a fight. That's not becoming the church, so Paul said,

I beseech Euodia ([Phl 4:2](#)),

And the s isn't there, it is just, the s would make it a masculine name, but in the Greek, unfortunately, it is a feminine name, Euodia,

and I beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord ([Phl 4:2](#)).

Now, let's not argue, let's not fight, let's not create division within the body. Let's be of the same mind in the Lord.

And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow ([Phl 4:3](#)),

Now, we don't know who Paul is referring to here. There have been a lot of guesses. Probably all of them are wrong. But the yokefellow would be one who had labored together. Maybe he was writing to the Philippian jailer who had been converted. There are some, I think it was Tertullium, one of the early church fathers, said he was writing here to his wife. But that hardly seems possible.

help those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other of my other fellow laborers, whose names are in the book of life ([Phl 4:3](#)).

When Paul went to Philippi, he first shared the gospel by the river where a group of ladies had gathered together for prayer. Among them, Lydia, you remember, the seller of purple. And having shared with the women, the following week they told their friends, and a big crowd of people gathered to hear Paul share the gospel of Jesus Christ. Because many of the women believed and were saved and baptized, and so the work of God really began with women, and they had a very important part in the ministry in the church in Philippi. And so, "Help those women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, my fellow laborers, whose names are in the Book of Life."

In Luke's gospel, chapter 10, there is the report of the disciples who had been sent out by Jesus, two by two, the seventy of them. And they came back and they said, "Lord, it was fantastic. A lot of people were healed; people who were blind, their eyes were opened. And Lord, even the devils were subject unto us." And Jesus said to them, "Don't rejoice in these things, but rejoice rather that your name is written in heaven." Hey, that is the most important thing. There is nothing more important to me that my name is written in heaven. Not in what God is done through my life, that is not so

Commentary on Philippians 3&4 by Chuck Smith 4.21.24

important is that my name be written in heaven. That's what is really important to me. God has a book of life. It is exciting to realize that my name is there in His Book of Life.

We read in [Revelation 20](#) of the great white throne judgment of God, "And the books were open, and the people were judged out of the things that were written in the book, and death and hell gave up their dead, and they were judged, and whosoever name was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into Gehenna and this is the second death." But there again, the mention of the Book of Life. It is interesting to me that God has this book in heaven, the Book of Life, and the names of those who are heirs of the heavenly kingdom, ordained of God to share, and He has inscribed their names in the Book of Life.

Now, when did God write my name in the Book of Life? When did He write your name in the Book of Life? You say, "Well, I was saved on October 2, 1968, so I guess God wrote my name in the Book of Life October 2, 1968." No! We read in the book of Revelation that our names were written in the Book of Life before the foundation of the world. How could He do that? Because He is God, and He is smarter than you are, because He is omniscient, He knows all things. And if God ever... well, because He knows all things, He can't learn anything. It is impossible for God to learn anything. So, if God ever is to know who is going to be saved, He has always known who is going to be saved, and having always known those that were going to be saved, He wrote their names in the Book of Life before the foundation of the earth. Aren't you glad? He knew you and wrote your name there before He ever laid the foundations of the earth. "Whose names were written in the Book of Life," from the foundations of the earth. And so those fellow laborers, Paul said, "Whose names are written in the Book of Life." Something that Jesus mentions, something that Paul mentions, something that John mentions in the book of Revelation. Now,

Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice ([Phl 4:4](#)).

Again, notice the rejoicing is in the Lord. There is always cause for rejoicing in the Lord. I can rejoice because He wrote my name in His Book of Life before the foundation of the world. Oh, thank you, Lord. I can rejoice in the Lord. Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice. A sad, sour Christian is no real witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand ([Phl 4:5](#)).

That is, live moderately, don't live extravagantly. There's no place in the Christian life for extravagant living. Live moderately. Why? Because the Lord is at hand. Don't get too involved in the things of the world, the Lord's coming.

Be careful [or anxious] for nothing [don't worry about anything]; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God ([Phl 4:6](#)).

Commentary on Philippians 3&4 by Chuck Smith 4.21.24

The answer for worry is prayer. Prayer and commitment, those things that concern me, those things that are prone to cause me to worry are the very things I need to be praying about. And once I pray about them, I need to just trust God to take care of them. I need to know that once I commit them to God, they are in His hands and He will work them out for His glory. Now, it may not be for my pleasure, it may not be like I want it to be, but I thank God I'm not in control. I thank God that He is in control of the circumstances that surround me. If I were in control of my life, I could make the worst mess of my life thinking that I was just doing what was good. But, you know, if you just let a kid go, they will just eat ice cream sundaes and nothing else. And so I would order my life, you know, make it sweet, make it delectable, put hot fudge and whipped cream on top and toasted almonds, you know. I want a bed of roses, Lord. I want to take it easy. But it doesn't always work out that way. Many times there are hardships, there are difficulties. There are things that I don't understand, but my faith is being tested, and my faith is being developed because I'm learning to trust in God even when I can't see the way. And though it doesn't fall the way I would like it to fall, I still trust the Lord and I learn that He has a better plan. Yes, it was tough, yes, I did hurt, yes, there was suffering. But ohhh the lessons that I learned that I wouldn't trade for anything, because I grew immensely and my walk and relationship with God has been enhanced by the whole thing. And I count that which I gained in my relationship with Him far more than the struggle that I went through.

And the peace of God [the result of this will be the peace of God], which passeth all [human] understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus ([Phl 4:7](#)).

You will experience such peace. "Hey, what are you going to do?" "Well, I have prayed about it." "Yah, but what are you going to do about it?" "Well, I have already done it, I have prayed." "Yah, but you can't just pray; you have got to do more than that." "Now God is going to take care of it. I have peace. It is in God's hands; I have turned it over to Him. I am not struggling with it anymore. I am not wrestling with the issues anymore; I have turned them over to God, and now I am going to rest in Him. I am going to have an experience." That peace that passeth human understanding, passes your own understanding. You can't understand how that you can feel such peace in the midst of such turmoil.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things ([Phl 4:8](#)).

That pretty well eliminates television, doesn't it? Of all of the mental pollution that is going out night after night over the major networks. Our whole nation is being polluted by the television industry and by the movie industry. I mean, it is leading the nation right down the tubes. Why? Because it is having people think on things that are impure, unholy, filthy, unrighteous, immoral, and there is other things we need to be thinking on.

Commentary on Philippians 3&4 by Chuck Smith 4.21.24

Sort of tragic, a lot of people watch television just before they go to sleep, because you plant that junk in your mind just before you drop off.

You know, I have found that what I plant in my mind the last thing at night before I go to sleep is something that sticks with me. I learned as a child that I can memorize any poem by reading it over three times before I went to sleep. In the morning I could get up and recite it. Poems of several pages, all I do is read them over three times before I went to sleep, and in the morning I could recite them. Because it seems like during the night, what you plant just before you go to sleep has a way of your mind continuing to work on it.

Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me ([Phl 4:9](#)),

Paul the apostle, when he was talking with the elders at Ephesus, he said, "I was daily with you teaching you and showing you." It was show and tell with Paul. His life was the example of that which he was preaching, and so should it always be. It isn't just the proclaiming of the truth, it is the demonstration of the truth. And so Paul tells them, "Those things which ye have learned, and received, and heard, and you have seen in me, I set the example before you."

do [them]: and the God of peace shall be with you. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity ([Phl 4:9-10](#)).

In other words, "You were anxious to send me some help, but you lacked opportunity. " Epaphroditus, you remember, had come to Rome, with a offering from the church in Philippi for Paul. And so, the care of him has flourished again. They sent him a very generous offering. They desired to do it before now, but, of course, he had been on his way from a Caesarea to Rome. He had been on that ship that was wrecked and spent a lot of time; they weren't able to catch up with him. But now, finally, that he is sitting there in prison in Rome, they are able to get to him again, and they send this offering. And so he thanks them that this care for him is flourished again.

Not that I speak in respect of want ([Phl 4:11](#)):

It is not that I really am, you know, desperately in need. It isn't that I have tremendous needs while I am here.

for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content ([Phl 4:11](#)).

Oh, what a tremendous lesson we need to learn. Because always the state that we are in might not be the most pleasant state to be in. Paul was in prison when he wrote this, chained twenty-four hours a day to a different Roman guard, as they would make their changes. And yet, content. "For I have learned whatever state I am in to be content."

Commentary on Philippians 3&4 by Chuck Smith 4.21.24

I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need ([Phi 4:12](#)).

It doesn't matter to me; I can live with it, I can live without it. I have learned to be content with it. I have learned to be content without it. Whatever state God sees to put me, I am content, because my life is in God's hands; He is in control of those things that surround me. He wrote, "Godliness with contentment is great riches." I have learned how to be content.

[For] I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me ([Phi 4:13](#)).

And there is the secret: I can abound, I can be poor, I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.

Notwithstanding, ye have done well, that ye did communicate with my affliction [to my needs]. Now ye Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia [Philippi was in the area of Macedonia], no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only ([Phi 4:14-15](#)).

When I left you, you were the only church. Now, there was a church at Thessalonica, Paul established the church of Berea. They didn't do anything for him. The only church that really sought to help Paul and support that ministry was the church of Philippi.

For even in Thessalonica [when I was there] ye sent once and again unto my necessity [to take care of my needs]. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account ([Phi 4:16-17](#)).

I love that. Paul was thanking them for what they sent, "not because I desire a gift. I desire that fruit might abound to your account." Now, God has a very interesting bookkeeping system. And in God's bookkeeping system, your investments that you make in the kingdom of God bring fruit to your account. Jesus said, "Don't lay up for yourself treasures on earth where moth and rust can corrupt and decay and thieves can break through and steal. But lay up for yourself treasures in heaven where these things cannot happen, for where your treasure is there will your heart be also."

God accounts to the person who supports the missionary the fruit that comes from the missionary's service. How can they hear without a preacher? How can they preach except they be sent? So, those that send share equally in the fruit of the ministry of those who go. That is why in supporting a ministry, I want to be very careful what ministry I support. I want to make sure that it is an effective ministry, doing a good work for God. Because there is a lot of charlatans out there that are padding their own pockets and not really doing a real service for God.

Commentary on Philippians 3&4 by Chuck Smith 4.21.24

And so Paul said, "Not that I desire a gift. I desire that fruit might abound to your account."

But [I have everything] I have all, I abound ([Phl 4:18](#)):

Got plenty. What a beautiful thing to say even though you're broke. I have all, I abound. Why? Because I have Jesus. That's enough.

I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell [Probably some cologne, I guess], a sacrifice acceptable, [and] well-pleasing to God. But my God shall supply all of your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus ([Phl 4:18-19](#)).

Isn't that a glorious promise? Take hold of it tonight. My God shall supply all of your need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Now who can measure that kind of riches? If God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how much more then shall He not freely give us all things?

Now unto God and our Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. Salute [greet] every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you. All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household ([Phl 4:20-22](#)).

As Paul was chained to the Roman guard, those were Caesar's guards, and so many of Caesar's household send their greetings through Paul, who had received Christ because Paul's imprisonment there.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen ([Phl 4:23](#)).

Beautiful, beautiful epistle to the Philippians, and now the glorious epistle to the Colossians; next week, the first two chapters. The preeminence of Jesus Christ. Aw, this one just lifts you into glory as we behold Jesus Christ our Lord, and we see the preeminence that God has given unto Him. The preeminence of Christ. The book of Colossians, one that will enrich us so completely as we study it together.

And now may God cause you to abound in love and in your walk in the Spirit. And may indeed you find the promise to be true as God supplies all of your needs: spiritual, financial, physical, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus our Lord. God bless and keep you and give you a beautiful week. In Jesus' name.