

Living As Citizens of Heaven

Maturity in Christ – Philippians 3:15-21

Crosspoint Church – Margie Auman – 7/28/24

We started a new summer series looking at the book of Philippians to help us grow in our understanding and application of what it means to live as citizens of heaven. The book is about Christ in our life, Christ in our mind, Christ as our goal, Christ as our strength, and joy through suffering. The book emphasizes themes such as joy – even when suffering which we already mentioned, humility, unity, perseverance & faith even in the face of adversity & the hope of resurrection life. Paul, writing from prison, has used the life of Jesus Christ as our primary example to follow, teaching us that we are to have the same “mindset” of Jesus.

Maturity & role models

- Adulthood - a slang term for acting like a mature adult, doing every day, ordinary tasks that are not fun or rewarding but are required of a responsible adult.
- The mature & wise Christian keeps their eyes on Jesus for He is their righteousness & source of wisdom.

What I want you to learn today is that a mature Christian is led & transformed by Jesus.

1. Mature mindset – 3:15-16

¹⁵ All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. ¹⁶ Only let us live up to what we have already attained.

Recap of Christian doctrines learned from 3:1-14 that impact a mature view of things.

- Justification - the gracious act of God in forgiving and declaring righteous any sinner who believes in Jesus Christ.
- Sanctification - refers to the believer's progressive growth in holiness or conformity to the image of Christ.
- Glorification - we shall share in God's glory when we are in our resurrected bodies in the new heavens and new earth, experiencing deeper fellowship with God and not being at risk of falling away into sin, God's glory finally being "all in all."

Differences in thinking - Allow God to make all things clear.

- Have a heart open to the Holy Spirit's guidance.
- God will make His truth clear if we seek Him.
- How open is your heart to the Holy Spirit's leading? How willing are you to be corrected in your thinking?
- The importance of unity among Christians

Philippians 2:2 - make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.

Philippians 1:27 - Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel

Psalms 133:1 - Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!

John 17:22-23 - ²²I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— ²³I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Live up to what we have attained - If you are a follower of Christ then that means living out what you have learned, understand so far about Christ & say you believe.

- If Jesus has your heart then the behavior will fall in place.
- Paul isn't reprimanding the Philippian believers for their level of maturity.
- Paul is encouraging them not to coast into heaven but to have an active, ongoing, & aggressive demand for more of Christ in our lives!

Does Jesus have your heart? Are you going to praise Him when life is hard just as much as you praise Him when everything is going your way?

How are you pursuing more of Christ in your life?

2. Positive Role models – 3:17

¹⁷ Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do.

- a. Jesus - humility. 2:5-11 - "In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: ⁶Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross! ⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
- b. Timothy – love & compassion – 2:19-24 (verse 20 - ²⁰I have no one else like Timothy, who genuinely cares about your welfare.)
Immaculee Ilibagiza - Left To Tell – Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust
- c. Epaphroditus – perseverance in suffering – 2:25-30 - ²⁵Meanwhile, I thought I should send Epaphroditus back to you. He is a true brother, co-worker, and fellow soldier. And he was your messenger to help me in my need.²⁶ I am sending him because he has been longing to see you, and he

was very distressed that you heard he was ill. ²⁷ And he certainly was ill; in fact, he almost died. But God had mercy on him—and also on me, so that I would not have one sorrow after another. ²⁸ So I am all the more anxious to send him back to you, for I know you will be glad to see him, and then I will not be so worried about you. ²⁹ Welcome him in the Lord's love and with great joy, and give him the honor that people like him deserve. ³⁰ For he risked his life for the work of Christ, and he was at the point of death while doing for me what you couldn't do from far away.

Tyler Trent - God is holy. I am not. Jesus saves. Christ is my life.

Tyler wrote in his book *The Upset: Life, Sports, Death & the Legacy We Leave in the Middle* – “I had other ideas about the ways I wanted this story to end. But I can now say with confidence that I'm really ok with whatever God has planned for me. I trust that his plan is bigger & better than mine. Even if I don't understand the plan, I trust the heart of the planner.”

“Christ's love is the ultimate upset that overcomes all the other reasons in life that we have to be upset.”

- d. Paul – steadfastness in the pursuit of Christ – 3:4-14 (4-11;13b-14 - ⁷ But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. ¹⁰ I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.)

Steadfastness is faithfulness or devotion to a person, a cause, obligations or duties. The reward of steadfastness is strength and courage, enabling us to face challenges with confidence, knowing that God is faithful to His promises.

We must understand the value of knowing Christ. We can never have enough of Christ & we should never be complacent about where we are in the Christian life & what we have done for Christ. We must be insatiable in our desire to attain more of Christ & to achieve more for him.

3. Negative Role Models/Living for the Temporal - 3:18-19

¹⁸ For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹ Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things.

Enemies of the cross of Christ -who are they? (?Judaizers from 3:2; fallen away Christians, itinerant preachers....)

Paul doesn't discuss anything they may have taught. Instead, he focuses on their behavior. These are people who might have right biblical teaching but they don't have right living & that is an abomination to God.

Their destiny is destruction - doomed to final judgement & eternal punishment.

Their god is their stomach - sensual lifestyle devoted to fleshly desires & the things of this world. Pleasure had become their god.

Their glory is in their shame - Glory is another term for boasting. Paul has previously spoken about boasting in Christ & now he's referring to the opposite, boasting in self indulgent pleasures.

Their mind is set on earthly things points out that every aspect of their life is summed up in their self-centered earthly behavior. Our thoughts determine our actions & that will also determine our eternal destiny.

4. Transformation by Jesus – 3:20-21

²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

Present & Future hope – Heaven is not merely a future reality we will enjoy someday, it is a present reality. From the moment we entered a saving relationship with Jesus, we received our citizenship there.

There are advantages of citizenship!

1 Peter 2:11 - ¹¹ Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.

Ephesians 2:6-7 - ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

We await our prize – our savior Christ Jesus is coming back because he promised he would.

Christ is the sovereign over all – He will & is transforming us into His glorious image!

We will have transformed bodies – why forfeit this gold for earthly garbage???

Self control – only path to a satisfying life! The destiny awaiting us is worth far more than the sacrifice of worldly pleasures.

Is there anything you wouldn't give up for Jesus?

Only fools play games when their eternal destiny is at stake. Are you ready to grow up? If so, take this mature mindset that Paul described & live it out. Will you seek more of Christ in every area of your life? Will you choose to follow people who seek to know Jesus more deeply? Will you allow your love for Jesus to permeate your thinking so it determines your behavior?

How can you model behavior that honors Jesus? What earthly desires will you lay aside for that which will never fade away?

How can Jesus help you persevere in your current struggles.

A mature Christian is led & transformed by Jesus.

