

THE UPWARD CALL OF GOD

jkroberts_us@yahoo.com

Philippians 3:12-21

1. Paul understood the importance of repetition in the area of learning about and leaning upon Jesus and wrote the following to the Philippians, "For the rest (of you), my brethren, delight yourselves in the Lord and continue to rejoice that you are in Him. To keep writing to you (over and over) of the same things is not irksome to me, and it is [a precaution] for your safety." AMP
2. A careful reading of Paul's writings reveal that we can learn a lot about the genuineness of our relationship with Jesus Christ by simply evaluating what is going on in our lives.
3. This morning we are going to look at the testimony that Paul shared about himself with the Philippian church.
4. I believe that what was true in Paul's life will be true in your life and mine if we have had a genuine encounter with the Living Lord Jesus.
5. In verse 14 Paul referred to "the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."
6. A genuine relationship with Jesus Christ is never going to be static but having begun a good work in us God is going to perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:6
7. Jesus made it clear that a life of faith involves responding to God's activity towards us. John 6:44-47

44 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. 45 "It is written in the prophets, 'AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me. 46 " Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father. 47 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.

8. Several things will be true in the lives of those who have been drawn into relationship with Jesus Christ and who continue to experience the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

I. A new perspective. 2-6

- A. On false religion and false teachers. Phil 3:2-3

2 Watch out for those dogs, those wicked men and their evil deeds, those mutilators who say you must be circumcised to be saved. 3 For we who worship God in the Spirit are the only ones who are truly circumcised.

NLT

- B. On worship.

NOTE: Paul went from being a devoted Jew to one who worshipped in the Holy Spirit, gloried in Jesus Christ, and put no confidence in the flesh. 4-6

- C. Those who have come to see and embrace Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are elevated to a new and expansive vantage point.

- D. Our perspective matters, and in Christ we have an elevated view of things.

NOTE: From its deck an aircraft carrier appears huge, but from an airplane flying overhead it is only a speck on the immense ocean.

II. A new passion and priority. 7-10

A. Paul wrote of the “surpassing value (priceless privilege, the overwhelming preciousness, the surpassing worth, and supreme advantage) of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.”

B. A right view of Jesus puts everything else in its proper place.

C. Knowing Christ, gaining Christ, being found in Christ, and possessing the righteousness of Christ became Paul’s all-consuming desire.

D. We could put verse 7 and 10 together.

“But whatever things were gain (personally advantageous) to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering, being conformed to His death (to this present world).”

E. Is your consuming passion and priority to:

1. Know Christ intellectually and experientially?

2. Know His resurrection power in your life?

3. Know the fellowship of His sufferings.

NOTE: To be so much like Jesus that the world looks at and treats you like it did Him?

4. Be conformed to His death (to this present world so that it no longer has any power over you or allure to you)?

III. A new path or purpose. 12-16

A. Paul understood that Jesus took hold of him and his life for a reason.

B. He desired with all his heart to fully fulfill God’s plan and purpose for his life.

C. Consequently he was never content with what he had accomplished but was always reaching forward and pressing on.

D. In verse 15 Paul pointed out that his attitude was the mark of a spiritually mature person.

NOTE: He cautioned his readers to allow God to perfect their attitudes and help them to not lose ground.

E. The upward call of God calls for our passionate and purposeful pursuit. Ps 27:8

When You said, "Seek My face," my heart said to You, "Your face, O Lord, I shall seek."

F. There are spiritual realities that can and should be fully realized in our lives, but they are not automatic.

1. The reality. Ps 73:26-28

“But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. 27 For, behold, those who are far from You will perish; You have destroyed all those who are unfaithful to You. 28 **But as for me, the nearness of God is my good;** I have made the Lord God my refuge, that I may tell of all Your works.”

2. The realization. Ps 145:18

“The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.”

NOTE: Many people have little interest in God; what they are interested in is what they think God will or can do for them.

V. A new position. 17-21

- A. By becoming an example to others.
- B. By learning from those who are spiritually mature.
- C. By understanding that we are citizens of heaven.

APPLICATION

1. If we are Christians we know something of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
2. We also know something of the attraction or allure of this present world.
3. What makes things doubly difficult is that there are many enemies of the cross of Christ who are disguised as the friends of Christ who preach and teach that we can have Christ and the world too. 18-19
4. The Apostle John wrote, "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." I John 2:15