

INTRODUCTION

- * Paul has exhorted the church of Philippi to be united and to have one mind. And that oneness was supposed to be in Christ Jesus. They needed to take upon themselves the mind of Christ - the mind of a bondsman rooted in humility.
- * Last week, we saw that Paul presented them with three earthly illustrations of men who laid hold of that mindset and who then demonstrated it through their lives.
- * Paul now turns to the core motivation of having this "mind of Christ" ... it begins with a passion. We will pursue whatever we are impassioned about. As we saw in our study of Ecclesiastes, Solomon passionately pursued self-pleasure. What you want the most - what you crave - what you care the most about - you will make time for and you will spend money on. That desire will begin to consume you until you accomplish it. In the end, the object of that pursuit becomes your "god."
- * What was Paul's pursuit? About what was he most impassioned? He tells us plainly - to know Christ. But, not just to know Him superficially. Rather, Paul wanted to know Christ in the power of His resurrection and in the koinonia (fellowship/oneness) of His sufferings. In order to accomplish this, it was going to require him to change the way he thought of his past and his pedigree. It was going to require him to change the focus of his future hope. Finally, it would then require him to change his present pursuit.
- * Today, we want to consider the first part of this process - properly taking care of your past, or as Paul states to the church of Ephesus, "putting off the old man."

INSTRUCTION

I. PUTTING YOUR PAST IN THE PAST (v. 1-11)

A. Paul's Warning (v. 2-3)

1. THE INFERIORITY OF P _____ C _____
 - a. The Dogs (cf. Deut. 23:18; 1 Sam. 24:14; 2 Kgs 8:10-13; Psalm 22:16, 20; Matt 7:6; 15:21-28; Luke 16:21; Rev. 22:15)
 - b. The Evil Workers (cf. Psalm 6:8; 26:5; 119:115; Matthew 7:23)
 - c. The Mutilation
2. THE SUPERIORITY OF S _____ C _____
 - * cf. Lev 26: 41; Deut 10: 16; 30: 4-6; Jer 4: 3-4; 9: 25-26; Acts 7: 51; Rom 2: 28-29; 1 Cor 7: 17-20
 - a. They Worship God in the Spirit - not in tradition (cf. John 4:24; Matthew 15:8-9)
 - b. They Rejoice in Christ Jesus (cf. Galatians 6:13-14; 1 Corinthians 1:27-31)
 - c. They Have No Confidence in the Flesh (cf. Galatians 5:6; 6:15)

B. Paul's Testimony (v. 4-10)

1. THE INFERIORITY OF P _____ A _____ (v. 4-8)
 - a. Delineated
 - i. THOSE I _____ (v. 5)
 - * Circumcised the eighth day ... Paul had godly parents; a godly heritage
 - * Of the stock of Israel ... He was a full-blooded Jew, not a proselyte
 - * Of the Tribe of Benjamin ... He had a pure lineage.
 - The tribe of Benjamin was from Rachel (the beloved), it meant "son of my right hand" - the place of honor,
 - the first king of Israel was from Benjamin (Saul - his namesake!),
 - the tribe of Benjamin had the place of honor in Israel's battle formation (cf. Judges 5:14; Hosea 5:8);
 - when the nation split only Benjamin remained faithful with Judah (cf. 1 Kings 12:21)
 - * An Hebrew of the Hebrews ... not just a Jew ... but, a practicing and Patriotic Jew!
 - ii. THOSE E _____ (v. 5-6)
 - * Concerning the Law: a Pharisee (a devout follower of the Law; cf. Matthew 5:20; 23:23-31)
 - * Concerning Zeal (cf. John 16:1-2; Matthew 23:34)
 - * Concerning Righteousness
 - b. Illustrated: I more so:
 - * Baptized as a baby, Of the stock of the church, Of the tribe of Martin Luther, And the son of a church treasurer.
 - * Concerning service: an acolyte and usher in the church
 - * Concerning zeal: I was active in the youth services and went to church camp
 - * Concerning righteousness: blameless ... my good works have outweighed my bad works!
 - b. Valued (v. 7-8)
2. THE SUPERIORITY OF K _____ C _____ (v. 9-10; cf. Matt 13:44-46; Prov 2:1-6)
 - a. Imp _____ With the R _____ of Christ (v. 9; cf. 2 Corinthians 5:21)
 - b. Impa _____ By a R _____ with Christ (v. 10) ...
 - i. Knowing Him in the Power of His Resurrection (cf. John 17:3)
 - ii. Knowing Him in the Fellowship of His Sufferings (cf. Philippians 1:29; Matthew 16:26; John 15:17-20; 16:1-4, 33)

II. PURSUING CHRIST IN THE PRESENT (v. 8-19)

III. RECALLING YOUR FUTURE RESERVATION (v. 17-21)

INTROSPECTION

- * What about your past is a stumbling block to your pursuit of knowing Christ?
- * Have you left your past - in the past - in order to pursue that which is far superior?
- * Is knowing Jesus honestly your highest pursuit?
- * What are you willing to consider as "dung" in order that you may truly know Jesus?
- * Is there a need to change the way you think and therefore the way you act?

INTERACTION ... Thoughts & Questions to ponder for later discussion

- * Discuss what your past spiritual lives looked like. Did you go to church? Did you grow up a good Christian home? Did you grow with no spiritual direction?
- * How could each of these various backgrounds affect your pursuit of Christ?
- * Consider the application to our secular lives. How does our social, financial, political, or occupational position become a contributor or deterrent to our pursuit of Christ?
- * What should we do to correct course and become more focused on Jesus?

