



## Part 6: The Gift and the Goal

Philippians 3:7-14; 4:1

*To stand firm, we must make the gift the goal.*

### I. The Heart of the Matter

Started this series six weeks ago with Jesus' warning and exhortation in Matthew 24.

Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. Matthew 24:12-13

Belief leads to love. Our love is assaulted by intimidations and seductions (remember the Satanic lullaby).

Our love for the Lord is like our love for another person – our love must be propelled by our estimation of the other's worth.

To stand firm until the end – to not allow our love to grow cold – will require more than our will power. It will require that we do what we can to see and savor the beauty of King Jesus. We learn this from Paul (see Philippians 3:15-17; 4:1).

### II. The Gift is the Goal

#### A. A New Perspective

“But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 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.” Philippians 3:7-8a

Paul is telling us that his encounter with the resurrected Jesus changed his perspective (Acts 9). At our conversion,

we are given eyes to begin to see life from God's perspective.

Before Jesus Paul had a completely different mindset about what was important and valuable to God. He thought his ethnic lineage as a Jew and his religious and moral commitments made him acceptable to God. He saw himself as an equal partner with God in his salvation.

We all have different experiences of realizing the resurrected Jesus is calling us to himself: some are dramatic encounters like Paul on the Damascus Road (Acts 9); others are like the blind man who had his vision healed by Jesus in a process (Mark 8:22-26); and others are like Timothy growing up in families of faith (2 Timothy 1:3-5).

Jesus says he's the light of the world, and whoever comes to him will not walk in darkness (John 8:12). We are given a totally new perspective.

#### B. A New Gift

"I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ 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." Philippians 3:8b-9

At our conversion, we receive the gift of Jesus himself and his righteousness. We are in a never-ending relationship with Jesus. Paul says we are now "in him/Christ" meaning we are now united to Jesus forever.

Our relationship with God is secure because it is based completely on Jesus' righteousness with God (2 Corinthians 5:21). It is not our moral or religious record that secures our relationship with God. It is Jesus' record of faithfulness before God that is credited to us as a gift.

#### C. A New Goal

"I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead." Philippians 3:10-11

Paul tells us that we have a new goal that is worthy of being our all-embracing goal in this life: to know Jesus and become like him.

But here is where our honesty compels us to face our fears that we will miss out on life's greatest joys. Here is where we

are confronted with our struggle to really believe Jesus knows what he's talking about (Matthew 13:44-46). Here is where we need to surround ourselves in a worshipping community with brothers and sisters who are ahead of us on the journey, who can encourage and challenge us to press on towards this goal.

Ex. Blaise Pascal – a 17th century French mathematician and scientist and a follower of Jesus had an experience with Jesus at age 31. We know of this because a parchment was found in his coat after his untimely death 8 years later.

“We need not fear that in seeking God only we may narrow our lives or restrict the motions of our expanding hearts. The opposite is true. We can well afford to make God our All, to concentrate, to sacrifice the many for the One...The man who has God for his treasure has all things in one. Many ordinary treasures may be denied him, or if he is allowed to have them, the enjoyment of them will be so tempered that they will never be necessary to his happiness. Or if he must see them go, one after one, he will scarcely feel a sense of loss, for having the source of all things he has in one all satisfaction, all pleasure, all delight. Whatever he may lose he has actually lost nothing, for he now has it all in one, and he has it purely, legitimately and forever.” – A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*

#### D. A New Humility

“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”  
Philippians 3:12-14

Paul wants to make clear that he has not reached spiritual perfection. Therefore, Paul presses on in this life with his singular goal to know Jesus and become like him.

Paul is showing us the gift of humility. We can be totally honest about where we are on the journey. We don't need to hide or be embarrassed by where we are in our spiritual journey to know Jesus and become like him.

Humility is the way of Jesus and His Kingdom (Philippians 2:1-11; 1 Peter 5:5-7).

### III. Clarity About the Source of our Joy

“Finally, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you.” Philippians 3:1

“Deep in the heart of every person is the longing, fitfully glimpsed and but half realized, to gather up all its strivings into an intense pursuit of one all-embracing objective worthy of the toil and tears and devotion of the human heart.” – Karl Rahner

Recommended: “The One True Thing” by Howard Baker

**Discussion Questions:**

1. We started this series with Jesus’ warning in Matthew 24:12-13. How much do you associate “standing firm” with guarding your heart and love of the Lord? What do you think is the relationship between our belief and our love of Jesus?
2. Paul speaks of his sudden transformation and new perspective after encountering the resurrected Jesus (Acts 9). Doug spoke of the different ways we are awakened to the reality of Jesus. What has been your experience?
3. What is your response to Paul’s goal to know and become like Jesus and his expectation that this should be our goal too?
4. What is your response to the quote by A.W. Tozer?
5. Is there anything you sense Jesus may be calling you to in order to know him better?