

The Upward Calling

Sunday, June 1, 2025

There is a section in the book of Philippians which is very recognizable to most of us as part of being transformed by the renewing of our minds.

Philippians 3:14: I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

When we confessed Jesus as lord and believed in our hearts that God raised him from the dead, we were saved. We received all of the wonderful benefits of God's grace. We were sanctified, we were made righteous and justified, redeemed from the curse of the law. We were give eternal life. WE have been made to sit in heavenly places in Christ. SEATED IN THE HEAVENLIES! We are part of the one body of Christ, where he is the head, and we are members in particular in that wonderful body. WE are the embodiment of all that God planned for, and desired from before the foundation of the world.

All those things are the greatest of all grand prizes any person could receive, not only in this life, but in the life which is to come that starts with the gathering together. So, what do we do in the meantime while we are waiting for Jesus Christ to return to gather us? Let's look at the context of this record in Philippians 3, starting in verse 8

Verse 8: Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge [for the excelling nature of the knowledge] of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win [gain] Christ. **9** And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of [thru believing concerning] Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith [the right way of believing].

10 That [the end result being] I may know him [get to know experientially], and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship [sharing relationship] of his sufferings [hardship or pain], being made conformable unto his death [having become conformed to his death]. **11** If by any means [that somehow, I may reach] I might attain unto the [out] resurrection of the dead.

The "out resurrection" is referring to *exanastasis* = anastasis with ek prefixed. Occurs only here in Philippians 3:11. It is referring to the raising of the dead with regard to the Church, as discussed in more detail in I Thessalonians 4:13-18 and in I Corinthians 15:51-57.

In this context so far, we see something that the Apostle Paul is teaching by revelation. He has deduced that everything that he gained in this life, i.e. credentials, titles, established lifestyle, accomplishments compared to others etc. All of it was just garbage to Paul now. His new life in Christ changed things for him. It gave him a new perspective on life. He no longer had to try and impress the Sanhedrin, or any of his contemporaries. His life was to impress God by way of Christ. Which meant that now he had to made certain determinations for his life and how he was going to live it. Part of that included declaring his past accomplishments dung, and seeking to be "found in him," meaning getting to know Jesus Christ in an experientially way, and the power, the *dunamis*, the inherent power of his resurrection.

The inherent power of the resurrection of Christ is what we received at the time of the new birth. We have the gift of holy spirit inside us, in every part of our being. His eyes within our eyes, his ears within our ears, his touch within our touch, his sense of smell behind ours and his taste buds within our taste buds. In other words, Christ's "five senses" within our five senses. This is what gives us the ability to receive revelation, and to

operate all of the worship manifestations, and the power manifestations. We are not just “walking empties.” We have a life born within us that gives us power for abundant living, abundant results. GOD wants us to know about this power that is a direct result of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and our acceptance of the truths in **Romans 10:9**.

Every individual believer has this power, this dunamis within them. But in order to understand this, and operate this power, we must study to show our selves approved unto God and rightly divide the Word, AND learn H.O.W. to operate this power. This is the essence of what the Apostle Paul was stating in this section of Philippians. Let's continue.

Verse 12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

In other words, he is saying, ***“It is not that I have already received or that I have already completely finished this personal project in life.”*** It's ongoing. It's a life choice day after day to walk this way. He had not accomplished it or completed it, but he just kept going. Furthermore, he states, ***“but I press on in pursuit if perhaps I may win based on that for which I was also won by Christ.”*** Jesus Christ himself put his whole being on the line. He sacrificed all of his heart, soul, mind and strength into completing “his race.” His goal? To win us back to God! That's the effort that is exemplified here for our race.

13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.

13 (English Standard Version) Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining [Gr. *agōnizomai*] forward to what lies ahead.

In other words, forget the past. Declare it null and void and not part of what will improve your life. Replace the thoughts of the past with what looks ahead. The next words here in the ESV says, “straining forward to what lies ahead.” The Greek word for straining is *agōnizomai* means “to stretch forward with all your strength.” We get the word “agony” from this word. Best example is in the Olympic Games in Track and Field in the 100 meter dash, all of the runners run hard, but many times the one who wins is the one who strains and stretches forward as hard as he can to cross the line first. This is the word used here, To “stretch forward with all your strength.” You don't think about who is running next to you. You don't look at those who are running with you or behind you, you just burn out to make it first! In this life? No. In eternal life's rewards.

1 Corinthians 9:24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. *“Run in such a manner that you may win”*

25 And every man that striveth [Gr. *agōnizomai*] for the is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

This contest is not something that we see with our five senses here upon earth, rather it is a mental challenge on where to place our focus. In the world, our focus could be on winning the PowerBall or State Lottery. It could be focused on moving into a big mansion. It could be focused on any number of the things of this earth. But that's not what we focus on. It is not the target of our goal of winning a large cash prize. We stretch forward to winning a different prize. In **vs 25**, it says “Now they do it (exercise self-control) to win a corruptible crown; but we and incorruptible crown.”

I once was ran in a 286 mile race from Rome City, IN to Athens, OH. My portion of the race was about 13 miles, or a half marathon. I trained, (for what I felt was very hard) for this race. I wasn't a very good runner back in 1979, so I only ran about 4 miles per day to get in shape. Let me tell you, 4 miles a day in training is fine if you run at least 13 miles once per week, but I didn't do that. By mile 8, I was pretty tired and my legs were like gummy worms, and my breathing was getting harder by the minute. I was falling back from the pack. I even tripped and fell into a ditch. Eventually, I caught up with the pack and finished third in my leg of the race. For this, I got a bronze medal. (Whoopie Doo!) For years, this medal was in a box of junk somewhere in our garage. I got it out one time to look at it. The ribbon was all wrinkled and snarled and stained, so I figured I needed to clean it up and hang it in my office. Which, I still have it. But what does it really mean to me? Not much! Talk about a corruptible crown!!! Back to Philippians 3:13 again.

Philippians 3:13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this one thing I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.

Then comes this great 14th verse in Philippians 3.

Verse 14: I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

"Press toward the mark for the high calling," means: *"I press on in pursuit toward the goal for the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus."*

We've made it this far with God's Word in our lives. We got ourselves to the point of the new birth. Many of us, by our own freewill, have manifested this great gift of holy spirit that God has given us. We've seen the accuracy of God's Word change our lives. We've learn how to operate the nine manifestations of holy spirit. Now it's up to us to continue to operate them. We pursue the prize of the upward calling. What is that calling that is mentioned here.

"calling: Greek: *klēsis* = calling". This is a reference to the hope of the calling in **Ephesians 1:18 and 4:4**.

Ephesians 1:18: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling [*klēsis* = invitation], and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.

Ephesians 4:4: *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called* [*kaleō* = invitation] *in one hope of your calling* [*kaleō*, meaning "invitation"]. [*Invitation to the one hope of our calling*]

II Timothy 1:8: Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; **9** Who hath saved us, and called [*kaleō*] *us* with an holy calling [*klēsis*], not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. [Called according to *God's purpose*]

Colossians 3:15: And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called [*kaleō*] in one body; and be ye thankful. [Called or invited to people to *peace* in the one body].

These Greek words are also found in **I Thessalonians 2:12** – "called to his kingdom and glory", **Romans 8:30**, - "called us to be justified and glorified." and **I Corinthians 1:9**, - called us "into the fellowship of His dear Son."

So we have seen what this calling entails. That it is an invitation to respond. People have been called as a result of Jesus Christ's accomplishment, and it is a calling according to God's purpose and grace given to them in Christ Jesus. Called in one hope of our calling. Called or invited to peace in one body. They were called to God's kingdom and glory. Those whom God has called are also justified and glorified. We are also called to the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ. This was not a calling or invitation, based on the merits or works of people, but rather it was according to God's purpose and grace given to people in Christ Jesus. These records speak of a specific calling, or invitation, of people according to God's purpose and grace in Christ Jesus.

Klēsis and **kaleō** are synonyms. (Different words that have similar meanings) It is an "upward calling" or upward invitation, and "to call by name." God knows your name. He's telling you personally. It's upward, meaning that which originates from above. A personal invitation. There are many other places that these words are used. If you use a **Strong's** or **Young's Concordance**, you can look up these words and see all of the place in the New Testament that they are used, along with another word that means "called," which is **klētos**. And the last use of this calling is 1 John.

1 John 3:1: Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called [*kaleō* – called by name] the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

We've been called by name..."Jack, or Ginny, or Mike, or Dennis..." not just called by our own name, but God also named us as "SONS OF GOD."

Vs 2 goes on to say, "now are we the sons of God." We are sons of God and we are called "sons of God by name." We may not know what we will be in the future other than that we will be "like him; for we shall see him as he is." We are called sons of God now, and we will be called sons of God in the future! This is because God has bestowed His love upon us in an unlimited measure. God called you, and God is calling us. Look up!

The upward calling is both now, and is our future with Him and Jesus Christ. This includes: having Christ born within us, new bodies that are like his glorious body, which includes a new mind. Eternal rewards are also coming where we stand on the Bēma, the reward stand to receive the rewards.

2 Corinth 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. (WT) ¹⁰ Moreover, we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ so that each *one* may receive in return for the *things* that he did while in the body, whether good or bad.

Once we are gathered together, a great many changes are coming. Those who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him, as well as those of us who are alive and remain at his coming. This will be the ultimate experience which concludes this life, and is the beginning of our new life throughout eternity!

God bless you.

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