

Living In The Now But Not Yet Series

March 03, 2021

Scripture: Philippians 3:12-21

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.

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,

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

15. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

16. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

17. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

18. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ:

19. Whose end *is* destruction, whose God *is* *their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

20. For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

21. Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Summary: How do we live with the tension that we have the promises of God yet they have not yet been completely fulfilled in us?

Tension - we don't like to live with tension - we seek to resolve that which gives us tension.

The problem is that sometimes our attempts to resolve the tension get us into more trouble. Now but not yet.

Eschatology (Any system of doctrines concerning last, or final, matters, as death, the judgment, the afterlife, etc.):

There is a tension between what part of eschatology deals with the present and what deals with the future.

It seems to me the two major camps run into difficulty because they try to resolve the tension rather than live with it.

One camp tries to make all the promises for today.

The other camp tries to make it all about the future.

But we live in a period of time where the promises are both - they are now but not yet.

We are part of the kingdom now but there is also the not yet of the kingdom.

Jesus reigns now but there is also a not yet aspect to his reign.

WE live in a time when the promises of God are being fulfilled in us, yet they are not yet completely fulfilled.

That leaves us in tension. How do we live in such tension?

Well that is what I believe Paul addresses in the passage in Philippians that we want to look at tonight.

1. Don't become complacent or self-satisfied in the Now.

Two parallel statements in 12-14

12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect,

13 Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it.

Contrast Paul's attitude to that of the Judaizers. Vv.2-11

They thought they had it all lined up.

Follow the rules and you were guaranteed to be right with God. Paul has demolished their argument.

He has shown by his own life that following all of their rules was just rubbish - none of it pleased God.

Instead, he has confirmed that the Philippians have the true faith.

Rather than feeling deficient in the face of those with their rules, the Philippian believers were actually the ones who had the true faith.

He then drives home the point by showing his own emphasis - to know Christ and the power of his resurrection.

This is the now - we have experienced the power of the resurrection of Christ.

Romans 6:2-4

2. God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?

3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

2 Corinthians 5:17

17. Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

But even here we cannot become complacent.

We cannot begin to think that somehow we have arrived.

Philippians 3:12-13

12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect,

13 Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it.

None have arrived - we are still a work in progress

Some try to resolve the tension of the now but not yet by concluding that we are now sinless.

No - we can never be satisfied, Christ did not save us for this. . .

2. Press on the completion of Christ's work in us.

Paul expresses this idea in three different ways.

A.

Philippians 3:12

12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

For what purpose did Christ save us.

Romans 8:28-30

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

B.

Philippians 3:13-14

But one thing I do: 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.

All of the things that I used to count important are rubbish -

Philippians 3:4-6

4. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:

5. Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

6. Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

C.

Philippians 3:15-16

15 All of us 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.