

LESSON SEVEN

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS - PART TWO

Scriptural Reference: Philippians Chapters 3 & 4.

A. CHAPTER THREE:

1. WARNING AGAINST LEGALISM:

Scriptural Reference:

"Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write to same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision" (Philippians 3:1-2).

Apparently, some legalist had come to Philippi and was teaching them that they should obey the Judaistic traditions. In this Scripture, Paul warns the Philippians not against three types of people, but against one kind with three characteristics: dogs, evil workers, concision.

In Paul's day, dogs were rarely individually owned. They roamed in packs as unclean scavengers. Prior to this, the Gentiles had been called dogs, but here the Apostle Paul reverse it and names the Jews, who would take the Christians back into the bondage of the Jewish traditions, as being dogs. It was simply a term of contempt.

Instead of using the word "circumcision," Paul uses the word "concision" which means "those who mutilate the flesh." By using this word, Paul reveals some sarcasm concerning the ordinances of circumcision.

2. PAUL'S BACKGROUND OF RIGHTEOUSNESS: (Philippians 3:3-9).

Here Paul describes fully his background of righteousness in which, if he desired, he really could boast.

When the nation of Israel was split into two parts, the northern part was made up of ten tribes and the southern part constituted the two tribes that were orthodox and had the temple. They were the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. When Paul said that he was of the tribe of Benjamin, he was stating that he was a man with an orthodox heritage. A Hebrew of the Hebrews stated that he shared in the covenant of Abraham and as a Pharisee, he kept the law in every detail.

Certainly, in the natural, he had much of which he could boast, but he counted all of this but refuse (dung) that he might win Christ and have the righteousness, which is of God, by faith.

In verse three, he wrote that those who worshipped God in the Spirit and rejoiced in Christ Jesus were of the circumcision, not those who mutilated the flesh, but those who had the righteousness of Christ through faith.

3. PAUL'S HEAVENLY GOAL: (Philippians 3:10-16).

Paul pictured himself as in a race exerting every ounce of strength that he might reach the goal set before him which was that he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Paul had had a glimpse of the glory of heaven (II Corinthians 12:4) and he was determined to reach heaven regardless of the cost. The past was to be put behind him and his eyes would be fixed upon the future as he pressed toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

4. HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP: (Philippians 3:17-21).

The word "conversation" in verse twenty means "citizenship." When Paul wrote that he had his conversation in heaven, he meant that he had his citizenship in heaven.

Paul warned the Philippians against those who were gluttons and lived only for sensual indulgences. In the last verse, Paul again expresses his hope of the resurrection. The phrase "vile body" means "the body of our humiliation." It is a frail house that returns to dust. Nevertheless being the temple of the Holy Ghost during life, the body is reserved for a higher destiny than remaining dust. When Jesus returns, this frail house will be changed like unto His own glorious body.

B. CHAPTER FOUR:

1. EXHORTATION TO TWO WOMEN:

Euodia and Syntyche were two prominent women in the Philippian church who had personal differences and were bringing some annoyance to the entire church. Paul beseeches them to be in harmony and to settle their differences. He exhorted one of the brethren there, whom he called a "true yoke fellow," to help the women at Philippi who labored with Paul in the gospel.

2. DO NOT WORRY OR BE ANXIOUS:

Scriptural Reference:

"Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:5-7).

Because of the near coming of the Lord, Paul admonishes the church to be reasonable in all things and have the ability to be considerate and not be extreme. He exhorted them to trust the Lord fully. This would mean that there would be no place for worry, anxiety or fretting. Instead of this, they would pray much and their prayer would be made with thanksgiving. If they would pray with thanksgiving, then the peace of God, which is more wonderful than the human mind can understand, would keep their thoughts and their hearts and would be a quiet rest trusting in Jesus Christ.

3. MENTAL HEALTH:

Scriptural Reference:

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Philippians 4:8-9).

Here is a paragraph concerning positive thinking. Physically, a man is what he eats; spiritually, a man is what he thinks. His thoughts will control and motivate his actions. How important it is to be thinking noble and pure thoughts. Paul enumerates the things that a Christian should fix his thoughts upon: things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtue, and praise. If we are to fix our thoughts on such things, it is evident that the Apostle Paul believed that a man could control his thinking.

4. PAUL'S SUFFICIENCY:

Scriptural Reference:

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

Paul expressed his total sufficiency to be in Christ. "All things" referred to everything that was in the will of God for him. He could be content under all circumstances of life. In both lack and abundance, the Apostle Paul would still be victorious through Christ. He did not place his confidence in his own strength but in the strength of Christ's presence within his life.

5. THE PROMISE OF AMPLE SUPPLY:

Scriptural Reference:

"But my God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

God does not promise to supply our wants, but rather He will supply all of our needs. The key to this promise is the phrase "according to his riches in glory." God owns the universe and it does not impoverish Him in the least to supply the needs of His children. He will supply to the fullest every need, both temporal and eternal, that the child of God has.

LESSON SEVEN

SELF HELP TEST

- A. How did Paul describe "Legalists" which revealed his contempt for them?
- B. What exhortation did Paul give to Euodia and Syntyche?
- C. In your own words, name the things that the Christians should think about.
- D. Write in your own words the following phrases showing the meaning of each clearly.
1. Vile body -
 2. Let your moderation be known -
 3. Be careful for nothing -
 4. Beware of the concision -
 5. Our conversation is in heaven -
- E. Write a paragraph fully explaining the meaning of Philippians 4:13.