



World Christian Fellowship

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Philippians 37 Focus on the future

Philippians 3:20-21, *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ,²¹ who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*

Be an example and follow examples.

Discern the enemies of Cross and stay away from them.

What is it that makes us pursue the prize?

It is the hope of the coming of Jesus Christ who will change us to be like Him.

We must keep that focus clear.

Paul says our citizenship is in heaven and we are eagerly waiting for the return of the Lord Jesus because when He comes, He will transform us to be like Him. He has got the power to do it!

Our perspective is a heavenly perspective!

We view heaven as our primary preoccupation.

This is what motivates us.

We are so eager to see our Saviour.

We are longing to hear the words of "Well done" from our Saviour.

We are looking forward to be rewarded by our Saviour.

We are so consumed by for eternal glory.

Apostle Paul knew very little of comforts and pleasant emotions.

Paul was uncomfortable most of the time,

- beaten,
- shipwrecked,
- stoned,
- Hunger,
- left for dead,
- naked,
- always sorrowful,
- tearful,
- bearing pain,
- difficulties, and
- many adversaries.

But he was committed to a productive life moving toward a goal and that goal was all tied to heaven.

So, his preoccupation was heavenly.

That's why he could say, "Far better to depart and be with Christ."

Much better for him.

This is the focus of life that is required if we are going to pursue Christ's likeness.

Christ is a heavenly being.

Christ is of heaven, from heaven, in heaven, heaven is His place,
He is ours, heaven is our place.

If preoccupied with Him, we are preoccupied with heaven.

It matters little to us what happens here, it matters a lot to us
what happens there.

Jesus is there, that's our place.

V 20, *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ,*

When the Lord calls us up to meet Him and will be forever with Christ.

That's our focus.

Paul says, "I long for that."

The only reason he stuck around here was to do his work, to finish his ministry.

When he came to the end of his life he wrote to Timothy.

2 Timothy 4:6-8, *For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. ⁷I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

When the work was finished Paul wanted to be with the Lord, because that was a better place, that was his place. He wanted to be with his Saviour.

Does the church have the similar attitude?

The church today this far-reaching emphasis on prosperity, health-wealth gospel, solve all your problems, fix up your life, have a happy marriage, have a happy home, and be successful. We are living in a man-centred theology!

Most of our lives in this world today are so bound to the earth that frankly we have absolutely no desire to leave and go to heaven.

How many of you would be willing today to leave and go to heaven?

Majority might say yes!

How many of you honestly and genuinely would be ready to pack up and leave and go to heaven today?

Most of us might say no.

Some of us might want to go because we don't like our circumstances.

Some of us might like to go because we want to inflict pain on somebody who would miss us.

Some of them want to go to heaven because they want to hell and suffer.

When you go to a Christian funeral we don't talk about heaven. We have very little concern about heaven until somebody dies then we go to the funeral and we comfort the remaining family that this person is in heaven and secretly we are thrilled it isn't us.

We live under the very deceiving lie that death is the enemy of the Christian when the fact of the matter is, for those who have a heavenly perspective death becomes a friend.

Somehow the church bought this concept of life is to enjoy and death is end of all in this materialistic world.

We do preach about don't store treasure on earth, but the church has been very busy doing that.

We are in this world.

Our Lord promises the reward to gratify your needs in heaven. When our Lord says that our reward is in heaven, we don't fully comprehend that.

Who in our world experiences delayed rewards?

Whatever you want, you get now!

You don't have to have money, then don't worry.

Buy now pay later.

Use your credit card.

You don't have money, just borrow!

Use whatever means your satisfaction is what matters.

Everything is instant gratification.

When we talk about heavenly reward then it doesn't interest many people since they are looking to satisfy them now.

So, in modern evangelical circles, heaven is pretty much ignored. Very little Christian preaching on heaven, very little emphasis on heavenly things, but mammoth kind of preoccupation with this world.

Since their whole focus is on this earth for them, death becomes the enemy because we assume that this is the best, when it isn't.

But if you are going to pursue Christ's likeness with the passion with which Paul did it, you are going to have to get your focus out of this world and into heaven.

V 20, "Our citizenship is in heaven."

Where we must start?

We are not citizens of this world.

The word "citizenship," only used here, means a colony of foreigners.

It is used in a secular source to speak about a capital city that kept the names of its citizens on a register.

We are registered citizens of another place. We are registered citizens of heaven.

- Our names are there,
- our Father is there,
- our Saviour is there,
- our home is there,
- our fellow saints are there,
- our inheritance is there,

Heaven is our place!

Paul says we must have that perspective.

Philippians could understand that because the Philippians were a colony of Roman citizens far from Rome. They would understand what it was to have citizenship somewhere other than where you are living. They were citizens of Rome, but they were in the colony of Philippi.

We are citizens of heaven living here in the earth. Unfortunately, Israel of old, taken into Babylonian captivity, when it came time to go back to the promised land, many of them had decided that they wanted to stay where they were, they became so entrenched.

Same kind of analogy as in the church. When the Lord says now it's time to go to heaven, we fight it as if it was the worst imaginable thing because this world has become everything to us. But our citizenship is in heaven.

V 20, *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ,*

The Lord is in heaven and He is coming back.

John 14:1-3, *“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ²In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.*

We are not waiting for an event, but we are waiting for a person, Lord Jesus Christ.

We have a complete teaching about Second coming of Jesus Christ. We are a rapture, pre-tribulation and pre-millennial kingdom believing church.

We are no longer longing for heaven but for Christ.

Heaven is our home and we wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Motivation:

Romans 8:18-25, says that we groan, waiting for the glorious adoption of the children of God, we groan waiting for the redemption of the body.

We are groaning, longing for what is to come.

Paul says that the sufferings of this world are not worthy to be compared with the glory which is to come.

2 Peter 3:12-13, *looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? ¹³ Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

John says if we have this hope in us, we purify ourselves.

1 John 3:2-3, *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.* ³ *And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

You are to be looking for Christ. That is the greatest point of spiritual motivation on the one hand, it is the greatest point of spiritual accountability on the other hand, and it is the greatest point of spiritual security.

If I know Jesus is coming, that's motivation.

I want to be ready when He comes.

I want to be faithful when He comes.

I want to show Him that have served Him.

Accountability:

1 Corinthians 3:9-15, *For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building.* ¹⁰ *According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.* ¹¹ *For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* ¹² *Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,* ¹³ *each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and*

the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. ¹⁴ If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

Motivation to receive the reward.

I want to receive the prize.

I want to receive the well-done, good and faithful servant.

I want to enter the joy of the Lord.

I am motivated at that point because I love Christ and because I know that there are eternal benedictions tied to my faithfulness here.

So I am motivated by the fact that He is coming, that I will have to face Him, that there is a judgment seat of Christ where I will have to face the things that I have done and be rewarded as He would reward me.

It's not just sheer motivation of love and joy and desire for reward, there's also a threat!

Because I know that I don't want to face the Lord having lost what I have wrought, as it says in John's epistle.

Look to yourselves that you lose not the things that you have wrought but that you receive a full reward.

Well we are not under condemnation, certainly feel the threat that some of the things we have done in our life are going to be burned up.

On the one hand it's a positive motivation, on the other hand it's kind of a negative threat, it's an accountability point that we must face the Lord.

1 Corinthians 4:5, *Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.*

God is going to open the secret things of our heart and find out what's worthy of praise.

Security:

It is our greatest security because it's a promise!

Jesus said in John 14, I will come again!

That's a promise.

Acts 1:11, "This same Jesus who is taken up from you shall so come in like manner as you've seen Him go into heaven."

John 6:39-40, *This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. ⁴⁰ And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."*

So, as we look at the Second Coming of Christ and the promise of being with Him, we have motivation, accountability and security.

It doesn't matter what happens in this world, nothing's going to change that.

Why?

Because my inheritance is undefiled, incorruptible, and reserved in heaven for you.

1 Peter 1:4-5, *to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

We need to live in the light of the Second Coming of Christ.

We are not in heaven, but we live in the heavenlies.

Ephesians 1:3, *"You've been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies."*

What does that mean?

Ephesians 2:5-6, *even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,*

- We have entered the heavenlies in Christ.
- We are not in the place called heaven, but we are experiencing heavenly life.
- We have the life of God within us.
- We are under the rule of the heavenly king.
- We live by the rules of the heavenly kingdom, the Word of God, the standards of righteousness.
- We share the heavenlies.
- We are ruled by heaven's king, we live for heaven's cause, we obey heaven's laws.
- We are to lay up our treasure in heaven.
- We are blessed in the heavenly dimension, the spiritual dimension of our new life in Christ.

So, we are tasting the heavenlies.

Paul says that you belong in heaven, that's your place. You are going to be there forever, right now we are looking for the Saviour.

What's our attitude?

V 20, *we also eagerly wait for the Saviour*

This verb is the same one used throughout the New Testament to refer to the Second Coming.

It indicates an eager anticipation with patience!

Where is heaven?

The Bible says heaven is up!

Revelation 4:1, *After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."*

How far up?

Way up!

Paul describe that as 'third Heaven'

2 Corinthians 12:2, *know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven.*

How long does it take to get there?

Jesus said to the thief on the cross, "*Today, you'll be with Me in paradise.*" (**Luke 23:43**)

All we know about heaven is
it's up,
it's far and
we get there fast.

2 Corinthians 5:8, *We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.*

Marvellous, that shows us about what happens after death.
The speed with which you move!

What is heaven like?

Ezekiel 1, that's an Old Testament description of heaven.
Read it today when you have some time.

Revelation 21 and 22, you will get a little more careful perspective on what heaven is like.

Revelation 21 and 22, describe about
Jewels, light, gold, angels, temple and the presence of God.

Absence of tears, death, crying, sorrow and pain. Everything is perfect and the redeemed of all the ages in history are there.
The holy angels are there.

So that's heaven.

It's got a capital city called The New Jerusalem.

It has twelve great pearls that are its twelve gates.

It's cubical, incredible, and indescribable. It's everything that the Scripture can describe and infinitely beyond our mind's grasp.

That is our place.

That is where our Saviour is.

That is the place from which He comes to take us.

So, we eagerly wait.

In our eagerness to wait, we are motivated to be like Him.

We have a sense of accountability, security because we know He's coming. He always keeps His promise.

So, we wait with eagerness, intensity, and yet with patience for His coming.

It's not an event, It is person.

V 20, "The Lord Jesus Christ,"

we wait for a person.

That's the prize.

Beloved, the goal we pursue all our life is to be like Christ, the prize we get is to be like Him when we see Him.

Why are we waiting for Christ?

Why do we want Him to come?

V 21, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

Because we want to be transformed, groaning for the redemption of this body.

We would like to get rid of this sinful flesh.

We want to be like Christ, perfect.

He will make us like Himself.

He will transform the body of our humble state.

We have been made a new creation in the inner man, already.

But the inner man is enslaved in unredeemed flesh.

We are a prisoner locked in unredeemed flesh.

An unredeemed humanness in which this new creation dwells.

The new creation longs to be liberated.

That's why it's called the glorious liberation of the children of God in Romans 8. We want to be set free.

Paul called it the body of this death from which he longed to be liberated.

So, we are waiting for that redemption and He will transform the body of our humble state.

When does this happen?

When you die or any time before Christ comes for His own, your body goes into the grave. Your spirit goes immediately to be with the Lord,

2 Corinthians 5:8, *We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.*

Philippians 1:23, *For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.*

When we die, our spirit goes immediately to be with Christ. We become one of the spirits of just men made perfect. Heaven is now occupied by spirits made perfect. They are waiting for their bodies. The bodies are awaiting the coming of Christ. The Bible says when He comes for His church, the dead in Christ rise first, and the ones that are alive, they will just go up and be transformed on the way.

But the bodies are going to be resurrected in the future.

Then later, the Old Testament saints' bodies will be resurrected. So even the spirits of just men now made perfect in heaven are waiting their bodies.

They must have a body because they are designed by God for functions in service and worship throughout eternity that are

best expressed through a glorified body as well as a glorified spirit.

What happens when you die here?

Your spirit goes immediately to be with the Lord, but your body must be changed. When Jesus comes.

V 21, *who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*

We are waiting for Him; He will transform the body.

We will be given a whole new body adapted to an eternal holy heaven.

What will it be like the new body?

Look at Christ after His resurrection.

- ✓ He ate,
- ✓ He talked,
- ✓ He walked,
- ✓ He also appeared and disappeared,
- ✓ He also flew through space from earth to heaven.

Look at what Christ was like after the resurrection.

- ✓ He was recognizable,
- ✓ He was identifiable.

Yet He was transcendent.

All of that, perfect, holy glory adapted to the new environment. Our new body is described in some detail in 1 Corinthians chapter 15.

We are corruptible, we will be raised incorruptible.
We are sinful, we will be raised perfect, holy.

When our spirits are in glory, they are not yet complete until that body comes and the combination of the two suits us for service forever.

What will we be like in heaven?
We will have a perfect soul or a perfect spirit, a perfect inner part and a perfect form, a perfect outer part.

The combination of which will perfectly manifest the glory of God.

There will be the elimination of all the sin that remained in us. There will be the elimination of everything that inhibiting us from doing exactly what God wanted.

There will be perfect freedom from all evil.
There will be no sin, no sorrow, no pain, no disappointment, no doubt, no fear, no temptation, no weakness, no failure, no hate, no anger, no quarrel, no more prayer, no more repentance, no more confession, perfect pleasure, perfect knowledge, perfect comfort, perfect love, and perfect joy.

1 John 3:2, *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*

It would be enough if God just saved us from hell.

It would be enough if God just saved us from hell and more than enough if He gave us heaven.

It would be enough if He just saved us from hell and more than enough if He gave us heaven, but beyond that, He makes us like His Son, and He does it all by grace.

We don't deserve any of it.

What magnanimity?

What generosity?

Romans 8:29, *For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

We will be in the form of Christ. Unbelievable.

So, when we die, we are instantly a perfected spirit.

When Christ comes, the bodies are raised, and we are made instantly into perfect form of Christ as a perfect holy instrument for service, worship, and praise.

We ought to long for that with all our hearts.

Are you sure God can do it?

V 21, *who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*

God is going to use the same power that He has to subject the whole universe to Himself.

If God can subject the entire universe under His sovereign control, then He can certainly raise your body.

God has the power to order the universe.

He has the power to line it all up.

He has the power to manage it.

He has the power to miraculously overrule natural law,

He has the power to give life,

He has the power to take life,

He has the power to save,

He has the power to subdue,

He certainly has the power to raise from the dead.

1 Corinthians 15:24-27, *Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵ For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. ²⁶ The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. ²⁷ For "He has put all things under His*

feet.” But when He says “all things are put under Him,” it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted.

He has the power to give us the prize. He has the power to make us like Christ. That's the promise part.

So, in this hope that we have in the coming of Christ, there's motivation, there's accountability, and there's promise.

Where's your focus?

Story of Phocas, who lived in 4th Century.