Sermon Discussion Guide

November 8, 2026
Philippians 3:12-21

Summary

Big Idea: Maturing Christians in this Life have their Hope in Christ for the Next Life
Last week in 3:1-11, Paul contrasted false teachers (who taught a Jesus + Works for Justification) with the true Gospel (Justification is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone). With our justification secure, Paul now moves on to think about our Sanctification and Glorification. Though justified, Christians still sin and are thus continually in need of the Gospel. The Christian life is neither one of lived perfection, nor of passivity, but a progressive pursuit of knowing Christ more and being continually and increasingly conformed to his likeness as we eagerly await and press on toward the return of Christ and the consummation of all things. In this pursuit, Paul continues his testimony, to set himself as the example for his readers to follow.

Discussion Questions

1. What are you looking forward to?
2. Which would you say better describes the way you think and live:
    a. "my best days are behind me" or "my best days are ahead"

Read Philippians 3:12-21

3. What does it mean to "press on"?
    a. What would you say most people are "pressing on" toward?
    b. What is Paul pressing on toward? Why – what is motivating him?
4. What do these verses teach us about God and the Gospel?
5. What do these verses teach us about the Christian life?
6. Paul says he forgets "what lies behind.." What could he be referring to?
    a. Which would you say has more of a deterring impact on your present, passionate and vigorous pursuit of Christ – your past failures or your past victories/success? Why?
7. What obstacles would you say hinder or compete with your forward-straining movement and desire?
    a. Do you find any commonality with your hindrances and the descriptors Paul gives of false teachers in 3:18-19?
    b. How does the gospel speak to these?
8. Paul frequently encourages his readers to imitate and follow his example (3:17, also see 4:9; 1 Cor 11:1; 2 Thess 3:8-9; 1 Tim 4:12-16).
    a. What is the relationship between truth being "taught" and "caught"? (Think teaching/writing/speaking truth and living, modeling, putting flesh on truth
    b. Who is watching your example? If words were removed, what message or truth is being proclaimed through the way you live your life?
    c. What change or specific area of growth would you love to see in your life? Why?
9. What would it look like for you to become MORE heavenly-minded?
    a. What one thing could you change in order to pursue the one thing that matters most?