

Philippians Sermon Series: An Exploration of Christian Joy

Sermon-based Small Group Guide - Week of Sunday, March 2nd

Sermon Title: How to Know Christ (with an Asterisk)

Scripture Texts: Philippians 3:12-4:1

Welcome

Greet everyone as they arrive and check in with one another. Provide refreshments if possible.

Discussion

Review

What do you remember from the sermon? Share a main point or illustration.

Read Philippians 3:7-8

Why did Kevin review these versus from last week?

Scripture Exploration

Read Philippians 3:12-4:1

From Serendipity:

Using imagery of a track race, where does Paul picture himself in his spiritual life? What prize is he after? How is he going to reach his goal?

Comparing your spiritual life to a race, are you sitting it out due to lack of practice, an injury, or no warm-up? Are you at the starting blocks? Going full-tilt? Ready to give up? Why?

Do you know what the goal looks like?

How does knowledge of the goal inspire you to press on?

What helps you see the goal clearly?

What are some good goals that cloud your focus on the main goal?

Kevin suggested that this scripture tells us we do not obtain the goal by our own **efforts** alone, but by the **embrace** of Christ.

Read Isaiah 40:11, 28-31

Compare translations – What words are used to fill in the blank?

vs 31 - “but those who _____ in the Lord”

How do we experience Christ’s embrace?

If you didn’t get a chance last week to discuss the relationship between our efforts and what God does for us then please talk about it now.

Near the end of the sermon Kevin read from The Last Battle (Final book in C.S. Lewis’ Narnia Series.) when the characters of this story leave behind the old Narnia and enter the new Narnia. This is a comparison between earth and heaven. The Unicorn cries:

“I have come home at last! This is my real country! I belong here. This is the land I have been looking for all my life, though I never knew it till now. The reason why we loved the old Narnia is that it sometimes looked a little like this.”

What are some glimpses of heaven that you see here on earth?

How do these glimpses affect you?

Individual Application

This scripture challenges us to not dwell on the past, but simply forget it and press on. So, we are not going to dwell on the past during this small group discussion but we recognize that it does take some work to forget and let go. Please spend some time at home this week praying about the way good and bad things from your past might be holding you back knowing Christ more fully.

What do you need to forget? What is keeping you from pressing on? What helps you forget? What keeps you from letting go?

Corporate Application

Please apply these questions to our congregation.

Do you think we have let go of some unimportant goals or excess baggage that we discovered in the interim process? What evidence do you see that we have?

What do we need to do to press on?
How do you see yourself being a part of this?

NOTE: If you'd like to continue some of your discussion about how we apply this scripture as a group here at FPC please email thoughts to Brenda Norton at brendan@spokanfpc.org

Prayer

Please pray for our session, staff and other leaders of our church. Ask especially for wisdom to know how to press on.

Remember

“But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 3:13b-14