**St Martins C3 – July 10, 2022**

**A life worth living – Keep the end in mind**

**Sermon Summary:**

A life where we are living for Christ can be challenging at times. We may think, is the reward worth the effort? Paul answers that question in His letter to the church at Philippi. The main theme of His letter is that, absolutely living for Christ is a life worth living. Whatever circumstances we find ourselves in, God is building His Kingdom in us and around us. Therefore, His purposes are being fulfilled, and with that purpose is our eternal reward.

The overall tone of Philippians is one of encouragement. Paul is writing to thank the Philippian church for a gift they sent him, but he also takes the opportunity to encourage them to hold fast to God and His purposes.

Over the next few weeks, we are going to work thematically through Philippians. So, let’s start with the overall main theme:

**Philippians 1:27 “*Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.”***

**Also read: Philippians 3:10 - 4:1**

Paul’s main point is: Live your life with that day when you give an account of your life before God, front and centre in your mind. Live your life in the present in a way that is consistent with God’s overall purpose for your life, both now and in the future. Paul acknowledges that the Philippians are already doing this(1:3-6)

The rest of Paul’s letter hinges around this main point of living with our lives in the present with our future in mind.

**Read: 1:7-11**

On the day we stand before Christ to give an account of our lives, we want to stand before Him in His Righteousness, so that we are blameless and holy. Or to put it another way, holiness matters. We need to allow the purifying work of Christ to be present in every attitude and action in our lives.

**Read: 3:18-19**

Satan will oppose the work of God. He will use people both inside and outside of the church to seek to undermine God’s purposes. Paul encourages those faithful to God and His way to stand strong in the face of these challenges. To not compromise, so that we can be rewarded for our perseverance on the day we stand before God.

**Read: 1:18-26**

Paul’s pointis: Everything he is doing in whatever context he is in, he is seeing the fruit of God changing people’s lives.God will look at the fruit of our lives one day. So let us prepare ourselves for that, by taking every opportunity we have to share God’s life with those around us.

A life worth living is one where we live with God’s purpose for our lives front and centre in our minds. Some of what that looks like is living a holy, courageous and fruitful life in the present.

**Suggested direction and questions for Connect Groups:**

Have someone in the group read out Philippians 3:10-4:1

*What is Paul passionate about in this passage?*

*What is Paul’s goal?*

*What does Paul mean when he says, “to live is Christ and to die is gain?” (1:21)*

Paul is encouraging the Philippians to live their lives with the end in mind, the same way he does. (1:9-11, 27, 3:16)

*If we were truly convinced that our whole lives were leading to a single point where we would give an account of our whole life to Christ one day, how would it change what we did today?*

*What are some of the benefits of living with the “long view” in mind?*

In this week’s message we looked at how good it would be to stand before Christ one day and be able to present to Him the Holy work He has done in us, as well as the powerful and fruitful work He has done through us.

*When considering these 3 areas of Christlike holiness, strength or fruitfulness, which of these are you confident you are fulfilling and which of these is more challenging for you?*

**Monday’s Devotion – All will be revealed**

**Read: 1 Corinthians 3:10-15**

Paul is writing to Christians and reminding them that everybody’s work will be judged one day. That may come as a surprise to some of us. It is easy to get the impression that we are only judged for whether we have followed Christ or not. However, this passage and others clearly point out that HOW we follow Christ also matters.

Just to be clear. Our access to heaven is not dependent on how we follow Christ. Entry to Heaven is solely dependent on our faith in what Christ has done for us. So, relax, your salvation is not in jeopardy.

What this passage is referring to, is God rewarding us for what we did WITH Him. In John 17, we see Jesus giving an account of His life before His Father. Jesus describes how He did all that His Father asked of Him. Wouldn’t that be an amazing thing to do? To stand before God one day and be able to look back on all that you achieved with Christ. Then, for Him to reveal how that work was truly good. So good in fact, it is like precious stones.

The point Paul is making here in Corinthians, as well as his letter to the Philippians, is that God is partnering with us in His purposes. He is also looking for the fruit of that work. In knowing that God is doing this, shouldn’t this shape our approach to life and ministry?

**Tuesday’s Devotion – Motives Matter**

**Philippians 3:18-19**

*For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things.*

When reading a passage like this, you would assume that Paul is talking about people outside of the church, but he isn’t. These are members of the church (or at least “Christians” from a close by church) who are coming in with bad motives and bad theology.

It is quite likely that these “enemies of the cross” appeared to be good people on the surface. Paul cautions the Philippians to not be deceived by appearances, but to see these people for what they are.

When we give an account of our lives, our integrity matters. Did we hold to what was true and of God? Was our message delivered with pure or selfish motives? Were we willing to be corrected or did we arrogantly push forward with our agenda or opinions? God not only measures what the apparent fruit externally looks like, He looks at WHY we are doing, what we do? Motives matter to God. It’s not just about what is achieved, but how it was achieved and the heart motivation of where it all started.

Take some time and ponder today how you are partnering with God. Why are you doing what you are doing? If no one gave you any recognition for what you are doing, would you still do it? Who are you allowing to speak into your life?

**Wednesday’s Devotion – It’s the simple things**

**Matthew 25:37-40**

*“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?**When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’*

What are we going to be judged for? – If we are going to have to give an account of our lives one day, surely we need to know what it is we are going to be judged on. What does God commend the righteous for?

This parable is in the context of Jesus’ return and preparing for final judgement. The first thing to notice is that God is looking at our actions and our motives. But then Jesus makes the point that it is actually very simple. It is not about how big of a ministry we may have had or how popular we were in Christian circles. What matters is the simple acts of love we do, especially for those in need.

Why is something so simple such a big deal? The answer goes back to the basics, love God with all your heart and love others as you would love yourself. Selfless, spontaneous acts of love for those in need is a sure sign that you love God and love others. It is what God notices and what God will reward us for.

**Thursday’s Devotion – Treasures in Heaven.**

**Matthew 6:19-21**

*“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.**But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.**For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

This is a challenging passage of scripture for those of us who are reasonably affluent and like the security of wealth in this current life. Jesus is reminding us here, that it is not the most important thing. We need to keep a close eye on our priorities. Put Christ and His Kingdom first and He will take care of our needs.

There are a couple of other important points in this passage. The first one, that is easily missed, is that we CAN store up for ourselves treasures in Heaven. Of course, the treasures of Heaven are not the same as here on earth. As we saw yesterday, righteous love is what builds treasure in Heaven. But, the point still remains, as we invest in a loving life-style now, that investment will pay off in the future.

The other important point is that our heart follows our priorities. As we have already seen this week, what is going on in our heart matters. Therefore, let your priorities be loving God and others, then your heart will be in a very healthy condition.

If Jesus were to look at the priorities of our lives now, what would it tell Him about the condition of our heart?

**Friday’s Devotion – Eternally remembered prayers**

**Revelation 8:3-4**

*Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all God’s people, on the golden altar in front of the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of God’s people, went up before God from the angel’s hand.*

God values the prayers of His people. They are held before the throne of God and not forgotten. I’m not sure if we are rewarded for our prayers, but they are certainly noted in eternity.

It may be easy for us to not value the prayers we pray, because we don’t see the results as quickly as we would like. However, we need to keep in mind that God values our prayers and holds them constantly before Him.

Maybe the reason for this is that our prayers are a pure expression of our faith in God. They are an admission that we are not in control, God is. We are not relying on ourselves. We are relying on Him.

Faith is a little bit like the love we have for God and others, which we looked at earlier in the week. Faith is one of those pure things that please God’s heart. It is what He is looking for from us. Will we truly trust Him? Will we prioritise Him and His Kingdom? When we do that we are building up treasures in Heaven.