

The Joy that is Set Before Us

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Preacher: Bill Story

[0 : 00] I had to make sure I turned my phone down or off. It was making noises. Where's that noise coming from? So it's not just over there.

It's over here. I hear noises. Take out your Bibles with me, please, and turn to Philippians chapter 3. We come to the end of Paul's really glorious look into rejoicing in Christ, in knowing Christ, in glorying in Christ.

I love this chapter. To me, it should be all in red letter. It's kind of the same. You slow down and just focus on these words.

There is mystery in these words. There is inspiration in these words. There is depth that we can't tap.

[1 : 07] I can't tap, but I want to know more and more. So we come this morning to verses 17 through the end, and actually into chapter 4, verse 1, because whoever divided the chapters didn't pay attention.

No, there's different reasons they do that. No, when Paul wrote the letter, it didn't have chapter divisions or verses. So we're connecting that together. But he's still talking about his rejoicing in the Lord.

He's still talking about glorying in the Lord. He's still talking about his goal to keep pressing on toward knowing Christ more and more. And now in 17 and following, he gives us some reasons to do that.

He gives us some more reasons to continue to press on. So I want to read from verse 12 through 4, 1, and then we'll pray and dig in. So if you're able, please stand as I read from Philippians 3, beginning of verse 12.

Paul says, Let those of us who are mature think this way.

[2 : 48] And if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained. Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.

For many of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, many walk as enemies of the cross of Christ.

Their end is destruction, their God, their belly. And they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.

But our citizenship is in heaven. And from it, we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

[4 : 07] So reads the word. Let us pray for understanding. Father, we ask as always that you would send your spirit to enlighten our minds, to revive our soul, to convict our heart.

Grant us, Lord, to grasp Paul's urgency as well as his reasoning. Help us to have a view, Lord, of you and of heaven.

Help us understand a little bit more today the joy that is set before us, that it might truly make a difference for how we persevere.

This we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Please be seated. So, do you think of heaven?

Yes. You do. When you think of heaven, what do you think of heaven?

[5 : 22] What is your thought of heaven? What comes to mind? This is what challenged me this week. You know, is your thought of heaven floating on a cloud, playing a harp?

Is that what heaven is? I don't even know where that idea comes from because it's not in the Scripture. Is it, you know, you think, well, it's going to be eternity. It's going to be so long. You know, it's, what are we doing the whole time? It's going to be tedious and unending and with nothing to do.

How can that be motivating? Heaven is described in a couple of ways in Scripture.

Jesus talks about a present heaven where the thief on the cross would be with him today in paradise, right? So, it's a present, it's a present place when we die.

[6 : 26] So, Paul talks about to live as Christ to die is gain, to be with him, right, at death. So, there's a presence of God. But then heaven is also described in Scripture as a new earth, a place after God is done with everything and he burns up the present elements and builds, creates a new heaven and a new earth where God dwells with man.

It's described as a new creation, a real place with a river, with trees, where God dwells with man.

There will be no pain, no sorrow, no death, no crying, no mourning, no sea, which is interesting, no sea. What the picture is, is again another picture of Eden.

Because what God started with the first creation was trees, a river, people walking with the Lord in the garden.

That same tree of life is now in the new creation, according to Revelation. That river of life is in the new creation. So, it's a picture of a garden again.

[7 : 45] It's bigger than that, though. It's also described as a city. It's described as a country. There's lots of descriptions of heaven, not a lot of detail.

But, what will we do? Does the scripture describe what we will do? Well, it describes worshiping Him. Not worship like we know on earth, except for maybe moments we know of a worship that will be like this.

Worship that is full and rich. A worship that is without loss of energy, without the fading of the mind. We've known moments of that kind of worship. You know, we caught up and we are fully engaged. Our hearts are soaring.

Our minds are intrigued. But, we're also told that we will reign with Christ. What does that mean?

[8 : 53] What will we do? Well, we will reign with Christ. When God placed man in the garden that He had created in Genesis, what did He do?

He'd just sit around, relax, sit on a cloud. Even in paradise, man was given a job.

We are built to do things. So, in the new creation, we will have jobs. We will have responsibilities.

We will reign with Him. There's a lot of new creation to be taken care of.

From plant life, to animal life, to, I don't know, how that's going to look. But we will reign with Him.

We will have responsibilities. We will have tasks.

Heaven will not be boring or tedious. And, the other thing we'll do in heaven is rest. We will rest from our labors.

[9 : 57] We will rest from the earthly sorrows. We will rest, particularly find rest in our souls. Huh?

We won't need physical rest, but we will experience, finally, a full rest of our souls. Because all the burden and pain and suffering, all is gone, and now we are present with the Lord.

So, heaven. And if you read Paul, you will find it is heaven or something like heaven, the future, the return of Christ.

These pictures are the things that motivate Paul the most. Heaven, Christ's return, the blessed hope. He talks about it over. And over and over again.

And here he is. This is what we have to look forward to. It's one of the most motivating things in his life. And it's what he calls us now to do to imitate him in his pattern of life and also his motivation of life.

[11 : 03] Heaven is one of those great motivations. The joy set before us. That's what motivated Jesus. Hebrews 12.

We just read it in our opening of worship. Looking to Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who endured the cross. Why?

For the joy set before him. It's how he endured. It's how he pressed on. It's how he dealt with the hostility and the shame. And so we look to him and we see our example.

We look to him who endured for the joy set before him. And so I'm borrowing that phrase for this section because I think that's exactly what Paul's talking about.

How we endure for the joy set before us. So, again, in chapter 3, he starts off in verse 1, rejoice in the Lord.

[12:02] What does that look like? I think it looks like verse 3. We worship in the Spirit of God. We glory in Christ Jesus and we put no confidence in the flesh. And then Paul gives his own personal illustration of how he used to put confidence in the flesh and no longer does.

In fact, now, he renounces all of that. He regards all of that confidence in the flesh accomplishments to be rubbish, to be nothing, to be valueless in view of the surpassing value of knowing Jesus Christ, a personal walk with Christ.

And then Paul goes on in verses 7 and following to talk about he still keeps pursuing Christ. It's his great goal in life to know him more, to know the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings.

That's how we get to know the Lord. We get to know the Lord through prayer, through walking with him, through trusting him. But particularly, Paul says, to know him is to experience his power and the fellowship of his suffering.

To walk the same road he walked, we get to know him in a deeper, more powerful way. So then, as we came to last week, verses 12, he talks about pressing on and why he presses on.

[13:23] And now we come, verse 17, where he urges us now to apply these things. He's been talking about himself. He's been talking about his experience. He's been given an illustration. Now he says, I've been given this illustration because I want you to follow that illustration.

I want you to follow my example. I'm urging you to imitate me and those who live by the same kind of pattern in life.

I'm urging you to live like me. It's quite a call. How many of you are brave enough to say to somebody else, follow me, imitate me.

I know I've got the pattern and I want you to imitate me. Now in Corinthians, Paul says this actually several times. He says it three times in Corinthians, says it in 2 Thessalonians.

He's not shy about this. In Corinthians, he says, follow me as I follow Christ. So understand, he's not saying I'm a perfect example. He's already told us that in Philippians here.

[14:27] He says, not that I've already attained it or become perfect. I'm not perfect. But my pattern of life is one I'm confident that you could also follow. It is the right pattern because it's a pattern Christ gave for us.

It's a pattern of walking with Christ, following in his step, experiencing power and suffering, being conformed to him. So, he calls them to imitate him.

Why? For the joy set before him. Now in these verses, 17 through 4.1, Paul gives two calls, imitate me, and then in 4.1, stand firm.

But in between that, he gives two reasons for this. Why follow Paul? Verse 18, he gives a reason, a negative one. Verse 18, for many walk as enemies of the cross.

He's going to talk about this negative pattern of life in 18 and 19. And then in verse 20, he's going to come up with a positive motivation. Our citizenship is in heaven.

[15:33] There's something we have to look forward to. So, he gives two different motives. One, negative. One, those who are falling away. And then, two, what we have to look forward to. Those are the motivations to keep pressing on and follow Christ.

Actually, in verse 20, my translation, the ESV has, first word there is, but. It's like a contrast between verse 19. I don't know what your translations have.

But it should be for. The Greek is actually an explanation, a reasoning. Verse 4, or verse 20 is not a contrast, but a further reason.

All right. So, let's look at this. Reason 1, verse 17 to 19. Why press on? Why imitate Christ?

Reason 1, press on in Christ. Why? For many have fallen away. For many have fallen away. Keep pressing on in Christ. Keep following my example.

[16:39] Follow this pattern. For many have fallen away. He calls us to a pattern, first of all, in verse 17. He urges us to imitate him. My translation has, join in imitating me.

The Greek is actually, mime, together. imitate, mime, me. But it's really mime together, not just individual, but all of you, mime me.

Imitate me. Follow my example. What is the example? It's what he's been talking about. Keep pursuing Jesus. Keep walking with Jesus.

And then he says, not just me, I'm not the only example. There's lots of examples. Keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. Look for. This word, keep your eyes on, it's the word, scopos.

Scope. Look at. Look for. Watch for. Pay attention to. Those who walk according to the example you have in us.

[17:46] Look for those examples. They walk according to a pattern. This word example, it's the word, it literally means to make an impression.

So if you push your foot down into sand, you make an impression. There's a mold there. There's a model there. So he's saying a way of life is a mold, a pattern, that you follow.

Follow my pattern of life and others who have this pattern. Walk according to the example you have in us. In this way, they model how to walk.

So he calls us to a pattern, but then notice verse 18, he comes to this reason. For many walk of whom I've often told you and now tell you weeping, are enemies of the cross.

How is that a motivation for following Paul, for continuing on? Follow me, imitate me, imitate other good examples.

[18:55] Why? For many are enemies of the cross. What is he talking about? It's a negative example. Many are enemies of the cross. Many walk also have a pattern of life where they are enemies of the cross.

In other words, the cross is not in their life. Why does he tell us this? Well, these are people who think they're Christian, had started in the Christian life, perhaps, have accepted Jesus as their Savior, but do not want him as their Lord.

They want the cross for what it gives them. They want forgiveness. They want grace. They want salvation. But they do not want to take that cross with them. Remember, Jesus said, you're going to follow me.

Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me. That's the walk of the Christian. But here are folks, and it's tragic because Paul says, I weep.

I tell you now with tears. Now, why would he weep if they were simply unbelievers, Gentiles, or unbelievers who had not yet turned to Christ? Why would he weep?

[20:16] Now, he does weep for the Jews who do not turn to Christ because those are people he has an attachment to. Those are people he knows. So he weeps for them. So understand, we may weep for people that we know closely that aren't yet followers of Christ, but why weep for people generally that we don't know have any connection to that yet not follow Christ?

See, the impression is that Paul is weeping because they once began the road. Now they've fallen away. Now they've become enemies of the cross. They don't want all that the cross means.

They are false. They have fallen away. So why is he telling us this? Because many fall away.

Make sure you're not one. Are these characteristics he's describing in verse 18 and 19 characteristics of your life? In other words, are there, is there fruit in your life?

It's healthy once in a while to examine ourselves. I say I'm a Christian. Is there any evidence? Is there any fruit? Not simply, am I living up to a par?

[21:30] I'm not talking about you doing self-effort to make, to be a holy person or something. I'm talking about is there evidence that God is working in you? See, you bear fruit.

You don't produce it, right? So is there evidence that I'm abiding in Christ and he's producing fruit that I now bear? I cannot bear fruit unless I'm abiding in the vine, right?

And any fruit I produce without being attached to the vine is useless. It's not proof of God in my life. So, Scripture does this. Paul does this.

The book of Hebrews does this. Calls attention to times that we need to look at ourselves. Are we, am I following Christ? Did I just, did I begin well and now I've fallen away?

Is there evidence that I'm still following Christ? Is there evidence that God really did change me? So, look at the, look at the perspective he gives of these folks, verse 18 and 19.

[22:37] They're enemies of the cross. Verse 19, their end is destruction, their God is their belly, their glory and their shame, and their minds are set on earthly things. So, what kind of folks are these?

What is it that drives them? Well, they're, he says, finally, their minds are set on earthly things. So, that's the focus. The pattern of their life is oriented toward the world, toward the earth.

He's not saying that we should never be earthly minded, but this is their preoccupation. That's what they think of. Remember, when Jesus said, you know, Peter had confessed that you are the Christ, the Son of God, you are, and then Jesus talked about going to the cross and then Peter, remember Peter, tried to stop him, hinder him.

No, it can't be. And what did the Lord say to him? Get away from me, Satan. Your mind is on earth, manly things, not on the things of God.

Man does things in a natural way that makes sense to a man. God does things different. So, here are folks that have begun to follow Christ but now continue to live their life oriented toward the world, toward earthly things.

[23 : 53] They focus on the now, not the later. They follow their belly. God is their belly. That's a fascinating phrase, isn't it? It's the only place we see that. God is their belly.

What does that mean? Well, I know how to make my belly God. Follow my hunger. Follow my craving. Sometimes, I eat too much because I follow that God.

Especially late at night when I'm, yeah, sorry, I won't get into that. He's just being kind of graphic here. Following their craving, following their appetites.

Whatever I want, I do. They glory in their shame. Now that's even more interesting. They glory in their shame.

You know, I think our culture glories in its shame. The things that used to shame our earlier culture no longer shame it.

[24 : 54] Now it's called normal. Now it's, in fact, it's praised. things that God say is abominable, things that God says are detestable.

The world has now made normal. But, how is it that some Christians go along with that?

Hmm. Well, they say they're Christian. But to go along with that is to adopt the values of the world. So, so here it is.

Here, here are folks that are adopting the world's values. What this reminds me of, these kind of Christians remind me, or professing Christians, remind me of is what Jesus said in the parable of the sower.

Everybody sows the seeds, some on the road, some in the, some in the, uh, uh, some on the path, some in the thorns, missing one.

[26 : 04] Rocks. Thank you. Okay. Rocks. This one reminds me of the ones that were sown among the thorns. They start to come up. There's a, there, it looks like they're alive. They come up and what happens?

They get choked by the thorns. Jesus interprets that as these are folks that receive the word, they begin to walk, but then the worries of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word.

And it cannot bear fruit. That's what it reminds me of. Because these are people who are worldly focused. They're deceived. They're, they're, they're still walking that way.

So they had received it, but then they have fallen away. These are people, I believe, who, you know, like the idea of the gospel, like the idea of forgiveness, like the idea of grace, like the idea of somebody else paying their debt and accepting the idea, but never really accepting the Lord.

Never really humbling themselves to say, you're mine. It's like when Paul was converted, what happened? Well, let's make a deal, Lord. No, it was, who are you?

[27 : 17] I am Jesus. Got it. Whatever you say. This way. Gotcha. That's what conversion looks like.

Might not be so quick, but it is a reversal of life. So Jesus warned of the same fate for those who do not act on his word.

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 7. These are very challenging words from Matthew 7. He says, enter by the narrow gate, for the gate is wide, or the way is broad, and the way is easy that leads to destruction.

Right? Their end is destruction. Here's Jesus using the same word. The people that go on the broad way, the wide way, the easy, excuse me, and those who enter by it are many.

So many walk in the way that is broad. For the gate is narrow, and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

[28 : 19] He goes on. He says, beware the false prophets who come to you in what? Sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruit.

Fruit takes a while. They might have the right dress. They might look okay at first, but you watch, watch. They will show their fruit, their true fruit, over time.

False ones will be false. He goes on. Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven. Not everyone who professes me will go into the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

And then Jesus applies it in Matthew 7. He says, he gives a parable. Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like the wise man who built his house on the rock, and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat against the house, but it did not fall.

Why? Because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like the foolish man who built his house on the sand.

[29 : 32] The rain came, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat against the house, and it fell, and great was its fall. What's the difference between the wise man and the foolish man? The wise man is the one who hears the words of Jesus and acts upon them, does them.

Foolish man also hears the words of Jesus, but does not act upon them. Both hear it. Both go through the storm.

The difference is the wise man not just hears it, but acts upon those words. He's the wise man. He will survive the storm.

Who is Jesus warning us about? Who is the one on the wide road? Who are the false professors? Who's the fool? Foolish man. Foolish man. It's those who hear the words of Jesus, but do not act upon them.

So press on in Christ, for many have fallen away. Look at yourself. Examine yourself. How do you know that you're not the fool? Well, are you applying the words of Jesus?

[30 : 39] Are you pressing on? Are you following him? I don't mean are there times when you struggle and you feel like you're cruising. And maybe this is one of those times and maybe God has brought us to this part of Philippians to say to you today, how you doing?

Follow him? You're cruising? Come on. You're my kid. Come on. You're my kid. Come on. He gently taps us.

He gently pulls us back in. That's why I think these warnings are in Scripture. They're not to scare us, but to awaken us in times of dullness, in times of when we've just kind of pulled back and felt overwhelmed.

So in verses 20 and 21, he gives a second reason. Why keep pressing on? In fact, he calls it in verse 1, stand firm in the Lord.

So second reason, stand firm in the Lord. Why? For the joy set before us. Stand firm in the Lord for the joy that is set before us, for this heaven that is before us.

[31 : 58] He says in verse 20, our citizenship is in heaven. Our country is in heaven. What country do you belong to? There's been a lot of talk about our country this last several months.

Our country. What country do you belong to? Well, there's a country we live in on earth. What country do you belong to? We have a right as citizens of the United States to make votes and help make decisions about our country.

That's great. Take those opportunities. Do that. Make your voice heard. But what country do you belong to? Who's your king?

See, our citizenship is in heaven. Actually, the word in the Greek means more of commonwealth. It's bigger than citizenship. Our commonwealth, our, our, our, the whole, we're citizens of a commonwealth.

What we all commonly get wealth from is in heaven. Our treasure, our country, our state, our government, our king is all in heaven.

[33 : 06] It's the same word as we saw back in 127 where he talked about be worthy of the gospel of Christ and literally talked about be, be citizens worthy of the gospel.

Do your politics worthy of the gospel. It's the same word, polito. Do your polity. Our polity is in heaven. Our politics are in heaven.

Oh, that's a different way of thinking of it. You political? Well, when it comes to heaven, yeah. Those are good politics. There's no spinning.

There's no, uh, empty promises. And it's actually our, our, our, our politics, our commonwealth exists in heaven.

It's not just there, but it, but it lives there. It's in heaven. What is heaven? Well, I, I, I did a little word search and, uh, sometimes you do a word search and there's maybe 30, you know, 40 instances and it's like, okay, I can do that.

[34 : 15] I can go. 273 times heaven is in the New Testament. Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much.

273. That takes a little while to go through 273. And I got to tell you, I did a little speed reading on a lot of those. Now, of those 273 times, a lot of them refer to heaven in, in not, not of, of the heaven, above heavens, but the, but the natural heavens.

Remember, scripture talks about three heavens. The third heaven, remember Paul went to, that's where God exists. That's where, that's the heaven we're talking about today. There's also a first heaven, which is, you know, the birds of the heavens, the birds of the sky.

So there, there's the sky, there's the, and then there's the heavens we see at night. Then there's the heavens where the stars are and the planets are. That's the second heavens and then there's the third heaven.

So a lot of references of the 273 are about the sky and the universe. Okay, they're not all about heaven as we think of heaven.

[35 : 22] So what is that heaven? Well, we have a heavenly father. We have a father in heaven. Jesus talked often about a kingdom of heaven.

That's where our kingdom is. My kingdom is not of this world. My kingdom is a heavenly kingdom. It's bigger than earthly kingdom. We have an inheritance in heaven. We have a reward in heaven. We have treasure in heaven. We are going to get a heavenly body. In fact, that's what he's going to focus on in the next verse.

But most important, we have a savior who's in heaven, who is coming back. And that's what he says in verse 20. Our citizenship or commonwealth is in heaven from which we await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We have a savior, a king, a master in heaven who is sitting at the right hand of the Father and reigning as we speak.

[36 : 38] Reigning. Putting every enemy under his feet. Though we might say, not doing it fast enough for my taste.

Wish he'd put a few more enemies under his feet. He's doing it as he desires. No matter what we go through, it is true that Christ is in heaven ruling, making decisions that are good decisions, that are wise decisions, that are often decisions made because there's still more people to come to him. There's still more people to come to him and so he's delaying. And we're thinking, Maranatha, Lord, Maranatha. So what does he emphasize about our heaven?

Well, verse 21, he emphasizes this body, heavenly body, the confirmation of our body. He says, this savior we're awaiting who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body.

He will transform. He will change the form of our body from a humble to a glorious body. Now, what does that mean?

[37 : 56] It's still a body. We don't become disembodied spirits that just float around. We get a real body. It is much like the old body, yet it's quite different than the old body.

Can you say that? It's still a body, but its characteristics are entirely different. So, what is that body going to be like?

Well, just think of what Jesus' resurrected body was like. What was that like? Was it something that could be felt? Touched? Yeah, even told.

Touched. Touched. It was something that can be seen with the eyes? Yeah, they saw. Some see. See my scars. Well, not here. Here. And here. Here.

I don't know if that's true of all of us, if we're all going to retain our scars, but Jesus' body did. He also was recognizable, yet not recognizable.

[38 : 56] Remember that? You know, the men walking on the road didn't, until he did the breaking of the bread, they didn't recognize him. The disciples didn't believe it was him until he said, no, come on.

Touch, touch, touch. In fact, he ate in front of them to prove that he was not a disembodied spirit, to prove that he had a real body. Did he need to eat?

I don't know. I hope we get to keep eating because I like doing that, but I don't know. We certainly don't need that, but we may get to enjoy that.

I don't know. There will be a marriage feast, right? So, we learn a lot about what our bodies will be like by looking at Jesus' body because, look, it says he will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body.

We get a body like his. Oh, what's his? Well, we've seen it. Not seen it. We've heard it described to us in each gospel.

[40 : 09] In fact, it's emphasized that he has a body. So, it's a real body. It's different. It's a spiritual body, yet can be seen.

It's a body that can appear and disappear, apparently, as Jesus appeared and disappeared. Move at the thought of, move at the speed of thought or move at the thought of, move at the speed of prayer because Jesus knows what you think before you ask.

No, I didn't. Yeah. So, what difference does all this make? So, now we come to verse 1 of chapter 4.

Therefore, there's a difference this makes. Therefore, there's a conviction that we follow. Therefore, because our citizenship is in heaven, because our bodies will be transformed, because we will be like Christ, therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy, my crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

We're going to come back to verse 1, by the way, next week, Lord willing, because did you look at all the things that he says about them there? My brothers, I love and long for, my joy and crown, my beloved.

[41 : 36] That's fascinating. Why does he pile up all those adjectives about them? We'll come back to that next time. What I want us to focus on is the therefore. What difference does it make?

Therefore, stand firm in the Lord. How does it affect my life? Because I have this certain hope.

Because I look to the joy set before me, I can stand firm in Christ.

Stand firm. What is that image? What is that picture? Stand firm. To me, I remember Ephesians 6.

Put on the armor of God and stand.

Right? You're in a battle that you cannot see. You're fighting against an enemy who is deceptive and schemes, right, and works through systems. So stand firm.

Be alert. Be thinking. Be active. Instead of sitting and relaxing. Stand firm. What will motivate me to keep standing firm? Well, therefore, because of the joy set before us, because I'm thinking about that.

[42 : 47] this text has challenged me this week. I don't think of heaven very much. I don't. Because I haven't really, until I did that 273 verse look, I didn't realize how big it was, how described it is.

For Paul, it motivates him all the time. the joy that is before him. And thinking of the things that Paul went through, how did he get through them?

How did he do it? The joy set before him. It's worth it, because what I get, this is momentary light affliction compared to the incomparable weight of glory that is laying on the other side.

And if you don't think about that often, it's not going to motivate you. You're not going to think about it when you're under stress. You're going to, you're going to go to default, whatever that is.

if heaven is not often on your mind, it won't be on your mind when you need it. If you read the Puritans, you mentioned the Puritans, they talk about heaven all the time.

[44 : 05] Why? Man, they were in the scriptures. There's some, there's some things about some Puritans we don't need to follow, but there are some wonderful Puritans that were very godly people, very rooted in the scriptures.

They think about heaven. Paul thinks about heaven. Do you think about heaven? Does it motivate you? Listen to how Paul described, he thought about this and he thought about the resurrection body.

And so in 1 Corinthians 15, he describes it. In fact, he's trying to correct some thinking about the whole resurrection. The resurrection itself. Whether there is really a resurrection after, is there really life after death?

He's kind of talking about some real important issues. And so when he's talking about the resurrection and how important it is that we will not only live again, but how we will live again.

So in 1 Corinthians 15, he describes this resurrection body. He says, so it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown perishable, what is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable.

[45 : 18] It is sown in dishonor, it's raised in glory. It's sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it's raised a spiritual body.

If there's a natural body, there's also a spiritual body. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, speaking of Adam, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

I tell you this, brothers, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery.

We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. Whether you die and then are resurrected later or whether Christ comes back while you are still alive, one thing is certain, you will be changed.

This earthly body cannot inherit the kingdom of God. This earthly body cannot dwell in the heavenly places, cannot dwell in the new heaven and new earth. That's what he's saying.

[46 : 21] Flesh and blood cannot. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet, for the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

Why? For this perishable body must put on the imperishable and this mortal body must put on immortality. What difference does all this make? Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Why? Why keep going at it? Why keep abounding in the work of the Lord? Why keep being steadfast? Can't I just take a rest? Why? Knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

See, if I'm going to keep being steadfast, if I'm going to keep abounding in the work of the Lord even when I don't feel like it, I must have a motivation beyond me.

I must have something driving me that makes sense, that moves me. And if I dwell upon heaven, the joy that is set before me, that's a pretty good mover.

[47 : 36] It's not our only motivation. It's not our only motivation, but it is a heavy one for the joy set before us.

Do you look forward to this? Does it give you comfort, hope, motivation? Do you remember this when you're under trial, when it's hard to press on?

Do you look forward or do you look back? Who do you follow? Jesus endured the cross for the joy set before Him.

Jesus disregarded the shame for the joy set before Him. Jesus endured hostility against Himself for the joy set before Him.

Let's do the same. Let's pray. Father, we thank You for Your Word. We thank You for Paul's example. We thank You, Lord, even for the warnings that some of us don't always believe with true saving faith.

[48 : 46] Amen. I know, Father, early in my life I thought I was a believer, yet I was not. And so, Father, help us to healthily, healthily?

Something like that. In a healthy way, look at ourselves, examine ourselves to see if we are truly of the faith. That doesn't hurt us to do that. And, Father, we pray that You would encourage those of us who are following You to recognize the great motivation and the great reason that Heaven has for us.

So, encourage us in these ways, we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.