

Thursday, February 22, 2024 - Day 8 of Lent

Open in Prayer:

Lord Jesus, I am truly sorry for the moments yesterday where I missed the mark, where I did not do what you asked me to do. I ask your forgiveness and that you might give me the strength to better follow you today. May your mercies be new today, and may I give you the glory you rightly deserve.

Read Philippians 3:4-14 (NIV)

“...though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless. But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. 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.”

Answer the following questions:

Paul is sharing with the Church at Philippi that by societies standards, he has what it takes! He was marked as a child in the covenant of circumcision in infancy, had a good family lineage, he celebrated the benefits which come with a good family name, he'd lived according to the letter of the Law, he had accomplished becoming a Pharisee (a religious leader), he had shown his faithfulness to the Pharisees by persecuting the people of the Way, and according to his self-righteousness coming from the Law, he was faultless. He had everything going his way!

1. What are the standards for success we place on people in today's culture?
2. What standards have you placed on yourself to find value or worth?

3. After coming to know Jesus, what changed in Paul's understanding of success or greatness?
4. What was the new standard? What was it Paul began chasing after?
5. What in your life might need to be surrendered or sacrificed so you might be able to press on towards the goal Paul talks about here? What would that look like in your life?

Close in Prayer

Almighty God, Thank you for Christ, in whom we come to know your Mercy, Healing, Redemption, Strength, and Pardon. May we participate in the process of making this known to the nations, so they might receive this free gift in Christ as well. Amen.