**one thing – wk6 – One Thing**

**Review: Paul in prison for preaching the good news of Jesus… writing to a church he planted 11 years earlier 800 miles away**

**Last week - Everything I have ever accomplished – I count as rubbish – compared to knowing Jesus. I gave it all up to gain one thing – JESUS!**

**Paul defines righteousness as – Faith in Jesus**

**Then, Paul says something surprising - Philippians 3:12 I don’t mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. (I am not perfect) But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. 13 No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it…**

**Saw Jesus, did miracles, writing Bible – if anyone has arrived it would be him. But he says, nope not me – still more to go…**

**13b …but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize (I press on toward the goal to win the prize) for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.**

**Paul gives us some great reminders about this journey to know God**

**Following Jesus: A Mature Perspective on Maturity**

**1.  As long as I’m** alive**– I haven’t** arrived*.* **(1 Cor 10:1-12)**

**This is about a holy dissatisfaction – not a guilt over not knowing stuff.**

**Paul understood his sin natures battle with his desire to honor God – he realized he still had more to work on. Continual teachable attitude.**

**Like weeds, no matter how much you pull they come back - Never a moment when the “weeds” are gone.**

**Religion says I have enough tokens and gold stars with God – but religion is rubbish - none of us will ever arrive or attain enough**

**We need a** mirror **more than** binoculars*.* **When you look in a mirror, what do you see – your faults… but we like these binoculars – to watch others – pick apart -** You have log eye disease (**Matt 7:3-5, Gal 6:3-4).**

**Which one do you live with spiritually?**

**Spiritual maturity is realizing you have not arrived and God still *needs to* work on you. Take a good look in the mirror.**

**He says I have not arrived but - Phil 3:13b …but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead****…**

**2.  To move forward in Christ, I must leave some things behind**

**Leave some things behind, embrace the new you and move forward**

**BTW - This is not about leaving your spouse.**

* **Past successes can seduce us – we can think we are better than we are / we earned this / God owes me / I deserve this**
* **Past failures can sideline us – God could never use me / I’ve messed up too much / you can’t let go of what you did.**

**“Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead…”**

**Paul was referencing his past successes… and his past failures.**

**That sin, that fear, bitterness, that mistake, that harmful relationship – that abuse - let it go! \*The glory days - your successes – let them go…**

**Earthly success isn’t forever, and failure isn’t final**

**(1 Cor 10:12, Rev 12:10, 1 John 2:1-2, 1 Tim 1:12-16)**

**3.  The** right path **is seldom the** easy path*.* **Phil 3:13 I focus on this one thing …looking forward (straining – reaching – stretching forward – making an effort) to what lies ahead…**

* **Following Jesus – I ain’t gonna lie – can be hard**

**One thing I do – I keep going, and keep going, and keep going!**

* **Reject / resist complacency… lazy faith… press forward!**

**Complacency in our marriage will kill it…**

**Complacency in our church will kill it… & spiritual life**

**1 Corinthians 9:24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? (in the Olympics you don’t get a participation medal – so what do they compete?) Run in such a way as to get the prize. 25 Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. (explain) They do it to get a crown that will not last; (ancient Olympics - crowns) but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. 26 Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight (box) like a man beating the air. (not pointless) 27 No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize. (Paul says, I strive & press on to live for Jesus just like you. I don’t want to disqualify myself by my actions - I don’t just preach, I do it!)**

**Like a runner – you may fall, stumble, struggle – But you get up! Because you are a runner. We run – a spiritual race – RUN!**

**4. The only way to follow Jesus is one** step at a time

**Phil 3:14 I press on to reach the end of the race (one step at a time, closer and closer – I press on) and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.**

**There is no crash course on being a follower if Christ –**

**we must grow step by step – sometimes inch by inch.**

**15 Let all who are spiritually mature agree on these things. (maturity is understanding, having grace, and patience with those who are still growing) If you disagree on some point, I believe God will make it plain to you. (if you don’t get this – I know God will help you understand in time) 16 But we must hold on to the progress we have already made.**

**Wow, he is saying, start with what you know and go from there – walk in that. You may not have it figured out yet, but as you walk with Him he will make it clear to you. Until then, take one step at a time - walk in what you already know.**

**Proverbs 4:18- The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day.**

**Don’t be overwhelmed - know God is only asking you to live out what you know - and as you grow, God will give you more. And for you who are mature- don’t dump everything on others.**

**Philippians 3:17 Dear brothers and sisters, pattern your lives after mine, and learn from those who follow our example. (I may not have a perfect faith – but I can still be an example of faithfulness to God – maturity is not perfection!)**

**Paul is simply saying if you’re not there yet, keep running you’ll get there. And if you think you are there – you’re not.**

**Then Paul – gives a serious challenge… Philippians 3:18 For I have told you often before, and I say it again with tears in my eyes, (tearing up) that there are many whose conduct shows they are really enemies of the cross of Christ.**

**Sometimes the most dangerous enemy is the one who looks like a friend – even in a church (Jo 8:44, 2 Co 11:14-15, Ma 7:15-16)**

**19 They are headed for destruction. Their god is their appetite, they brag about shameful things, and they think only about this life here on earth.**

**Satan’s goal is not to make us evil, it's to keep us from Christ = Paul is pointing out not immature people, but dangerous people. If Satan can derail you away from the truth of Jesus, he is fine w/ you**

**Maturity is understanding**

**5. We are not called to legalism or to lawlessness – but to liberty**

**Paul had talked about the add on Christians – now the flip side**

**We react differently to this freedom Jesus gives us:**

* **Some go crazy with rules (legalism)**

**Rules, regulations, Hail Mary, light the candles, obey the ten, try harder**

**Not only love neighbor, but love like this… Not only read bible, but read like this... / hair / movies… The result: guilt, exhaustion, shame**

**They preach a false gospel / Jesus + Anything = religion**

* **Some just go crazy – (lawlessness) Do what you want, live it up!**

**Those who live immoral lives and dishonor the name they claim.**

**They claim to be Christians- but their fruit says otherwise. I’m forgiven!**

**Result: bondage to self or even to addiction**

**1 Peter 2:16 - Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. / Galatians 5:13 13 You were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.**

**Paul is saying there are 2 types of people in church to be cautious of -**

**1. The Legalist- those who turn the tools of faith, into the rules of faith.**

**2. The Lawless- life does not reflect Jesus in compassion or lifestyle**

**Both sides are unhealthy and dangerous**

**Several chapters in Galatians deals with this**

**This exposes two things Christians tend to do:**

**\* Syn-cretism – mixing the world w/ God (philosophies, opinions, lifestyles - to the point you can’t tell the difference)**

**\* Sec-tarianism – divide ourselves from the world (fear of mixing it - we don’t involve ourselves – but separate completely – the bubble)**

**Syncretism –leads to unfaithfulness - Turning freedom into a self-centered person with little self-control (lawlessness)**

**Sectarianism – leads to irrelevance - religious / church with no real impact on lives – a bunch of spiritual weirdoes (legalism)**

**Why is this a big deal? Paul tells in those verses- Lawless & legalist**

**Phi 3:18For I have told you often before, and I say it again with tears in my eyes, that there are many whose conduct shows they are really enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 They are headed for destruction. Their god is their appetite, they brag about shameful things, and they think only about this life here on earth.**

**Lawless & legalist - \*Devalue the cross -**

**18 …there conduct shows they are really enemies of the cross of Christ.**

**God’s grace is not cheap - the cost for our salvation was blood! Some wink at the cross – I am saved by grace, so I am free to live any way I want. Thanks Jesus! Big guy upstairs. Listen He’s KING!**

**1 Cor 10:23 "I have the right to do anything," you say - but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything" - but not everything is constructive.**

 **Our position is not based on our actions true, but a life will reflect it**

**While some cheapen the power of the cross emphasizing human effort,**

**others cheapen the power of the cross for an allowance to indulge…**

**Living a hypocrital life or raising the bar with man-made rules – cheapens the cross of Christ to simply an admission ticket.**

**Lawless & legalist - \*Repel people from God**

**19 …their god is their appetite – whatever they crave… they do**

**Living for selfish pleasures, rather than denying self to live for Christ - they give free reign to their wants / appetites. This type of hypocrital life is a repellant to those looking for Jesus.**

**When you read the NT- Jesus & apostles never attacked the culture – the warnings were always on the so-called followers of God who made it hard for people to know Jesus.**

**One the most intense warnings of Jesus deals with why this - Luke 17:1 Jesus said to His disciples, “It is inevitable that stumbling blocks (temptations) will come, but woe to the one through whom they come! 2 It would be better for him to have a millstone hung around his neck and to be thrown into the sea than to cause one of these little ones to stumble. 3 So watch yourselves!**

**The line between accountability and legalism – explain**

**God gives house rules – “faith in Jesus and follow the spirit” – this results in living a life that honors God and reflects his word.**

**Lawless & legalist - \*Breed an attitude of elitism and arrogance**

**19 …they brag about shameful things – boasting of what should be ashamed of**

**Not only do they do them – but brag about it – take pride in it.**

**I’m gonna Instagram that – snapchat story – Facebook update**

**Pastor friends smoke, drink & swear more than before – condemning those who don’t? You must be immature or a legalist – you don’t wear black – of have a tattoo?**

**Legalism and Lawlessness – both breed arrogance:**

**Legalism - The cross is cool and all, but tongues is where it’s at / prophecy / signs & wonders / keep the sabbath / do you pray at 5am / do you read the bible 3X a year? - I’m Varsity, you’re Jr Varsity.**

**Watch out for those who focus more on what we eat than who we are**

**Lawlessness - What you don’t drink, you don’t party – I’m free! You’ll will eventually. You must be immature - Nothing can separate us…**

**Watch out for those – who focus on self-indulge than self-discipline**

**Lawless & legalist - \*They focus on earthly pleasures**

**19 …they think only about this life here on earth –**

**They focus on pleasing themselves rather than pleasing God.**

**What I want – what I deserve – what I like – what I desire.**

**Here is the last reason this is important…**

**19 …They are headed for destruction. (and at times – taking others with them)**

**\*They are leading people to hell - destruction**

**Why can’t we just let it be – ignore this issue and just get along.**

**There are things we can debate and discuss without division. But there are things that are issues of salvation… that is where we are to make a clear distinction. Spiritual lives are at stake.**

**Those who promote lawlessness lead people to a false gospel.**

**God has rescued us in our sin – to save us from our sin.**

**Those who buy the lie – that you can do anything you want are leading people to destruction and judgement. A false salvation.**

**Those who promote legalism lead people to a false gospel.**

**God has died to bring freedom – not bondage.**

**Those who buy the lie – that you must do certain things to gain God’s favor – it leads people to discouragement – often leaving their faith before it takes root.**

**If being religious is about a list of things you don’t do, then a corpse if highly spiritual. It’s not what makes us right w/ God.**

**Listen – the cross does need our help!!! Whenever the cross is not enough – Jesus + anything / They trample on the cross.**

**Maturity is knowing we are not called to legalism or to lawlessness – but to liberty – we are free… but not irresponsible!**

**Philippians 3:20 But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. (just passing thru) And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior. (Jesus is our Savoir – not man-made rules or phony lawlessness) 21 He will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same power with which he will bring everything under his control. (our life beyond this life) 4:1** **Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!**

**Like Paul said – I have not arrived at the perfection of this. But one thing I do - I will run this race with my eyes on the prize. One step at a time – I will strive to mature and grow.**

**So, pull out the mirror – fix your hair – and come run with me.**