

December 30, 2008

Phil. 3:13 "...but this one thing I do"

How can such a statement be made with all that is going on around us, being pulled by the world, flesh and devil on a daily basis? How can this be? Was this just a desire of Paul and something he never realized? Or is it really possible to be and to stay focused on one single point.

At the end of Paul's life he makes quite a bold statement. In II Tim 4:7, 8 the apostle speaks of not just beginning a race but finishing a race, fighting a good fight, and actually keeping the faith. He then speaks of the crown of righteousness laid up for him. But not just for him only, but for all those that love His (Christ) appearing.

Can it be then, that keeping the life set on one thing is linked to our love for Christ? I believe this is the key!

Each of us has focused on things that we love. I have witnessed, as a Pastor, over and over again that people do what they love to do, even when sometimes what they love to do is killing them. This is true with drugs and alcohol, gluttony, adultery, fornication and any other fleshly sin. We can look in our checkbooks and see what we love. We can look at our time schedules and see what we love. We can ask our children and they will tell you what mom and dad loves. Most of the time it can all be settled by admitting that we love ourselves and live only to please ourselves. It could be said of mankind today, "but this one thing I do" is simply living to please myself, at all cost, no matter whom it may hurt in the process. Fathers and mothers deserting their children, child pornography, molestation, a drunk driver who kills and innocent family. Each of these only think of themselves for the moment and are willing to sacrifice anyone else for their own so-called happiness.

Paul lived differently. And thank the Lord that so have countless others down through history. I am saved today because of a father who got saved and led me to Christ. The whole story should also include a mother who lived with and put up with my drunkard father for twenty-four years before he was finally saved. She sacrificed her life for her children. She kept her eyes on something other than herself and was greatly rewarded in the end.

What about the missionaries, preachers, and others who have given their lives so that we could have the Word of God in our hands, churches built and making a difference where they were.

What about those of our forefathers who gave their lives for our country so that we might live in freedom.

We must still be careful though. What about those who have sacrificed, given their lives for other causes, but the causes were not good or even righteous causes. I recently heard a man on TV talking about saving whales. He said that once you've seen a whale in real life, you would give your life or do anything you could to save them. I wondered if he has ever seen a real live baby. I wondered if he had ever heard the story of Christ and His salvation offered to all mankind. It does matter what our "thing" is that we do.

Paul loved Christ. It was what he did. Nothing else compared. To Paul, Christ had the preeminence. Jesus Christ was Lord!

This should be true of every Christian. If I truly love Christ for what He has done for me, then He should be the "one thing I do". He is the mark to press toward. I should also do as Paul said and "crucify myself daily" and then press with all my being toward this Christ who loved me and gave himself for me.

I don't want to just finish the race. I want to fight a good fight, finish the race having kept the faith, and hear "well done thou good and faithful servant".

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