

Live a Life that Counts

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning again, and glad that we're here together today. We are in part two of our message we started last week, Living a Life That Counts, and looking at how not to waste our lives.

And as we've been looking at this, we have seen how really God wants us, or God wants to raise up men and women and boys and girls whose lives count for Him on the landscape of human history.

God wants us to draw closer to Him so that as we live our lives, everything we do is for Him, and everything else pales in comparison, and we make a difference in others' lives.

Isn't that a great prayer to pray every morning as we get up? Lord, make me a blessing. Lord, help me to be a blessing to someone else today, like the song says. And He wants our lives to count.

So as we are doing this, we go back to our verses that we were looking at last week. It's a fairly long section, Philippians 3, 1 through 14.

[1 : 09] Welcome to turn there with me this morning. Take your Bibles out, and we'll look at Philippians 3. And we're going to go back over, and by way of review, read over this entire section, and then we're going to be spending our time in verses 8 and following.

He says in starting at verse number 1, Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.

Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation, for we are the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Remember he was talking about these Jewish legalizers or Judaizers who were coming in to these non-Jewish Christians and saying you have to be circumcised, you have to follow the feast days, you have to do all of these things that Jews have had to do down through these centuries in order to be a Christian or in order to be pleasing to God.

And then Paul also goes on to say, Though I also might have confidence in the flesh, if anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, Paul says, I more so.

[2 : 23] You guys think you're right with God. I have even more reason to look to the physical things for me to be right with God. I more so circumcised the eighth day of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, concerning the law, a Pharisee, concerning zeal, persecuting the church, concerning righteousness, which is in the law, blameless.

But what things were gained to me, these things I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed, I also count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith, that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death, if by any means I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected, but I press on that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

He goes on to say, Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended, but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Let's pray. Lord, this morning, as we've gathered together to study your word, learn more about you, and continue our time of worship this morning, may you speak to us through your word, and help us to understand how that our lives may count for you, and not to waste our lives in the pursuits of these things that may be good, but that the Apostle Paul says, really, we count as loss, because when compared to what we gain in Christ, nothing that this world can offer compares.

[4 : 38] Teach us this morning, we pray. We're in Jesus' name, we pray. Amen. So as we've looked at, we said we're going to be looking at four characteristics in these 14 verses of lives that count for Christ.

And by way of review, we saw last week, first of all, they treasure Christ. Those whose lives count for Jesus treasure Christ above everything this world has to offer.

Because if we look at what Paul said, when he says, you think you have got reason to boast, he says, I even more so. He talks about being a Jew, talks about being a Pharisee of the Pharisees.

He's talked, first of all, about his family heritage. He said, I was a real Jew. I was a complete, full Jew. I was circumcised on the eighth day of the tribe of Benjamin. And he says, I was in the most elite of the families, the families that didn't leave King David way back centuries ago.

He says, my family was actually given the property that Jerusalem is in, and the temple is in. And so he says, this family heritage is something that I can look to.

[5 : 50] Also, social status. He's also, he says, talking about being of the tribe of Benjamin, socially speaking, he was at the pinnacle of Jewish society because of his family, and because he was a Pharisee, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, he says, biblical knowledge was something that he could, could count as something that was very, very important to him.

As a Pharisee, they were experts in the law, in the Old Testament law. So he could look to his biblical knowledge. They knew the law backwards and forwards. And he says, as pertaining to zeal, he says, I persecuted the church.

I pressed on. I, I followed hard after those who were of the way. And I had them arrested. And I brought them back and put them on trial. And some were even put to death.

And then he says, I dare anyone to, to look at my life and find any area of the law where I have transgressed. He says, concerning the law, that which is the, the legal aspect of the law, he says, I am blameless.

So he said, I had a moral lifestyle. So family heritage, social status, biblical knowledge, religious activity, and moral lifestyle. The apostle Paul said, all these things I count as laws.

[7 : 14] He says, actually, they're rubbish to me. He says, they're, I count them as dung. They're, they're, they're nasty and stinky in the eyes of God, compared with the holiness and righteousness of Jesus Christ.

But as we saw last week, all these things that Paul lists, family heritage, social status, biblical knowledge, religious activity, and moral lifestyle, are good things. So really, it were, it was good things that kept Paul from Jesus.

And so he says, as I look at these things, I understand that these are, in the, in the scheme of eternity, these really don't count unless we have faith in Christ.

And then he goes on to say, the only treasure of the life that counts is Christ. And we also have found something in our life worth losing everything for.

That's what the apostle Paul, by way of review, in those first seven verses we looked at last week. So this morning, we're going to catch up and head to the, excuse me, head to number two, which we see there, those whose lives that count for Christ, they trust in Christ to provide everything they could ever need.

[8 : 34] So if, first of all, if we treasure Christ, above everything the world has to offer, we also find that we trust in Christ to provide everything that we could ever need.

The problem with today is what many people are doing is they are looking for things to provide what they feel will provide satisfaction, will provide fulfillment.

It might be in relationships. It might be in accomplishments. It might be in education. And they say, well, if only I could gain that, then I will be satisfied.

If only this happens, then I will have what I need. But the person whose life truly counts for eternity and counts for Christ is the one who says, all I need is Christ and everything he chooses to provide me.

And whatever the world provides, Paul says, you know what? We count that as loss. We count that as not important in the grand scheme of eternity. So, when you get to verse 8, he says, I've counted all the things this world could provide.

[9 : 41] Family, moral lifestyle, biblical knowledge, all of these things, and everything the world provides. He says, I've counted them as loss. So, when you get to verses 8 and verse 9, Paul says, yet indeed, I count all things loss.

So, Paul went from these things he listed, to he said, everything that this world has to provide, I counted as loss. Remember, we said he listed in the column, this column, everything the world has to offer.

And when he came down to it, he added it up. He said, it adds up to just one big zero. It's all worthless. Living a life for these things, in the grand scheme of things, is worthless, if we're not living for Christ.

So, he says, I count all things loss. For what? It's not just, he says, all these things are worthless. I count all these things as loss, for the excellence of the what?

Of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord. He says, that's the thing, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may, what?

[10 : 53] Gain Christ. So, what we are seeing is, so when you're found in him, he says, I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.

And so, being found in him, when we even go even further, verse, when we go to verse 10, and being found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness, which is from God.

So, when we're found in Jesus, that's the way what the Apostle Paul puts it, he says, when we're found in Jesus, what do we gain? Remember, he says, I've counted all these things as lost, but to be found in Christ, I gain what?

I gain his righteousness. I gain the righteousness, which is from God, by faith. So, first of all, when we count all these things, the world has to offer as loss and as rubbish, compared to Christ, when we're found in Christ, see, the thing is, when we lose something, or when we give up something, God always replaces it with something even better.

So, if we say, you know what, God? Everything this world has to offer, I consider as loss. But, what God replaces it with is, Jesus Christ.

[12 : 18] And, when we're found in him, he gives us, his righteousness. And, what does his righteousness provide for us? Well, we see his righteousness, covers, our sin.

Because, I think, what Paul was saying is, he was saying to these Judaizers, he's saying, none of these things, these things that you are saying are important, like circumcision, these feast days, all these things that you're doing, all of these activities that you're doing to be right with God.

He says, really, don't matter, because nothing that we could ever do in our life, no matter what kind of righteousness we could muster up, does not compare, and is never going to be enough to be right with God.

So, even as Christians, if we understand, that standing before God, everything that we could ever do in this life, will never measure up to what we need, to spend eternity with God in heaven.

So, we have to have it through Jesus Christ. We get his righteousness. His righteousness covers our sin. Go back to verse 9, where Paul says, and I'm found in him, not having my own righteousness.

[13 : 41] That is what gives us hope. Because some would say, well, I can't be good enough. Well, that's true. Nobody can be good enough. And sometimes we measure ourselves against others. We compare. So, well, you know what?

I just don't think I can be as good as so and so, because they just seem to have it all together. Well, what the Bible says is, all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. The Bible says, there is none righteous.

No, not one. So, Paul says, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness. Remember, Judaizers, Paul is saying, it's not about what you do. It's about Jesus Christ, which is, he says, this righteousness, which is from the law, not having my own righteousness, but that which is through faith, in Christ, the righteousness, which is from God, through faith.

Our righteousness is never good enough. We need the righteousness of Christ. So, when we come before God, he won't see us, and our sin, what he'll see is, Jesus Christ.

The righteousness of Christ is applied to our account. And so, when we come before him, he won't see that ugly, horrible sin, he'll see Jesus.

[14 : 54] And that's why God is going to be justified in receiving us into his presence, because the sin debt's been paid, and he's applied his righteousness to our account. And so, his righteousness covers our sin.

But also, we see his power guarantees our resurrection. You see, this life is not all there is. So many people in the world today are living for today.

They're living for what this world supplies. They're living for whatever this world can give them. They're working hard for the things this world gives them. But if we understand that this is not everything, and one day, all of this, this earth will burn up, and we have one or two destinations, either the lake of fire for those who don't know Jesus, or to be in the presence of God, with Jesus Christ, for those who have trusted Christ as their personal Savior.

So he says, to know the power of his resurrection. The word *dunamis* in the Greek, where we get the English word dynamite. Now, we're about ready to see Paul talk about suffering.

Paul's been stoned. He's been beaten. He's been put in prison. He's been shipwrecked. He's been left for dead. And so, if you really want to read a list of the things the Apostle Paul has been through, go ahead and look one day when you have time.

[16 : 23] 2 Corinthians chapter 11, verses 22 through 28. And if you ever think you're having a bad day, I read somebody's Facebook post this week about how such a bad day they've had, and they've had this, and they had that.

And you know what? They were pretty difficult. But if we ever think we're having a bad day, just go and read the Apostle Paul's list of what he'd been through in 2 Corinthians 11.

And I think it's going to put what we've been through in a different perspective. When was the last time you were stoned and left for dead? When was the last time you were beaten and put in prison? When was the last time? On and on and on and on.

So what Paul is going to be teaching us is, how do you overcome in the middle of all these things that the Apostle Paul went through?

Well, you overcome because there's coming a day when the trumpet will sound, and the dead in Christ will rise first, and they which are alive and remain shall be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

[17 : 30] And so shall we ever be with the Lord. So how could Paul go through all this being beaten and arrested and put in prison and shipwrecked, and all of these difficulties and all of these problems, the sufferings that he's gone through is, one day the power of God is going to provide our resurrection, and our bodies are going to be transformed, and we're going to be with Christ forever.

And so that's where the power of Christ's resurrection, and it is gain for us because we're going to forever be with him.

And also we see that his satisfaction transcends our suffering. The satisfaction of knowing Christ, the satisfaction of being found in him, having his righteousness, and remember last week we talked about if we can see that Jesus Christ is like this big treasure chest of joy.

In the midst of all these things, the Apostle Paul says he counted it joy to suffer for Christ. And we see that in James, about all the tribulations and the trials of our faith.

We are to count it all as joy. It doesn't mean we're happy, but it means when we understand that the weight of the suffering today is not to be compared of what we have in Christ Jesus.

[19 : 11] So one day we have to look forward to the resurrection. It's provided by the power, Jesus' power, but his satisfaction transcends our suffering.

See, now here is where it's going to be getting really good, and we need to get our arms around this. And when Paul says, I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection, as we see here in Philippians chapter 3, we understand in verse 10, when he says, I want that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, we're like, okay, Paul, I'm right there with you.

I want to experience the power of Jesus Christ, and I want to experience the resurrection. But when Paul says, and being conformed to his death, or to become like him and share in his sufferings, we're like, well, Paul, I don't know if I'm still with you.

Paul, I'm with you when it comes to knowing the power of the resurrection, but when it comes to wanting to suffer with him, I don't know that I'm really there. And especially in American society, we work hard to have as many comforts as this world provides, and we want to be comfortable with what the Apostle Paul is saying is, a living a life that counts is one that's willing to say, I am willing to suffer with Christ in the same way that Christ suffered in order to accomplish his purpose and his mission.

And we see that in the lives of the apostles. We see that in the lives of the Christians in the early church. And really, we're seeing that in the lives of Christians across the world.

[21 : 05] We were heard during our men's prayer time, Coptic Christians in Egypt. There was some who lost their life just last week. There was a bus that was stopped, I believe it was, and they filed out and they were asked, are you a Christian?

And those that said, yes, well, you have two choices. You can either renounce your faith in Jesus or we'll kill you. Some they slit their throats and others they shot and killed because they would not renounce their faith in Christ.

And so they were suffering for their faith. Let's look at what Paul says in Philippians 1, 21 to 23. Paul says, For to me to live is Christ, and to die is what?

Is gain. Remember, he says, I counted all these things in this world as loss in order that I might gain Christ and be found in him and gain his righteousness. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor.

So Paul is looking at both sides. If I stay on the earth and I continue to live, he says, I can see the fruit of my labor. Yet what I shall choose, I cannot tell.

[22 : 20] For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. He says, dying is gain because if I die, I'm ready.

I've completely got Christ. So if you take my life from me, I've counted all that as loss. So I'm going to actually gain more if you kill me. Now that's an attitude, if as followers of Christ that we have, when God calls us to go to an area or to accomplish his purpose and win the lost, to an area that might not be the safest, there are many missionaries today who are in very dangerous places.

God is calling believers today in certain places, inner cities, to go and to share the gospel that are not safe. But if we have the attitude of the Apostle Paul to say, you know, if I die, I'm way better off.

But if I stay here, I may be able to see the fruit of my labor. And I'm hard-pressed. You know, I want to go, but I want to stay to accomplish the mission. And you know what? That frustrates you if you're Paul's jailer.

Because think about it. Paul says, if you let me live, I'm going to preach the gospel like it's going out of style. But if you kill me, I'm going to Jesus and I'll be better off.

[23 : 41] Either way, I'm a happy man. I mean, that would frustrate Paul's jailers. I mean, what can you do to Paul? You can beat him and he says, you know what? I'm suffering for Jesus. If you kill me, I'll be better off.

But if you let me live, I'm going to preach Jesus. So either way, Paul says, I'm good with either way. So he goes on to say, not only did we, he says, and be with Christ, which is far better, and be found in him, he says, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness, which is from God by faith, that I may know him.

He says, one day, he says, I will know the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, he says, being conformable, being conformed to his death.

So his power guarantees our resurrection. His satisfaction transcends our suffering. And then what we see, I think what we're seeing in practice is God delights in showing his greatness through those who radically trust in him.

If we radically trust in Christ to do his will in our lives and for him to make our lives count for Jesus, that's when I believe God is delighting in showing his greatness through those.

[25 : 12] What if we never attempt anything for Jesus? Is God going to just pour out his power upon us and do great and mighty things? I don't think so.

Why? Because we're not attempting anything. But God says, I believe, God, I believe, wants to pour out his power, pour out his blessing and show his greatness through those who are willing to step out in faith, trust him, and say, God, if you don't come through, I'm going to fall flat on my face.

But I'm going to trust you, I'm going to step out. It's like jumping off the end of a cliff and saying, okay God, if you don't catch me, I'm going to die. God, say, God, I'm going to trust you for something that no man could ever do, that no human being could ever do.

But if you come through, the world is going to say, I don't know how he did it, other than, he serves a great and mighty God. Case in point, I think back of George Mueller back years ago.

Some of you might have read his biography. He was a pastor in Bristol, England, for over 66 years, but he's most well known for taking care of orphans.

[26 : 25] In his lifetime, he had direct care over 10,000 orphans. And one thing George Mueller was known for is that he never asked anyone for financial help.

He never took a salary, and he took care of all these orphans through gifts from others. As a matter of fact, he went out of his way not to tell anyone what he needed.

If someone were to come to him and said, Pastor Mueller, what do you need? He would be known to say, well, if you go home, when you go home, please ask that God would reveal to you what you need to provide.

And that's how he went through his ministry. And that is the way he, there were days when they had no food. They had nothing to drink. And maybe a milkman would come and would provide them milk and give them food.

There were days when they were sitting for breakfast at the table knowing there was no food, but he invited the children to the table. And he would pray, God, in your most infinite wisdom and in your provision, please provide our meal today.

[27 : 42] We thank you in advance for the meal that you shall provide in that one particular morning. A bread wagon through a wheel near the orphanage. And knowing that the bread was going to not be fresh by the time they had it delivered, the bread delivery man came up to the orphanage and said, do you all need any bread?

And so they had breakfast. And on and on and on, George Mueller stepped out in faith and radically trusted Jesus, radically trusted God for his needs, and God continually came through in marvelous, grandiose fashion by providing what he needed.

He built five orphan houses throughout his life. He circulated nearly two million Bibles. He published and distributed over three million books. He gave thousands of dollars to other ministries that were in need.

And over the period of his lifetime, he gave, by today's standards, he gave over 7.5 million dollars away to other ministries. This is all through a single ministry that never accepted a salary and never told anyone what their needs were.

Imagine that. not only were your needs met, but have over 7.5 million dollars to give away and never ask for anything. That is radically trusting Jesus.

[29 : 10] And we see God do it in the lives of missionaries. We see God do it in the lives of believers because they are willing to trust him. This is what Paul says, not that I've already attained, he says, or already perfected, as we continue on with this, he says, but I press on.

I'm pressing on that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus also has laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended, but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead.

So, first, those whose lives count for Jesus treasure Christ above everything the world has to offer. Secondly, they trust Christ to provide everything that they could ever need.

So, if we're trusting God every day, Lord, please take care of what I need today. Take care of what I need. And then thirdly, what we find is that they pursue Christ with obsessive passion.

That we will be pursuing Christ with obsessive passion. And it's interesting that what we see in verse number 12, Paul says, not that I've already attained.

[30 : 33] Paul says, you know what? I'm not perfect. I am not where I need to be. I've not attained perfection. I've not attained righteousness. But what does he say as he's continuing to live for Jesus?

I press on. I press on. I press on that I may what? Lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

The Apostle Paul over and over made reference to athletics. Talked about race. He talked about different types of athletic events.

And so, Paul is saying, he says, I'm pressing on. I'm following hard after that I may lay hold of Christ Jesus, lay hold of that for which Jesus Christ also laid hold of me.

And it's interesting to note that the word in the original, press on, that Paul uses here, is the same word that he used in verse 6. Remember in verse 6 where he said, concerning zeal, he said, I pursued the Christians.

[31 : 47] Same word. Jesus says, I'm pressing on to lay hold of that for which Jesus Christ also has laid hold of me. And he said, verse 6, he was saying, I was, literally, what he was saying was, I was following hard after those Christians.

I chased them, I chased them down, caught them, and brought them back. And he says, as far as Jesus, he says, I'm chasing hard after Christ. I want to follow hard after him, so that I may lay hold of that for which also he has laid hold of me.

How passionate are we in our Christian life? Are we living a life like that? That we follow hard after Christ? So what we're finding is, the question we ask is, why follow hard after Christ?

Why not just enjoy the salvation we have? Enjoy all the blessings we have in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus? and like many Christians do, and just kind of coast?

Well, first of all, so that we'll know his infinite wealth. So that we will know his infinite wealth, because the harder we follow after Christ, the more he will provide for us what we need and where we lack.

[33 : 04] And the more we'll realize that what Christ offers is far more valuable than what the world offers. Because what happens to fame, fortune, and anything else the world has to offer?

Well, one thing, they lose their draw after a while. Kind of get old. It's like a child with a new toy. What happens after Christmas after about the first 30 minutes?

They're playing with what? They're playing with the boxes that the stuff came in. Those toys that you spent like \$80 for, they're playing with a box.

And so the same thing in this life. What happens when we get that promotion or we get that raise? It's like, I got it, and all of a sudden it's like, okay, let's go on to the next thing.

Because it seems to have lost its value for us once we get it. But once we find Christ, we find all the wealth that there is. Also, we find his infinite worth.

[34 : 09] He is worth more than anything this world could provide because he is Jesus. He is the very Son of God. So we find that when we pursue Christ with obsessive passion, we know how much he's worth and we see his infinite wealth.

So what qualities do we need to pursue Christ with obsessive passion? Well, first of all, I think we need a fresh understanding of the degree to which Christ has followed hard after us.

Think about it. Before we came to know Jesus, who was the one that was doing the searching and the running after? It wasn't us. The Bible says there is none that seeks after God.

Nobody, nobody ever has sought after God. And we say, well, yeah, that was a time in my life when I was seeking and I was searching. That came after God wooed you and wooed me.

Because the Bible says, now there are people who want to change their life and they want to go to church and get right, but they're looking for a God that they have formed in their own mind. But to seek after a God who's holy, who's righteous, and who hates sin, and will only accept us as we are and in full surrender, say, God, I accept Jesus Christ and what he's done for me on the cross of Calvary, and I fully surrender you to live your life for me, and in order to follow Christ, I've got to give up everything.

[35 : 46] Take up my cross, be willing to die for you. Not too many people want that. And so that's why the Bible says there are none that seeks after God, no, not one. And so it was Jesus who pressed hard after us.

It was Jesus who gave up everything in heaven that he had. to come down and take on human flesh and suffer reproach, suffer beating, and then die on the cross for us.

It's Jesus that went through all of that to go after us. So when we really understand what Jesus did for us, I think when we get a fresh understanding of that, I think then, I believe, we'll understand why it's important for us to follow hard after him.

See, now that he's called us, now that we've got to follow hard after him to follow him and keep up with him. Also, the second thing, I believe, is what we need is a holy dissatisfaction with easygoing, half-hearted, mundane Christianity.

Holy dissatisfaction. Because what did Paul say? Remember, he says, neither do I consider myself to have already attained. I've not reached perfection yet. So was Paul kind of resting on his laurels and saying, hey, I'm part of the body of Christ, and I've got fire insurance, and so all I've got to do is coast and just go to church, go to temple, and I'm good.

[37 : 13] No, Paul said, I'm following hard after Christ because I'm not satisfied with where I am. If we think about it, should we be satisfied with where we are?

No. There's always more to learn. We can always grow closer to Christ. We can always be hating sin more. We can always be growing in Christ.

It's like a five-year-old saying, you know what? I've grown enough, and I don't need to grow anymore. No, we've got a lot of room to grow. The same with us. We've been a Christian for 30, 40, 50, 60 years.

We still have room to grow. There's always something for us to learn. There's always something fresh for us to discover about our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

So when we realize that, God, I'm not there yet, I need to press on. I need to be more like Christ. I need to be fashioned after him.

[38 : 12] And I think then we'll really catch what the attitude Paul had. I need to press on. And then I think what we need next is a single-minded discipline that governs our lives.

a single-minded discipline that governs our lives. If we wake up in the morning with the idea, I need to live for Jesus.

I need to accomplish his goal for my life today. There's one thing, one thing, and that's Jesus. Let's look again at Philippians 3.13. He says, brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended, but he says, one thing.

One thing I do. In your translation, you probably see the I do there. That was supplied. That was not written in the original when Paul wrote it. So it helps us to understand what he meant, but it's really not there.

So what Paul actually does when he's writing this, he says, but one thing, and it's kind of an abrupt stop, but one thing, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead.

[39 : 26] He says, just one thing captivates me. Isn't that a picture of the New Testament? Just think about it. What would Jesus and the rich young ruler, what did Jesus say?

He said, there's one thing you lack. Well, you know, Jesus, I've done all this, and blah, blah, blah, blah. He says, just one thing you lack. Just one thing. Talking to Martha, who was all so busy with all the preparations and everything, and what did he tell her?

He said, just one thing's important. Just one thing. What was that one thing that Mary was doing? Spending time with Jesus. He says, Martha, you're too worried about all these material things and getting lunch ready.

He says, there's one thing. There's one thing. That's important. What about the psalmist? The psalmist says, one thing I desire. And then, what about the blind man that Jesus healed?

Remember, he was questioned by the religious rulers? And they were, well, what about this? And how did he do this? And how did he do that? And blah, blah, blah. And what did the blind man say?

[40 : 36] I don't know, but there's one thing I know. Once I was blind, now I can see. The only important thing. He says, I don't know how he did it, but there's just one thing.

Yesterday I couldn't see, or this morning I couldn't see, now I can see. So Paul says, but one thing, one thing, those things, forget those things which are behind, reaching forward to those things which are before.

We are inundated with so many things in the world today that vie for our time and vie for our attention. But if we as followers of Christ would just say, there's only one thing that matters, it's Jesus Christ.

And also, they look, oh, forgive my poor grammar this morning, they look forward to the prize of his praise.

They look forward to the prize of his praise. Because he says in verses 13 and 14, brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended, but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the what?

[41 : 51] For the prize of the upper call of God in Christ Jesus. So we see the prize of our salvation is also the purpose of our salvation. He has saved us for a purpose.

And he says he goes, he looks forward to the prize of one day being with Christ Jesus. So we look forward. The fourth thing that will be part of our lives is we look forward to the prize of his praise.

And there's a two full prize of the life that counts. The first thing is the completion of our salvation. The completion of our salvation results in the manifestation of his glory.

Because you see, our salvation is not complete. Now you say, well, pastor, what do you mean by that? No, we're completely safe in Christ. But our salvation will ultimately be realized when?

In heaven. See, that's the end goal of our salvation. We're saved, we're safe in Christ, we're sealed until the day of redemption, we'll never lose our salvation.

[43 : 01] salvation. But remember, it's not about earth, it's about glory. And so he saved us so that one day it will ultimately culminate and be completed when we spend an eternity with him.

Because let's look at Romans chapter 8, verses 29 and 30, where the Bible says, for whom he foreknew, God's saying, for whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Moreover, whom he predestined, those he also called, whom he called he also justified, and whom he justified he also glorified. In other words, all that God calls to salvation, he calls to be glorified or completed in Christ.

That's God's plan. God's plan is, everyone who trusts Christ as their Savior will ultimately one day be glorified with Christ. That's been God's plan from the beginning. To complete our salvation by having us be glorified in Christ.

So, the two-fold prize, first of all, is the completion of our salvation, being with him in glory, and then the second thing is, the crown of their salvation results in the multiplication of the gospel.

[44 : 20] Remember the way Paul talked about those who came to know Christ under his ministry? He says, you are my joy. He says, you are my crown of glory.

Because the crown of Paul's salvation was those that he brought to Christ with him, and those that Paul will spend eternity with him in heaven.

So, as we follow hard after Christ, as our lives count for Jesus Christ, we are going to be sharing our faith and multiplying the gospel. Then, it all ends in one prayer.

God, even if it cost us everything, help us not to waste our lives, and don't let us waste your church.

because there are so many churches across the world that are not accomplishing his mission. We're satisfied to meet every Sunday and go through the motions and enjoy each other's presence, but we're not, as the Apostle Paul talks about, we're not bringing others with us into glory by sharing our faith, by helping others to know what Jesus Christ has to offer.

[45 : 46] So, in this life, even if it cost us everything, don't let us waste our lives, because we've already considered everything as a loss for the ultimate knowledge of Jesus Christ, and let us not waste the body of Christ, because the body of Christ has been left here to build his kingdom.

Let us pray. Father, we thank you for your goodness. we thank you for loving us. We thank you, Lord God, for providing everything we could ever need.

And Lord, help us to understand what it means to live a life that counts, to be willing to give up everything this world supplies in exchange for you.

Lord, help us to live a life that counts. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.