

Philippians

A Life of Purpose and Joy

Confidence in Christ

Date: Sunday 25th April

Speaker: Adam Pipe

Key Verses: Philippians 3:1-16

Talk Summary:

1. Paul's Pool!

In verse 2 Paul begins warns against those who wanted to add circumcision to the message of Jesus. Paul says to the Philippians it is us who are the true circumcision. Paul gives three marks of the true people of God (3:3):

- i. Worship by the Spirit of God
- ii. Boasting in Christ Jesus
- iii. Not putting Confidence in the Flesh (who we are or what we can do)

Then Paul turns his opponent's argument against them and says if anyone thinks that they have reasons to put confidence in their own privileges and achievements he has more (3:4-6). Paul uses accounting imagery, talking about a profit and loss account (3:7-8). Those badges of honour and achievement he used to put in the profit column he now counts as loss for the sake of Christ. Paul even takes it a step further and says he considers everything a loss compared to knowing Christ as his Lord. Paul says anything I might put in the credit column I now consider (there is no polite word for the word Paul uses!).

2. Paul's Passion

As we read verses 7-11 we see Paul's Passion for Jesus. We see Paul emphasising that he wants to 'Know Christ' (3:8,10), to 'Gain Christ' (3:8) and to be 'Found in Christ' (3:9). Adam talked about three aspects to the phrases and Paul's passion for Jesus:

- i. A personal knowledge of and relationship with Jesus
Not just knowing about Jesus but an intimate knowledge of him.
- ii. A status
Being found in Christ is also a status, we are adopted into God's family.
- iii. Conformity of life
Knowing Christ is also about living a life conformed to Jesus and his death on the cross.

3. Paul's Prize

In 3:12-16 Paul draws upon the image of a runner in the Greek Games. Paul tells us three things in these verses (remember this is all in the context of God's grace and not about earning our salvation):

- i. Press on. *'Press on' – is a hunting word which means to pursue to chase and capture. Paul runs his race in pursuit of Christ and all Christ has to offer.*
- ii. Forget what is behind. *Paul runs his race looking forward and doesn't focus on what is behind him: past achievements, past failures, and comparison to others.*
- iii. Reach for the prize. *'13 to strain every nerve to go after what's ahead' (NTFE). Paul is running toward the prize of a crown of righteousness that will last forever.*

Worship

Adam quoted from the Hymn 'When I Survey' by Isaac Watts you may want to use this hymn as a basis for worship.

Alternately, worship is not just singing, it is thanking God for who he is and what he has done and is lived out through a life of trusting obedience. Discussing this together is an act of worship. (More small group worship resources can be found at bvc.so/sgworship)

- What are you thankful for this week?
- Where has God been at work in your life?
- When have you taken risks in faith and obedience this week?

If you have a time of singing you can skip the above questions but please do ask this question each week:

- What has God been speaking to you about this week? *(Go around the group quickly don't spend a long time on it)*

Discussion Questions (choose some which are most relevant to your group)

1. What stood out to you from Adam's talk?
2. Joy is the prevailing mood of Philippians - why is joy so important? Do we need God to restore our joy after the last 12 months of lockdown?
3. What do you put your confidence in? from where do you get your identity/self-worth? What is your equivalent of Adam's medals and certificates?
4. What does a 'life characterised by worship and service to God in the power of his Spirit' look like?
5. Adam quoted from the Hymn 'When I Survey' by Isaac Watts. What are *'the vain things that charm us most'* which we need to lay at the foot of the cross today?
6. Are there things in our own life that we are putting our trust in apart from Christ? Or trying to hold onto as well as trusting in him?
7. Paul's passion was for Jesus and an intimate knowing of him. Discuss the challenge of actually knowing Jesus rather than just knowing about him.
8. What spiritual practices help us develop this intimate knowledge of Jesus?
9. How can we live our lives in a way that is pressing on to reach the prize?
10. What does Paul mean by forgetting what is behind?

Witness

We want to be investing in authentic relationships with those who don't know Jesus yet and inviting them to anything where they might meet other Christians and Jesus. Pick one of the below each week:

- How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?
- What church events coming up would your friends appreciate an invite to?