

Philemon 3

by Ken Baird

In Philippians 3, Paul encourages believers to forget past achievements and pursue a deeper relationship with Christ through faith and humility.

Duration: 43:19

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 11:13-16, 2 Corinthians 11:23-28, 2 Corinthians 12:10, Philippians 3:13

Topics: "Persevering Faith", "Second Coming"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the tendency to look backwards and reminisce at the end of the year. He shares personal experiences of loss and encourages the audience to press forward and forget the past. The speaker emphasizes the importance of service to the Lord and being a part of the body of Christ. He also highlights the need to keep our eyes forward and upward, anticipating the second coming of Jesus Christ and the recompense of the reward. The speaker concludes by reminding the audience of the challenges faced by the Apostle Paul and encourages them to persevere in their faith despite difficulties.

Transcript

Shall we open our Bibles, please, to the third chapter of Philippians, Philippians chapter 3. At this time of year, we do some reminiscing and some anticipating because of the change in the calendar. We look backwards and we look forward. We look backwards perhaps with some regret.

1982 was kind of a bad year for us. Our grandchildren lost three of their six grandparents in about ten months' time. And we feel that.

We are among the survivors. But we look backwards and I don't know whether we should or not. But there is a tendency to look backwards at this time of year, especially before New Year's Eve.

They generally, even the newspapers do it, they take up the news stories of the year, the most valuable person, and the best and the most striking, the most arresting news stories. It's a timeless summary. They even give the weather summary for the year.

They reminisce. And there is that tendency, that human tendency to reminisce and I guess there's really nothing wrong with it if you don't do too much of it, if you don't get occupied with it. But you have to look ahead as well.

And there is a verse in the third chapter of Philippians that I think lends itself very, very much to this thought in mind. Incidentally, before I start reading here, the name January, as you may know, the Romans gave us our calendar. And the name January comes from a two-headed god by the name of Janus.

I don't know whether you've heard that before or not. But one head is looking in one direction and the other head is looking in the other direction. Well now evidently this tendency to look backwards and look forward when the year changes is an old, old custom because it came from the Roman calendar.

And so they gave us the name of January for that two-headed god looking in both directions. It's fitting, if you don't mind the pagan thought, we look both directions, only we've got one head and we have to turn our head. And they also, I used to know more of this than I do now.

It's amazing what I'm forgetting. But the weekdays, for instance, are named after God. I don't know whether you knew that or not.

Wednesday is Woden and Thursday is Thor. Thor is the god of war. And don't ask me what the others are.

But our calendar, no doubt, is just pagan. That's all there is to it. Now, I don't know how you feel about it.

I'm going to be writing Wednesday on my letters regardless of the fact that it was named after Woden. I'm going to write Thursday on my letters regardless of the fact that it was named after Thor. I'm not going to let that influence me at all.

And I'm not going to hesitate writing the name of January on my letters because that was named after Janus, the two-headed god. But this is that time of year and you can see that human nature has not changed too much. It's down through the years because the calendar is an ovum.

It came from the Romans. I don't know what time it began when we used our present calendar, what time that it was initiated. But human nature hasn't changed.

There is that tendency to look backwards and there is that tendency to look forward. Paul did it. Paul did it.

Okay, Philippians chapter 3. Though I might have confidence in the flesh, if any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more circumcise the eighth day, as is taught of Israel in the time of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law fairly concerning zeal of persecution in the church, touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gained to me, those I counted lost for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but lost for the excellency of the knowledge which is Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do counten but done that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God my faith, now that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffering, being made conformable under his death, if by any means I might attain under the resurrection of the dead.

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended, that Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before. I press towards the mark for the prize of a high-calling God in Christ Jesus.

Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded, and if anything be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Now, I'm sure that the Apostle Paul, when he's speaking in verse 13, forgetting those things which are behind, looking backwards, he's thinking about all the things that he had to boast about. He boasts about them here for the purpose of just showing what he was in the flesh.

Circumcised the eighth day, the stock of Abraham, the tribe of Benjamin, one of the favorite sons of Jacob, and incidentally, not the son of a concubine, the son of one of Jacob's wives, and his favorite wife, Ephes. And a Hebrew of the Hebrews, a distinguished person, touching the law, a Pharisee. Now, he could have added a lot of other things, but he stopped to live here.

He could have added, brought up the feet of Gamaliel. He could have added that, and that was really something. Persecuting the church, and of all the things, well, he mentions that in the next verse, concerning zeal, persecuting the church, touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

He doesn't say sinless, he says blameless. As far as the law was concerned, he was such a diligent Jew that nobody could point the finger at the Apostle Paul and say, now you have broken the law. He was blameless, not sinless, blameless.

That's the kind of man that the Apostle Paul was. He really had those things that could be said about him that distinguished him from other people. He was a remarkable person.

Touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless, but not sinless, because he himself says, in the seventh chapter of Romans, I had not known sin, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet. Now that's the tenth commandment. Now the Apostle Paul, pardon me, the Apostle Paul could go through the ten commandments, clear to the tenth commandment, before he got in trouble.

Can you imagine that? I don't have to go that far before I'm in trouble. But the tenth commandment was what convicted the Apostle Paul that he was a sinner. I have not known sin, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet.

It seems like the law is like a scorpion, the sting is in the tail, and you can't get past that tail. We have often said, and I have often used it humorously, borrowing a little from Rudyard Kipling, Raise there a man whose soul is so dead, who to himself hath never said, I wish I owned that car. Well, we are covetous.

We're covetous of people, we're covetous of position, we're covetous of money, we're covetous of people. We're self-centered, and we want our own way. This is kind of a takeoff from our message this morning.

We want our own way. We're prejudiced on our own behalf. We're egocentric.

Now, the Apostle Paul says, touching the righteousness which is in the law of man. Isn't that marvelous? When you think of that man. Now I can't, I don't think I could say that.

I know I couldn't say that. And I know I wouldn't have to go to the tenth commandment before I could be convicted. As a child, I got in trouble with the law through the fifth or sixth commandment.

Honor thy father and mother, for thy days may be long upon the earth, for thy God giveth thee. And I didn't quote it correctly, not verbatim. But I knew there were times when I didn't obey my parents.

Evidently Paul had. Evidently he had. Now these are the things that distinguish the Apostle Paul.

But he came and he was counting on them for righteousness. Touching the righteousness which is in the law. Did you know the law furnishes a righteousness? It does.

The law furnishes a righteousness before men. But not before God. Not before God.

By the law was the knowledge of sin. Paul experienced that experimentally. By the law was the knowledge of sin.

He knew he was a sinner by the law. Now, he didn't tell anybody that he coveted. So he really stood head and shoulders, morally speaking, legally speaking, about those that were around him.

He was a remarkable person. But he goes on to say he wasn't interested in developing a legal self-righteousness which made him admired, made an exemplary among Jewish people. No, he says, there's another righteousness, but I want more than that.

And so he says, verse 7, But what things were gained to me, those I counted lost for Christ? Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but lost. For the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung or refuse, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God, my faith. That's the righteousness that he wanted.

Now, in Christ he became a nobody. In Christ he occupied exactly the same place as you and I do. The Apostle Paul did.

Not a whip above us, in Christ. Not a whip. You and I occupy the same place in Christ, the same righteousness as ours.

It's imputed, but it's ours. God looks at it, I stand just as tall as the Apostle Paul, righteously speaking. In the mind of God, so do you.

It's the righteousness that God furnishes, that is imputed to me, and to you, in Christ. Now Paul says, I would rather be a non-entity, so to speak. Of course he wasn't.

Pardon me. Than to have my own righteousness. He speaks about being in Christ.

Be found in him. You couldn't see the Apostle Paul for Christ. He's in Christ.

He says, that's what I want you to see. When you look at me, in Christ. And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ.

The righteousness which is of God, by faith. That's the righteousness that he wanted. That's the righteousness that he had.

That's the righteousness that you and I have. I think I've shared with you a story. I've told it so many times that I don't know where I've told it, but I want to tell it to you.

And again, I must say, I've told you before, don't stop me. Years and years ago, I had the privilege of listening to Dr. William J. Pettengill, one of the co-authors of the Scripture of Life. Grand old man.

Heard him in Salt Lake City, and they employed one of the largest churches in Salt Lake City to house the people that came to hear Dr. Pettengill. And I was in the audience. And Dr. Pettengill was talking along

this line one night, and he says, I want the people in this room that feel that in God's sight you're just as righteous as Christ.

Put your hand up. Well, I put my hand up. Five or six other people put their hands up.

People looked at us. If looks would kill, we'd have been dead. In God's sight, just as righteous as Christ? Well, I put my hand up.

I had to. Dr. Pettengill says, now put your hands down. Now he says, I want to see the hands of the people in this auditorium who feel that in God's sight they are not as righteous as Christ.

And there was a sea of hands all over the place. Sea of hands. He looked around over the audience.

He says, put your hands down. You're wrong. That righteousness is yours, and that righteousness is mine.

Equally, we stand in the good name of another. Paul says, that's the righteousness that I want. I don't want to be distinguished for what I am in myself, in my law keeping.

The only distinction that I want is to be submerged in Christ. And all that you see when you look at Paul of Tarsus is Paul, the apostle in Christ. Now, I think that this is what Paul is referring to in verse 13, of which we've been speaking.

Brethren, I count myself not to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before. He would not be occupied with his past life. He would not take pride in his accomplishments.

Now, you might be surprised that the 11th and 12th chapters of 2 Corinthians in this respect, because I always felt that the apostle Paul, we're talking a lot about the apostle Paul tonight. So, I'm just going to ask you to turn to the 11th and 12th chapters of 2 Corinthians. I don't know whether I've ever taken this up here or not, I doubt it.

So, this may be new, a new thought to you, I don't know. But I used to think that the apostle Paul, and I'm going to read this because it's so instructive. He is competing, in the minds of these Corinthian peoples, with some that claimed that they were really somebody in Christ.

And the apostle says, now look, he says, I brought you the gospel. He says a little more than that. These people incidentally were Jews.

I'll show you that in a few moments. He says of these people, in verse 13 of the 11th chapter of 2 Corinthians, for such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed, as the ministers of righteousness whose sins shall be according to their works. I say again, let no man think me a fool, if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself alone. Now I used to hold this against the apostle Paul in my early days.

He does boast. But now you would say, well now this militates against what we read there in Philippians 3.13, forgetting those things which are behind. But I want to put this in proper perspective.

I want to put this in its context, so that we'll understand why he's doing what he's doing. He says, I say again, verse 16, let no man think me a fool, if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little. That which I speak, I speak it not after the Lord, the Lord didn't tell me to say this, but as it were, foolishly, in this confidence of boasting, seeing the many glory after the flesh, I will glory also.

For you suffer fools gladly, seeing yourselves alive. For you suffer if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, and the man smites you on the face, I speak of concerning reproach, as though we had been weak, albeit wherein, and he is bold, I speak foolishly, I am bold also. Now Paul is going to do some boasting.

Now the reason that he's going to do it is because he was held in low esteem by these Corinthians, by Jewish false apostles who came in and wanted to take over, that they might indeed line their own pockets perhaps, extend their influence through these Corinthians Christians. And Paul says, now look, if I've got to compete with these people, I'll do it. I'll do it.

I'll boast. I feel like a fool for doing it, but I'll boast. If that's what it takes to get your favor, I'll boast.

So he says in verse 21, I speak of concerning reproach, as though we had been weak, albeit wherein, and he is bold, I speak foolishly. He feels like a fool talking this way. I am bold also.

Are they Hebrews? Now this gives us a clue as to who these people are. Are these Hebrews? Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. He's boasting here. Are they the ministers of Christ? I speak of the fool.

I'm more. In labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in death off. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes, save one.

Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stolen, thrice I covered shipwrecks. A knife in the day, I have been in the deep, in journeyings often, in perils of water, in perils of robbers, in perils of mine own countrymen, in perils of the heathen, in perils of the city, in perils of the wilderness, in perils of the sea, in perils among false brothers. In weakness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness, beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, in care of all the churches.

Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is offended and I am not? If I must need glory, I have a glory in the things which concern my infirmities. If I must need glory, that tips us off as to what he's doing here. If I've got to do it.

That's the way he's saying it. If I've got to do it. I'll do it.

Now he says as he goes on, The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed forevermore, knoweth that I lie not. He in Damascus, the governor, under Aretas, the king, kept the city of the Damascenes with the garrison desirous of apprehending. And through a window and a basket, I was let down by the wall and escaped his hands.

It is not expedient for me, doubtless, to glory. He's having a hard time doing this, but he's doing it. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.

I knew a man in Christ. He speaks in the third person here. I knew a man in Christ about fourteen years ago, whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth.

Such a one caught up to the third heaven, and I knew such a man, whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell. He's speaking about himself. Because it's his body that he's talking about.

God knoweth. How that he was caught up in the paradise and heard unspeakable words, which is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such a one will I glory, yet of myself I will not glory, but in my infirmity.

For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool, for I will say the truth, and now I prepare, lest any man should think of me above that that he seeth me to be, or that he hearth of me, lest I should be exalted above measure. Through the abundance of the revelations there was given me a thorn in the flesh, and that of Satan to profit me, lest I should be exalted above measure. Now, isn't this humble upon the part of the apocryphal to say, lest I be exalted above measure, God gave me this thorn in the flesh.

And it was a dreadful thing that interfered with his service. He asked the Lord three times, verse 8, for this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee.

For my strength is made perfect in weakness, most gladly therefore will I prefer, rather glory in my infirmity, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, and reproaches, and necessities, and persecutions, and distresses for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then am I strong.

Now, he is telling us what God had to do to him to keep him down. Now, this is a revelation. Paul had the same flesh to deal with as you and I did.

Exactly the same flesh. And this man had been given such responsibility by God, he held such a high place, coughed up to the third heaven if you please, whether in the body or out of the body, he couldn't tell. Incidentally, that should solve a few problems for us, knowing what we're going to be like after we leave this world.

We're not even going to miss the body. As far as you and I are concerned, we're going to function, and our thoughts are going to be such that we won't know whether we're in the body or out of it. So, don't worry too much.

Now, he says, I had to have this happen to me. Sometimes I worry why I'm so healthy. I don't have these revelations anyway, but this man had to have this to hold him down.

Imagine that the Apostle Paul would admit that. I had to have it. God gave it to me.

You wouldn't think it was you, the Apostle Paul, but he had to have it. Now, he goes on, verse 11, I am become a fool in glorying, ye have compelled me. There's the secret of the whole thing.

You made me do it. You made me do it. I feel like a fool.

But you dote on celebrities to the degree that I had to make myself a celebrity to get along with you. To keep your respect. Isn't that too bad? I don't know how you feel about this, but this is the greatest rebuke that I can see for the Christians.

That the Apostle Paul would have to resort to tactics like this to keep their goodwill. Because the other, those apostles were coming in and trying to take over the converts of the Apostle Paul. They were Jews, you know, as we've already mentioned.

Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. And he goes on and tells a lot of things that they didn't suffer. That he did suffer. Now, I don't know whether this will put Paul's boasting in the 11th and 12th chapters of 2 Corinthians in proper perspective or not with you.

But it was a good many years before I realized the stature of this man. And here we begin to understand when we come down to the 11th verse of the 12th chapter and become a fool and going, he has compelled me. For I have to have been commended of you.

That's what I, that's the treatment I should have gotten from him. So what do I have to do? Build up my own stock so you'll listen to me? Oh, this is, this is tremendous when you start to think of it. What an indictment against those Christians.

Paul does it. You know, I'm glad he did it. Because it gives me an insight on what this man went through.

In order that you and I may have it on. It, it, it, it, uh, this isn't the Bible. It's part of the Bible.

And I'm glad it's there. But don't ever think for a moment that Paul was a braggart. He only did this.

To hold his position with the Corinthians. He thought so much of them. Isn't it too bad when you have to resort to that sort of tactic? I think the Apostle Paul, now going back to Philippians, I think that he meant exactly what he said.

When he says there in, in the third chapter of Philippians verse 13, Brethren, I count myself not to have apprehended. But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind. That was his true ambition.

To forget the things that were behind. The things that he could post in. I want to put them out.

But there is another ambition that I have. Reaching forth unto those things which are before. Now, you and I cannot follow the Apostle Paul here in forgetting those things that are behind.

But I just want to talk about a few things that you and I need to forget. One of them is our failures. We can be so occupied with our failures that it can be an absolute hindrance to our going on for the Lord.

Most of us cannot live up even to our own expectations. I think we're probably, we're harder on ourselves than anybody else. And we do, we do take ourselves to task.

Now, our failures can be a real detriment or they can be a real help. If we can profit by them. If we can profit by our mistakes.

But to be preoccupied with those mistakes. Indefinitely. I know a meeting.

I know a meeting, I'm going to tell you this. I'm not going to tell you where the meeting is. There was a brother in that meeting years ago.

It was a young brother at the time. And it came time to give thanks for the emblems on the table. And he gave thanks for the cup before they had given thanks for the bread.

Now he threw that meeting into a little bit of chaos. Somehow it escaped him. Or he didn't say what he meant to.

But he gave thanks for the cup first. What would you have done? Would you have passed it? I don't know what was done because I wasn't there. Perhaps some other brother graciously gave thanks for the bread.

And then they took the bread first. But the man's voice had not been heard since that day. He would not forget the things that had happened.

We make mistakes sometimes. But God does not want us to be so preoccupied with those mistakes that we shut up for the rest of our lives. Forgetting those things which are behind.

And you and I need to forget our failures. We need to forget our blasted hopes as well. Disappointments not necessarily our own fault.

The failure of others. And we need to forget those failures. They are failing creatures just the same as we are.

And we should forget the faults of others. I was impressed with a lodge order. I'm not in favor of lodges.

Secret orders. But one of them has got a saying. I don't know whether it's the Masons or not.

I'm not going to try to raise their salt. But they have a saying in that lodge. We write the faults of our brothers upon the sand.

I thought, that's nice. They're not all bad, are they? The trouble of it is, those nice things that would make you admire those people substitute for the things of God. And that's not right.

I thought, that's nice. I like that. We write the faults of our brothers upon the sand.

It can be easily brushed out. So we need to forget the things that are behind. Perhaps the things that have been done even against us.

The failure of others. We need to forget adverse and uncontrollable circumstances that come into our lives. They're permitted by God.

They don't need to throw us forever. Paul says, I want to forget what's behind me. And I know what he's talking about.

I'm talking about what you and I can forget. We're not in his class. We don't have that problem that he has.

But we do have problems. And certainly, this is one of them, to forget our own faults, and not brood over them forever, and to forget the faults of others as well. And then certainly we need to forget our accomplishments, don't we? We certainly need to forget our accomplishments.

Paul counted his accomplishments as a religious zealot to be but refuse in comparison with his position in Christ. He did not want distinction. He wanted identification.

And there's a difference. He wanted to be identified with Christ. He did not want to be distinguished above any other Christian.

As far as the righteousness that fit him for the presence of God, we have exactly the same righteousness. I don't know whether we've risen to that or not. We should.

Now, our accomplishments can be troublesome. They can occupy our minds. And we should hold them lightly.

Because sometimes the seeming accomplishments are not the accomplishments that they seem to be. If God has used us, thank God for that. But don't become preoccupied with that sort of thing.

Because it will cause us to rest on the oars. It will cause us indeed to stop. And there's no stopping us.

As far as you and I are concerned, there is no stopping us. I use a little bit of Ruth by way of personal testimony when people ask me if I'm retired. I use this.

I use it more on one occasion. It's effective. I say, no, I can't retire.

You can't retire? You're 74 years old and you can't retire? I said, look, when do you tell people, when do you quit telling people that God loves them, that Christ died for them, and then go to heaven when they want to? When do you stop doing that? Now, there is no stopping for a Christian. He does not reach that part of his life where he can rest on the oars and rest on past accomplishments. If he does, he's missing a blessing.

You and I, God's people are like a tree. We're told that we're like a tree. I think that's Isaiah 65, 66, something like that.

And the tree never stops growing. It never stops growing. The fish never stops growing.

The longer you live, the bigger you get. You and I should be exactly that way. We should never stop growing.

But we should not be occupied with our accomplishments. Because if we do, we'll stop growing. Now, we should not be occupied with our sins.

Because God has given us a way to get rid of them. And to get rid of the consciousness of them. And that's simply by confessing them, owning them, judging them.

And you and I can do that. God has wanted us to do that. And our failure, the sins that beset us, the failures that we have experienced because of sin.

And that, I think, probably the worst one is unbelief. We reproach ourselves for it. But we need to forget those things that are behind us.

Even in 1982. We need to forget them. We need, like the Apostle Paul, to press forward toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Reaching forth unto those things which are before. Forgetting those things which are behind. Reaching forth unto those things which are before.

What are those things that are before us? Well, our service to the Lord. God has given us a sphere of service to the Lord. Our gift in the assembly.

God has related us to each other. And the best possible figure is that of a body. And the body, each part of the body is necessary for the health of the whole.

We might think, well now, I don't know what part of the body I am. But we are a part of the body. And the health of the whole body is dependent upon the working of each and every single part.

And certainly, reaching forth to those things which are before has to do with our service to the Lord. Now, we can reach forth to the things which are before in regard to the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ. We can love his appearing.

And that will certainly inspire Christ-like living. He that hath this hope in him purifies himself. And I can't think of any incentive in reaching forth to the things which are before, I can't think of any incentive to produce righteousness in the Christian rather than to think of the fact that he's going to soon be standing before the Lord Jesus at the judgment seat of Christ.

Really, it will have a very salutary effect in our lives to remember that within a few moments we might be standing in the presence of our Lord Jesus. We can love his appearing. And what will that produce? Do you remember that what is produced by loving, if we love the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, do you remember what Paul says about that? What is it produced in you and me? The crown of righteousness.

Why? Because we're really looking for his coming. We're going to merit the crown of righteousness. It's going to produce a righteous life.

And we look for those things. We stretch before those things. Stretch forth for those things.

And certainly, I suppose that many of you have said, well, perhaps in 1983 the Lord will come. Have you put that on your Christmas card? Maranatha, he's coming soon. And certainly that will produce a very, very wonderful effect in our life, reaching forth to those things that are before us.

And then, of course, we should be reaching forth for the approbation of the Lord when we are at the judgment seat of Christ because we're going to be there. And we should remember that there will be some that will be ashamed at the judgment seat of Christ. And that's no place to be ashamed, really.

We ought not to be ashamed at the judgment seat of Christ. John speaks of, he didn't want to be ashamed of his children in the faith. Corinthians speaks about suffering loss.

There will be some shame and connection with the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we should keep that in mind as we look forward to the things that are before us. So as we approach 1983, there's much to be done for the Lord.

There's no reason to rest on the oars. We should keep our eyes forward and upward to the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ, being aware of the recompense of the reward because he never fails and he never lies. Certainly this should be a real reason to look forward to the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And it should be a great year because we've got the Lord. We haven't exhausted this subject, believe me. But reaching forth under those things that are before us, the incentives for service, the enablements for service, the strength for service, the guidance in service.

We can make a whole message out of that alone in our service for the Lord. But it's a year of opportunity and we should never, never fail because of what has happened in 1982. Shall we bow in the word of prayer? Father, we do thank thee for thy word and pray thy blessing upon it to our hearts.

We thank thee for a man like the Apostle Paul. Lord, we thank thee that he was what he was because he followed Christ. Even in this third chapter of Philippians he mentions that fact a little farther down in the chapter.

That they were to follow him as he followed Christ. We know that we can follow our blessed Lord Jesus. And we pray that this year will be a productive year in our lives.

Keep us from making excuses for ourselves. But that we might indeed serve our Lord with renewed zeal, we ask that we give thanks in his name.

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