

Life Group Notes 10/15/2023
Pastor Mark Warren Philippians Week 6

[No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net. Thank you for taking the time—Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.]

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP.** BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! **Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 10/8. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** I include each of the passages mentioned in full, to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes. Footnotes are not meant to distract. This week's footnotes include:

1. [On chapters and verses in the Bible.](#)
2. [On biblical perfection.](#)
3. [On Christian denominations and revivals \(a very brief history\).](#)

*****Important:** At the very [end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week. ***

Pastor spoke of the word that was spoken during worship. New doors are opening, and we are putting action to what God is opening up in front of us. Do you have a testimony?

Pastor begins this week where Charlie Temple left off last week. Take a moment and review what you remember from last week. Pastor Mark began with a question: Have you ever seen someone who looks today as if they had jumped out of an old high school yearbook, with the same hair style and clothing style. Why do people cling to styles? What made you move on?

Pastor asks, "What did the past do to us to define us?" Answer him.

First review last week's reading from Philippians 3: [4](#)though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: [5](#)circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; [6](#)as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. [7](#)But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. [8](#)Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ [9](#)and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the

law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— [10](#)that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, [11](#)that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

1. Pastor Mark says, “Clinging to the past or spending too much time in the past is actually preventing us from passing through the open door that God has for us. Explain.
2. Have you learned how to forget about the past? Do you have ideas?
3. Pastor Mark received a word during worship, “You cannot receive a new day by living in the past.” Explain.
4. He asks, “How often do you think of ‘the good ol’ days,’ ‘the best of days’ or ‘the worst of days?’” Answer him.
5. How is it possible that the past can prevent us from looking to the future?

Now let’s move on: ***Straining Toward the Goal***

[12](#)Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. [13](#)Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, [14](#)I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. [15](#)Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. [16](#)Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

1. Look at verses 10 and 11 above. What has he not already obtained?
2. Who has obtained it? (See [footnote 2](#) below on perfection)
3. Have you set all of this as your goal? Or are there parts of Paul’s quest that you might want to leave out?
4. What does Paul mean, “...by any means possible?”
5. What do verses 12 and 13 do for you, in terms of comfort?
6. At what point is quitting and giving up an option?
7. At what point is letting go of past failures, and even past successes, a mandate?
8. Look at verse 13. How much of your past do you retain?
9. Why must we forget what lies behind us? What is the priority?
10. Why must we strain forward? Why “strain?”
11. Have you ever run in a race? Describe the last part of the race with the goal line in sight.
12. What is the prize? What is that “upward call?” Can you clarify?
13. Mark says, “We are all here by intentional design for an intentional purpose.” Explain.
14. What does Paul mean to “hold true to what we have attained?” What steps are involved? What do you think is the consequence if we do not hold true?
15. Can we encourage each other in this? How?
16. Look at verse 15. What of those who are not mature? Have you ever been among the immature? What helps us to grow?
17. Look at verse 16, “[16](#)Only let us hold true to what we have attained,” and compare it to verse “[12](#)Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect...” If Paul is our example, what part of our past do we retain? What part do we let go of?

18. What is the difference between holding on to our past, and holding true to our understanding...that we received from our past?

[17](#)Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. [18](#)For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. [19](#)Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. [20](#)But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, [21](#)who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

1. Have you ever had anyone tell you, "Just imitate me, and you'll be good?"
2. How often have you heard someone say, "Do what I say. Do not do what I do?" What is the effect?
3. Paul is saying, "Do what I do." Why is this not arrogance when Paul says it?
4. What ideas does this exhortation inspire in you?
5. Mark says, "In a sense Paul is being like a good mother or father. 'Imitate me...Do what I'm doing.'" Have you ever done that with your children? Did your parents ever teach you this way? Was it effective?
6. When does this teaching fail?
7. There is a principle in sports training: Play with those who are better at it than you are. Explain.
8. What is Paul saying? Have you seen enemies of the cross of Christ?
9. List the defining characteristics of those who have made themselves "enemies of Christ." What are their priorities?
10. On what have they set their minds?
11. Look at 1 John 2: [15](#)*Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. [16](#)For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not from the Father but from the world. [17](#)The world is passing away, along with its desires; but whoever does the will of God remains forever. [18](#)Children, it is the last hour; and just as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have appeared. This is how we know it is the last hour. [19](#)They went out from us, but they did not belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. But their departure made it clear that none of them belonged to us.* Look at the appetites John describes and compare them to the appetites and priorities Paul describes above. What do you see?
12. How does John say we distinguish those who are with us from those who are not?
13. What does an enemy of the cross do? What is your response? Do you have a testimony?
14. In Matthew 12:30 and Luke 11:23, Jesus says, "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters." Explain.
15. In contrast, in Luke 9:50, He says, "Do not stop them, for whoever is not against you is for you." Explain. How do these contrasting verses help us know who our friends are?

Pastor Mark says, "There is no life in the past. The past already happened, so by going back and trying to bring the past back to life, you're trying to resurrect something that will not come back. Jesus has put your destiny in your future. There is life in your future. We always go back as if there is something there that will produce something for us here, and all that is there, waiting for us, is death. Even if the past is full of good days, going back only prevents us from going ahead, to the "upward call" to which we are called.

1. Explain. React to what Mark is saying.
2. Mark says, "We're stuck in trying to re-create the best of days." Why is this not the best way to learn from them?
3. He says, "This is how religion is created. A revival is remembered, an event is magnified, and suddenly a denomination springs from the memories of "glory days." See [footnote 3](#) below.
4. Mark asks, "Why is it bad to put new wine in old wineskins?" Do you know?
5. Think about it: Is old wine bad? Which is more valuable on the shelf?
6. Why is new wine essential, and why are new wineskins required?
7. Have you ever made wine? If you have, what happens eventually to the balloon that is on the top of the bottle? Why? What happened to the life in the wine?
8. Look up Isaiah 43: [18](#) "Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. [19](#) Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. [20](#) The wild beasts will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches, for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, [21](#) the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise. What is God saying?
9. How is it possible to miss the new thing by remembering the old thing?
10. Now look at Isaiah's contest: Look at the previous verses. [16](#) Thus says the LORD, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters, [17](#) who brings forth chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick. What "old things" are they to forget? What is God saying? ...that what He did for Moses didn't matter? Or that the days ahead are not Moses' days, but our days, and He will do for us AS He did for Moses, and not what He did? Explain.
11. Why is living in the past avoiding the life He has promised?

Look up 2 Corinthians 5: [16](#) From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. [17](#) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. [18](#) All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; [19](#) that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

1. Look at who is included in “forgetting about memories.” How did Paul once look at Christ “according to the flesh?” How does he see Him now?
2. If the new has come, does that mean the “new” is perfected? What is our job in bringing the “new” to perfection?
3. Who is included in the message of reconciliation? Who is not included?
4. Mark says, “We have an enemy that want’s to kill steal and destroy,” what is our job?

Mark reviews,

- “The past tries to define you, but Jesus defines you. The past is what it is. It’s just the past. ‘They’ do not define you. Your identity is rooted in Christ.”
 - “The past is always pulling away from the forward vision that Jesus has for you.
 - “The past is dead, but the future is filled with life. Jesus is waiting for you in the future. He is drawing you forward. He is your future forever home.
1. Explain.
 2. Have you let the past define you? Explain? Do you have a testimony?
 3. Have you let the past define a neighbor? What was the result?
 4. Are mullets included in the list of things we forget about and overlook? What else is.
 5. What is the difference between remembering the past, reviling and reliving the past? Which is profitable?
 6. Does the past pull you back or do you allow it to encourage you to press on?
 7. Who sees your future? What do you see? Look up 1 Thessalonians 5:24 “*He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.*” What does this tell you?
 8. Review Philippians 2: [12](#) *Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now even more in my absence, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.* [13](#) *For it is God who works in you to will and to act on behalf of His good purpose.* How does what we saw in chapter 2 connect to the message today? How do we know the same Paul wrote to both the Philippians and the Thessalonians?

The Follow-up Application

1. Use the [SOAP journal studies](#) below throughout the week.
2. Make a list of what you *have* attained according to verse [16](#) Only let us hold true to what we have attained.
3. If you are in a position of leadership, assess the example you are setting this week.
4. Assess your own priorities.
5. What is God doing in and for you? Write it down.

Take the time to pray.

Scribe's Notes:

1. **On chapters and verses in the Bible.** We do not have any copy of any of the original manuscripts written by the hand of apostle or prophet, or his scribe at the prophet's dictation. The Bible is made up of copies made from copies that were transcribed and sometimes translated from the original. In fact, the remarkable nature of the Bible and indeed its claim to fame as an historic record, is that the multiple ancient copies we do have, some dating to within decades of the original, all match each other with astonishing accuracy. No other manuscript has been copied as demonstrably accurately as has the Bible. Prior to the Dead Sea scrolls, discovered at Qumran in the 20th century, the earliest copies of Isaiah were from the fifth century AD. The copy that was found at Qumran dated to the fifth century BC, one thousand years earlier, and matched the later copy letter for letter with accuracy well over 90%. Pastor Mark commented that the chapters and verses were not found in the original writings. Paul did not write his letters, and number his sentences and organize his work in chapters. Indeed, scribes, copying manuscripts, had adopted the practice of adding chapter and verse to facilitate study and verification. The chapter numbers and verse numbers are not inspired. Looking at the last verse of Acts 21, they are even baffling: "[40](#) *Having received permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the crowd. A great hush came over the crowd, and he addressed them in Hebrew, saying.*" This is how the chapter ends.
2. **On biblical perfection:** The verb Paul uses here, τετελείωμαι, *teteleiomai*, means "to consummate, reaching the end-stage, i.e., working through the **entire** process (stages) to reach the **final** phase (*conclusion*). Perfection is the end of a process through which no "perfection" is possible until the process itself is complete. Its root is *telos*, the same root that explains Jesus' last word on the cross: "Τετέλεσται (*tetelestai*)", "It is now complete, paid in full, nothing more to be done." In this sense, perfection is not attained by a life without sin until that life be also without even the *possibility* to sin. Jesus, who lived a life rife with temptation like as we, yet without sin, was not *perfected* until He put back on immortality and was no longer even subject to temptation. In other words, one can have lived an entire life without sin, and not be perfect in the biblical sense, because one is still breathing, cells still growing, dying and reproducing, and therefore that life is not complete. In an earlier footnote, we noted that God's name, *I AM*, in Hebrew includes the concept of the future tense. Hebrew has no future tense. Today I eat, and tomorrow I eat. To best translate the NAME, you say, "*I (already) am what I will be,*" unchanging and no shadow of turning. Perfection. The gospel is encapsulated in this precept. He already is what He will be, and we are called to be LIKE HIM. Jesus is what we will be. He has called us to grow and be like Him. "You WILL be perfect (*teleio*), because your Father in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:48) (Note the verb,

though often translated in the imperative, *you must be perfect*, is actually written in the future indicative...as a promise.

- 3. On Christian denominations and revivals.** Sectarianism has been a plague to the Christian church described in all the epistles. Peter, James and John et al argued over who was the greatest, even at the table of the Last Supper. John makes it a point to acknowledge that Peter entered the tomb first, but HE, John, arrived first. John won the foot race. Paul to the Corinthians warns them to stop ascribing greatness to whichever apostle they like best. He warns the Ephesians of the wolves who would come and draw men away. The hundred years history of the third and fourth century, often called the Jesus wars, was a fight from city to city as to which bishop was the most important. Rome usurped that authority in the West, and Constantinople to the East, until that parochial "authority" was overthrown by Islam in the fifteenth century, only decades before the reform. Throughout the subsequent centuries, revival after revival broke out, only to be quashed or fought or at least discouraged by the "orthodoxy" that had then seized power. Jean Calvin, the Swiss reformer, and Martin Luther, the German, began a movement in the sixteenth century called the Reform that then set out to destroy the Anabaptists who advocated baptism by immersion, encouraging their exodus from Europe to bring freedom of faith to the Western Colonies of North America, and to found a nation here. The Wesley brothers and George Whitefield began a new movement in the colonial days that was called "Methodist," which became what is today one of the most confused denominations of the 21st century which, yet still boasts powerful and sincere advocates of the gospel. The holiness movement of the late 19th century started in tents in Kentucky, where the attendees were described by the press as "holy rollers" because of their ecstatic behavior in worship and meetings, and began the Nazarene church, Christian and Missionary Alliance Churches and many others. The Pentecostal movement of the early 20th century inspired the Assemblies of God and our own Foursquare denominations. Each movement redefined "orthodoxy" on their terms and became their own bastions against "other gospels..." justifying their resistance with eyes on their own past, and missing the life in what was being planted, which was often the seeds of the latest move of God.
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For further study:

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP**... (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—What is God saying? / **P**ray—What is your response?) ...method to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: 2 Timothy 1:8-10
Tuesday: 2 Corinthians 4:16-18
Wednesday: Philippians 3:20-21
Thursday: 2 Corinthians 5:16-19
Friday: Philippians 3:15-16
Saturday: Philippians 3:18-19
Sunday: 1 John 2:15-17

Once again, some passages suggested here have more than the usual number of verses. This is not to increase the burden but to provide clarity of context. Pick the verses that speak to you most clearly and run these through the SOAP steps.