

October 9–15. Philippians; Colossians:
“I Can Do All Things through Christ Which Strengtheneth Me”

Overview

In Paul's epistle to the Philippians and Colossians it is clear that he is addressing Saints who have been justified and are familiar with the process and the blessings. There is little condemnation, warning, or correction in these epistles. Rather he is telling them what they must do to progress further along the straight and narrow and reach the goal of partaking of the fruit or eternal life

Justification: Progressing Along the Straight and Narrow

Paul expresses his desire to help others along the straight and narrow path that he has traveled

Php 1:21-24

[21] For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

[22] But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not.

[23] For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:

[24] Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.

JST Php 1:21-22

21 But if I live in the flesh, *ye are* the fruit of my labor. Yet what I shall choose I *know* not.

22 For me to live, is to do the will of Christ; and to die, is my gain.

What is the internal conflict that Paul is facing?

(to live, is to do the will of Christ; and to die, is my gain)

Like Lehi's desire for others after he progressed along the path and partook of the fruit:

1 Nephi 8:12

And as I partook of the fruit thereof it filled my soul with exceedingly great joy; wherefore, I began to be desirous that my family should partake of it also; for I knew that it was desirable above all other fruit.

How do you think Paul knew that in the next life he would be with Christ?

Perhaps Paul received a promises similar to Alma's

Mosiah 29:20

Thou art my servant; and I covenant with thee that thou shalt have eternal

life; and thou shalt serve me and go forth in my name, and shalt gather together my sheep.

Alma was promised that when the time comes he will be exalted. But in the mean time he will continue the work of gathering Christ's sheep

Paul uses his own life to show how worldly standards and accomplishments do not compare to being justified by Christ

Php 3:3-7

[3] For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

[4] Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:

[5] Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

[6] Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

[7] But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

What does Paul say to enforce his statement that worldly accomplishments no longer mean anything to him?

(I more:

Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee

Concerning zeal, persecuting the church

touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless)

Paul tells us how he feels about sacrificing those worldly things

Php 3:8-10

[8] Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss 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, that I may win Christ.

[9] 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:

[10] That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

What does it tell us in these verses that Paul has sacrificed for the cause of Christ?

(for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung)

What did Paul receive by giving up everything to know Christ?

(That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death)

Joseph Smith

“A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary [to lead] unto life and salvation.... It was through this sacrifice, and this only, that God has ordained that men should enjoy eternal life.... When a man has offered in sacrifice all that he has for the truth's sake,... he does know, most assuredly, that God does and will accept his sacrifice and offering, and that he has not, nor will not seek his face in vain.” (Lectures on Faith, pg. 58-60)

Neal A. Maxwell

“President [Brigham] Young said of Jesus, 'Why should we imagine for one moment that we can be prepared to enter into the kingdom of rest with him and the Father, without passing through similar ordeals?' The Apostle Paul noted how this sacred process produces an exclusive cadre - those who have known the 'fellowship of [Christ's] sufferings' (Php 3:10). These are they who will have the greatest capacity for endless service, joy, and happiness.” (“Enduring Well”, Ensign, Apr. 1997)

Paul teaches us important lesson to help us in progressing along the path

Php 3:13-15

[13] 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,

[14] I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

[15] Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

What do you think Paul means when he tells us to, “press toward the mark of the prize”?

(I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God)

Edward Dube

“To press toward the mark is to faithfully continue on the ‘strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life’ with our Savior and our Father in Heaven.... Paul’s letter to the Philippians, which he wrote when he was bound in prison, is a letter of overwhelming joy and rejoicing and encouragement to all of us, particularly in this difficult time of uncertainty. We all need to take courage from Paul.” (CR, April 2021)

Why do you think it is important that we, “[forget] those things which are behind”?

(reaching forth unto those things which are before)

Howard W. Hunter

“Fix your attention on your goals and don't look back. To dig a straight furrow, the plowman needs to keep his eyes on a fixed point ahead of him. That keeps him on a true course.... If our energies are focused not behind us but ahead of us-on eternal life and the joy of salvation-we assuredly will obtain it.” (The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter, pg. 66)

Paul stresses that if we are not diligently moving forward on the straight and narrow path then we risk wander off

Php 3:16-19

[16] Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

[17] Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

[18] (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:

[19] Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

What are some reasons that Paul gives for wandering off the straight and narrow?

(whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things)

What advise does Paul give us that will help us stay on the path?

(let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing
mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample)

Neal A. Maxwell

“One sees poignant parallels in Paul's description of his discipleship - 'I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling' (Php 3:14) - and Nephi's description of what disciples must do to remain in the straight and narrow path: 'Ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ' (2 Nephi 31:20). Discipleship is not simply surviving and enduring; discipleship is a pressing forward, a creative Christianity. Discipleship does not wait to be acted upon, but instead acts upon men and circumstances to make things better. (Things As They Really Are, pg. 66)

We do not stand still on the straight and narrow path. There are things we must strive for and accomplishments if we hope to progress

Php 4:1,6-7

1 Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

What are some of the things that we must be actively doing to progress along the path and avoid wandering off?

(stand fast in the Lord
prayer and supplication
think on these things)

Ulisses Soares

“The Savior invites us to seek Him in every thought and to follow Him with all our heart. This gives us the promise that we can walk in His light and that His guidance prevents the influence of darkness in our life.

“Seeking Christ in every thought and following Him with all our heart requires that we align our mind and desires with His. The scriptures refer to this alignment as ‘stand[ing] fast in the Lord’ (Php 4:1). This course of action implies that we continually conduct our lives in harmony with the gospel of Christ and focus daily on everything that is good. Only then may we achieve ‘the peace of God, which passeth all understanding’ and which will ‘keep [our] hearts and minds through Christ Jesus’ (Php 4:7).” (CR, Oct. 2020)

Pauls tells the Colossians that they are progressing well along the path and that they are considered to be among the “elect of God”

Col 3:9-12

[9] Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

[10] And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

[11] Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

[12] Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

What does Paul say that let’s us know the Colossians had been justified?

(ye have put off the old man... and have put on the new man)

Charles W. Penrose

“Now here is the pattern: Those who believe and repent must be taken down into the water and be buried from their old lives, must put off the old man with his deeds, must be buried in the likeness of Christ's burial and raised up again in the likeness of Christ's resurrection.... They come forth to a new birth, they are born of the water.” (JD, 22:82)

Paul also refers those whom Christ has justified as “the elect of God”
What does it mean to be elect?

The elect are those who love God with all their hearts and live lives that are pleasing to Him. Those who live such lives of discipleship will one day be selected by the Lord to be among His chosen children. (A Topical Guide To The Scriptures of The Church of Jesus Christ of The Latter-day Saints)

D&C 29:7

And ye are called to bring to pass the gathering of mine elect; for mine elect hear my voice and harden not their hearts;

That are the elect admonished to do?

(bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering)

John Taylor

“We profess, further, to be the elect of God set apart, elected, chosen by him to be his servants to accomplish his work upon the earth—in the first place, to establish correct principles among ourselves, and then to teach these principles to others.” (JD, 8:95)

Let's read more about what the elect of God should do to progress along the path

Col 3:13-17

[13] Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

[14] And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

[15] And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

[16] Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

[17] And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

What are some traits and expectations of the elect of God?

(Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another
put on charity
ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful
Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom
teaching and admonishing one another)

Col 3:1-4

[1] If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

[2] Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

[3] For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

[4] When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

What do you think Paul means by, “your life is hid with Christ in God”?

Wilford Woodruff

“The Lord has raised up this people to accomplish his purposes.... The Lord says, 'I have called you by my everlasting priesthood, and your lives have been hid with Christ in God'.... Through his son Ephraim God has raised you up and has put this power into your hands, and you hold the keys for the salvation of Israel.... The ten tribes of Israel [will] come to Zion, and they will bow down in the midst thereof, and receive the Priesthood at the hands of the inhabitants of Zion.

“Then what manner of men ought we to be, we, who have been ordained and called, and had such responsibilities placed upon us by the God of heaven? Our lives have been hid with Christ in God, and we are heirs of the eternal Priesthood.” (JD, 18:122)

It seems that those who have been ordained and called to gather in the elect have been blessed and preserved by Christ to carry out this work