



Message Reflections

July 21, 2019

Read *The New City Catechism* questions 30-32.

These questions dive into some of the foundational principles of our understanding of salvation: faith, justification, and sanctification.

Please take some time to read Philippians 3:7-14, which combines all three of these topics into one passage, and then reflect on each of the main areas using the following questions.

Philippians 3:7-14

⁷ But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in^[a] Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. ¹⁰ I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

¹² Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Faith: (vv. 7-9)

“Faith can be mixed with doubt, but it cannot be mixed with apathy.”

You do not have to have all the answers to have faith in Jesus Christ. However, faith does take action...it does require a step...you have to do something!

Have you placed your faith in Jesus Christ?

If “no,” then why not? Would you be willing to talk to someone who is a little further on the journey?

If “yes,” then are you growing in depth of trust? Like in any relationship, trust takes time to build. It takes time and experiences that you can learn to lean into. When was the last time you took a step of faith (shared the Good News, served people in a new setting, invested in a kingdom ministry...)?

Justification: (v. 9)

By faith we are justified—made right with God. This is a miraculous statement! We do not earn it in any way. Christ's righteousness is given (imputed) to us. God sees Christ's character!

Do you live in this reality or are you still trying to earn a “right relationship” with God through religion and works?

Sanctification: (vv. 10-14)

Justification is purely a gift of God through faith. Sanctification, however, is a partnership with God—a natural response to his extravagant grace. Although God joins us (empowered by His Spirit), we play a role in our growth. It is a gradual process of becoming more and more like Christ. It would be impossible without the work of the Spirit!

Read vv. 10-14 and reflect on how you are growing. Are you striving and pushing forward? Are you stalled? Are you forgetting what is behind and pushing on?

Take a moment to thank God for His amazing gift of salvation, and for the sanctifying work He does in your life – continually transforming you more and more into the likeness of Christ as you put your trust in Him!

Todd