

SERMON: The Joy of Pursuing Christ
SERIES: Philippians: Living In Joy
SPEAKER: Pastor Mark

May 13, 2018

CONNECT (5-10 minutes): Help the members of the group grow in relationships with one another so all people in the group know they matter. Spend some time discovering what is happening in the lives of your group members. Share how God has been revealing himself in each other's lives.

REVIEW (15-20 minutes): Use this time to review the passage and the sermon outline (see below).

Note: this is a great opportunity to share leadership.

Use these simple questions to review the sermon/passage or for if you don't have much time:

1. What does this passage teach you about God? About us?
2. How does this passage point us to the gospel? How does it challenge you? Change you?

SCRIPTURE:

Philippians 3:12-21.

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.

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.

SERMON OUTLINE:

- I. The joy of running after Christ.
- II. The joy of running in community.

GROW (45-60 minutes): Use this time to go deeper with your group.

Use these questions to discuss the sermon/passage:

1. How would you describe your personal pursuit of Christ? Are you striving to experience, obey, and delight in Jesus? Have you become more passive or coasting lately? What things can get in the way of your pursuit of knowing Christ?
2. Read 3:12. Why is it so important to remember that none of us (even Paul) has attained spiritual perfection? And, why is it so important to remember that Jesus himself is our prize and not anything else that Jesus can give us? (For example: what is the danger in making forgiveness, physical health, or a new situation the prize over Christ?)
3. Read 3:13. "Forgetting what lies behind" means that we a) don't dwell on our past failures or defeats and b) we don't dwell on our past achievements. Which of these do you tend towards? How does the gospel (you are both wicked and loved) prevent both of these extremes?
4. Read 3:17. Besides Jesus, who are you imitating in your Christian walk? Who might be imitating you/who are you an example to?
5. Read 3:20-21. The church community is so important in order to keep reminding each other of our citizenship in heaven and the transformation we will experience at our coming Savior. How have you seen the church community build these truths into your life? Where have you been able to encourage others with these truths? Do these truths characterize your small group discussion?

Pray: Praise God for your citizenship in heaven and your ongoing transformation into Christ's likeness. Confess those things that have gotten in the way of your pursuit of Christ. Ask God to strengthen you to "forget the things that are behind" and "press on" in courage each day alongside others.