

PHILIPPIANS (COUNT IT ALL JOY)

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SERIES: Philippians (Count It All Joy)

TITLE: Program 21 – Follow Me!

MONDAY

OPEN

Have you ever had anyone say to you, “Hey, listen, don’t follow me; you follow Jesus, but don’t follow me”? You say, “Well, are you a Christian?” “Yeah, I’m a Christian, but don’t follow me.” The question is, Beloved, why not? Why shouldn’t another believer follow you? Is there something that you’re not doing right? Is there a way that you’re not walking that you ought to walk? Paul said, [“Be an imitator of me as I am of Christ.”]

PART ONE

We are such imitators, aren’t we? I mean we are imitators of style. We are imitators of trends. We are – I mean you look at hairstyles and we see a gal and this is the way she’s wearing her hair, we want to wear our hair. You see these guys at one time and they were wearing these baggy pants that were falling off of their hips and it was like their pants came down and they needed their diapers changed, and they’re walking down the street and they

think they're so cool. You look at the trends and the styles of the 50's and the 60's and that. We're imitators. And yet, let me ask you a question. How many Christians do you know that you could imitate? How many Christians do you know that are so walking with Jesus Christ that you could follow their lifestyle and know that you are a follower of Jesus Christ? You could look at the way they spent their time. You could look at the way they spent their energies. You could look at the way they spend their money and you could say, "Hey, I'm going to follow that person because that person is following Jesus Christ." Well, as we come to the final segment of Philippians, chapter 3, this epistle on how to have joy no matter what; joy, chapter 1, despite imprisonment; joy, chapter 2, despite people; joy, chapter 3, despite things. Remember Paul has said that, ["I count all things as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung, that I might know Him, that I might win Him, that I might be a partaker of the fellowship of His sufferings, that I might attain to the resurrection from the dead."]

(Paraphrase, Philippians 3) He wants to press on and he wants to look at Christ, and he wants to gain hold of Christ, and he wants to be everything that God intends for him to be. He wants to be like Christ. And that's what Christian means. Christian means "little Christ," a little Christ. In other words, we're an imitator of Christ. Now what Paul does, as he comes to this portion of Philippians, chapter 3, after telling us what the goal is, **"the goal is the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus," (Philippians 3:14)** then he makes this wonderful awesome promise. And this is what he says in verse 15. **"Let us therefore..."** Now remember therefore is a term of conclusion. And if you download the study guide on Philippians, you know that a term of conclusion is important because it kind of wraps up and makes that point. And the way I mark therefores in my Bible are three red dots in the form of a triangle. So he says, **"Let us therefore, as many as are perfect..."** **(Philippians 3:15a)** You say, "Well that leaves me out." Well I want to tell

you something: that leaves me out too. But the word perfect there doesn't mean without blemish. The word perfect there in the Greek is TELEIOS and it means mature, those that are growing up, those that are pressing on, those that are determined to become more like Christ. So he says, **"Let us therefore, as many as are perfect,"** mature, **"have this attitude."**

(Philippians 3:15a) Hey, you say, "There's that word attitude again. I've got to mark it." That's right, you mark it with a big "A" in your Bible. You say, "I don't want to mark in my Bible." Well you know, if you've downloaded the study guide, that you have the whole book of Philippians in front of you and so you can mark it in your study. But then what I would suggest is you don't walk around with your notebook, but you do have your Bible at hand, don't you? I mean I don't go places without my Bible, because I want the Word of God with me. I want to be able to explain it to others. I want to read it if I have time, if I'm listening to someone teaching or going to church I want my Bible open so that I make sure that I'm getting what they're saying, but also so I see the context of what they're saying. So with open Bible, or open study guide, you mark attitude. And he says, **"Let us therefore, as many as are perfect,"** mature, **"have this attitude."** All right, **"and if in anything,"** and this is the promise, **"if in anything,"** I love this, **"you have a different attitude, God will reveal [this]...to you."**

(Philippians 3:15) Do you realize what a promise this is? He's saying, "Listen, if your attitude, if your mindset is to be like Christ," if your mindset is to **"press on towards the...prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus,"** **(Philippians 3:14)** if your determination is to be a person of the one thing that is needful, which is knowing Him. The one thing that is primary in life and that is beholding His beauty and wanting to be like Him. If that is your attitude, then He tells you, "I promise you that if you start wandering off the path, if you start running off the course, so to speak, because I know that your attitude is to be like Christ, I'll tap you on the shoulder. I'll get you back on the track and I'll point you toward the goal. I'll let you know

because I know your heart.” Isn’t that a wonderful promise? And that’s the promise I claim. I tell the Lord, “Lord, I want to be everything that You want me to be.” When I go over the finish line in life I want to hear, “Well done, My good and faithful servant.” When I go over that finish line I want to know Him and the power of His resurrection. And I have this wonderful promise that if I get off track, and I have gotten off track. I have gotten so busy in ministry that just everything was ministry, ministry, ministry. And the Lord just showed me: “You’re off track.” And what you need is you need a Sabbath. And so I try once a week to have a day that is not a day when I have to accomplish anything that has to do with ministry, but just a day when I enjoy the Lord. Sometimes I fast, sometimes I don’t eat breakfast and I don’t eat lunch and that’s just so that I can hear His voice clear. Sometimes I go the whole day without. Sometimes I nibble all day. But my goal in that day is to be still and to know that He is God. To be still means let go, relax, cease striving. It’s to be quiet before Him. It’s to enjoy Him. It’s to go outside our kitchen door and sit on the patio and just drink in the beauty of the flowers and everything and talk to my God. It is to be still. And so it’s that leisure with God that we so desperately need. Well, he says, **“If [you have] in anything a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you. However,”** and here’s the warning, **“let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained.” (Philippians 3:15b-16)** In other words, he says, “I don’t want you going backwards. I want you going forward.” And what happens is, if you and I are not careful, then we can go backward in our Christian life, and this is the problem in Hebrews. I want you to go to the end of Hebrews chapter 5, to verse 11. And this is what he’s doing: he’s talking about Melchizedek. And you say, “Melchize-who?” Well Melchizedek was a high priest in the day of Abraham and Abraham paid tithes to God to Melchizedek. And so Melchizedek was a picture of Jesus our high priest. And he’s trying to explain that Christ was a priest after the order of Melchizedek. You say, “I don’t even understand all that.” You

know what? You need to learn it because it's in the Bible. You need to learn the whole Bible because this is God's book. This is God's Word. These are His precepts for life. And through His precepts you get understanding and you hate every false way. So he says, he's writing to these Hebrews, that are suffering, that have been alienated from other Jews because they believed in Jesus. He's writing to Hebrews that have been alienated from the Roman nation because the persecution against Christians is just rising. He is writing to Christians that are experiencing the fellowship of his sufferings. And yet there's a problem here. And this is the problem. Listen, in verse 11:

“Concerning him,” Melchizedek, “we have much to say, and it is hard to explain.” (Hebrews 5:11a) You see, so many of us just want the milk. “Just give me the basics,” and let it go. No you're not to have milk; you're not to stay a baby all your life. You're to grow up. If you don't grow up, then the Bible says that you are carnal, that you are fleshly. And if you're carnal and fleshly, according to 1 Corinthians, chapter 3 and 1 Corinthians, chapter 1, then there's going to be quarreling and there's going to be disputes and you're going to be followers of men and you're going to be imitating the wrong people. You're going to imitating the wrong people, because you're going to be imitating, now listen carefully, people who are enemies of the cross. You say, “What does that mean?” Well we're going to get to it, but just be patient for a minute. Verse 12, he says you have grown dull of hearing. He says, **“For though by this time you ought to be teachers.”** You ought to know enough that you could explain it to others. **“You have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God.”** (Hebrews 5:12a) In other words, you got to go back to baby food. Now what is baby food? Baby food is justification, sanctification, redemption, expiation, propitiation. You say, “I don't even know what those things are.” O Beloved, if you can't explain those things from the Word of God, then you haven't grown up and you need to understand this. Now watch what he says. “The elementary principles of the oracles of God.”

Those are elementary principles because they're foundational principles about your salvation. He says, **"And you have come to need milk and not solid food,"** or King James says, **"meat."** **"For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness."** Now remember Paul wanted to know the righteousness that comes by faith. So it says, **"For he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature."** Now Paul says, **"Not that I am perfect, not that I am totally mature, but I am pressing on."** He says, **"But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses exercised to discern good and evil."** (Hebrews 5:12b-14) Now right after this break we're going to look at people that are standing and preaching and proclaiming Christ and yet are enemies of the cross. And if you have gone backwards instead of forwards, then you don't know how to spot these people and you're going to imitate the wrong one. We'll talk about it when I come back.

PART TWO

I have to begin this segment of the program again with a question. Who are you imitating? Are you imitating the world? Are you imitating some sports figure? Are you imitating some Hollywood figure? Are you imitating the styles and the trends of the culture or are you imitating Christ? You say, "But if I imitate Christ I'm going to be out of sync with the rest of the world." Duh! Of course you will. Listen, the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. And that's what 1 John, chapter 5 says in the very last verses of that book. And you and I have to know that there are two cultures in this world. There is the culture of the world and there is the culture of Christ. And the culture of the world is under the dominion of the devil. And the culture of Christ is under the dominion of Christ. And what does light, the dominion of Christ have in common with darkness? Now Paul is very concerned. And Paul has said, "This is my goal and this is what I'm pressing on toward. And I'm telling you that if you have the same attitude that I have,

God is going to let you know if you get off track.” But he goes on to say, **“Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.” (Philippians 3:17)** Paul is writing and Timothy is writing. So what he’s saying is, “You look at others in Christendom and you watch the way they walk. You watch the way they dress. You watch the way they talk. You listen to what they preach. You listen to their values and, and you listen to what they want you to do or what they’re telling you that you can have or not have in Christ.” And he says, “You listen to them very, very carefully and if they are not following my pattern, my pattern,” Paul says, “then don’t follow them, because they are not walking the right way.” Now what this ought to do is, this ought to make you throw on the brakes and come to a screeching halt and say, wait a minute. I’m going to sit and I’m going to listen carefully and I’m going to examine lifestyles. I’m going to examine the way money is spent. I’m going to examine where the values are, if we just keep you know, spending money on ourselves when there’s a world that desperately needs the gospel. You’re going to look at everything, and you’re not only going to look, but you’re going to listen to the message and you’re going to find out, are these people who proclaim to be followers of Jesus Christ, who proclaim to be teachers, who proclaim to be prophets or apostles, or whatever they’re claiming to be, are they walking the way Paul walked? Now let’s look at it again. He says, **“Brethren,”** and you would mark that. You’ve marked it already. You’ve marked the references to the Philippians, and you’ve marked the references to Paul and to Timothy. **“Brethren, join in following my example and observe.” (Philippians 3:17a)** Keep on observing. Keep on watching. You can’t tell in just one glance. You can’t tell in maybe just one or two programs. [“But you keep on observing those who walk,”] and I marked walk like with two feet in black. **“Those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. For many walk, of whom I often told you and now tell you even weeping.” (Philippians 3:17b-18a)** He says, “I am

weeping. I am brokenhearted. And I am brokenhearted because here are these people that are professing Christ and they are enemies.” Listen to what he says: **“Enemies of the cross of Christ.” (Philippians 3:18b)** Now this is something that you need to examine very, very carefully. Because when you look at the cross of Christ, Jesus said to the people that were following Him, **“If anyone wants to come after Me,”** and this is in Luke 14 and you can find it in Mark. You can find it in the gospels. [“If any man desires to come after Me, then let him number one, deny himself; number two, take up his cross.” And both of those are aorist tense. It’s a puncticular verb. It’s at one point in time. It’s a decision that you make and you hold by that decision. “So if any man’s going to come after Me let him, number one, deny himself; number two, take up his cross and number three, follow Me.”] (Paraphrase, Luke 14:27) Now follow Me is like a straight continuous line. It’s like the present tense in the Greek. If you have a New Inductive Study Bible, the tenses of the verbs are explained to you in the back of that Bible and it’s very important. So He’s saying you deny yourself one point in time. You take up your cross at one point in time. And then for the rest of time you keep on following Him. Now when you look at Christ, did He preach prosperity? When you look at Christ, did He call people to live a life of ease or did He call people to deny themselves? When you look at Christ what did He do? I mean you look at Christ and He served others. He laid down His life. He didn’t lay up treasures on earth. He laid up treasures in heaven the same way you and I are to do. And so you have to watch now, you have to watch who you’re going to imitate even in Christendom. And many times, and I say this in love and I say this in compassion, but many, many times the ones we want to follow are the ones that make us feel good. The ones that we want to follow are the ones that promise us material things. The ones that we want to follow are the ones that are not going to talk to us about sin. Well the cross of Christ is all about sin. The cross of Christ is all about death to self and remember he wanted to know Christ. He wanted to know the

fellowship of His sufferings. He wanted to attain to the resurrection from the dead. So he wanted to understand this crucified life. In Galatians and this summarizes it really. And in Galatians 2:20 this is what he says. This is the crucified life. He says, **“I have been crucified with Christ;...it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh,”** in my body, **“I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and,”** watch, **“gave Himself up for me.” (Galatians 2:20)** In 1 Corinthians, chapter 11, Paul wrote this: [“Be an imitator of me even as I am of Christ.”] (Paraphrase, 1 Corinthians 11:1) Philippians 2: [“Let this mind, this attitude, be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: ‘Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but He humbled Himself, and He took upon Himself the form of a servant, and He became obedient unto death, even death on the cross.’”] O Beloved, what is Paul calling us to know? Paul is calling us to watch who we imitate. Listen, if you want to know who you’re to imitate, you get to know Paul and you read his life. And we’re going to learn a lot more about Paul in Philippians, chapter 4. But you watch him and then you’ll understand what it means to be an enemy of the cross, because Paul was not an enemy of the cross; he embraced the cross. That’s where he lived and that is the pivotal point of all Christendom. That is the pivotal point of the Christ-like life. That is the source of your power. So he says, **“Many walk, of whom [I’ve] often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite whose glory is...their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.” (Philippians 3:18-19)** In other words, it’s all about me. It’s all about what I can I have. It’s all about what I can achieve, rather than me living that crucified life, dying with Christ and living, yet not me, but Christ in me.