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Sermon Notes

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## **Two Journeys to Glory**

### **Philippians 1-4**

Goal: Big-picture review of Philippians

#### **I. One Overall Purpose: The Glory of God in Christ**

##### **A. The End for Which God Created the World**

In 1765, seven years after his death, Jonathan Edward's great essay on God's ultimate goal in creating and redeeming the world was published: *The End for Which God Created the World*. Its central thesis was the God makes Himself and His own glory the ultimate end and goal of all things He does in the universe

The supporting text Edwards reverted to was Isaiah 48:10-13

***Isaiah 48:10-13 For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another. 12 "Listen to me, O Jacob, Israel, whom I have called: I am he; I am the first and I am the last. 13 My own hand laid the foundations of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens; when I summon them, they all stand up together.***

##### **B. The End for Which God Redeemed His People**

God's glory was also His ultimate end in redeeming a people for Himself and forgiving their sins:

***Isaiah 43:25 "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more."***

Many Christians think God puts people first in everything He does... that God's ultimate aim in both creation and redemption was the salvation of people, their benefit, their joy, their happiness, their blessedness

But Edwards accurately corrects that false understanding... God does very much care about the salvation of people, their benefit, their joy, their happiness, their blessedness

But His ultimate aim in creation and in redemption in Christ was His own glory and that of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ

Since this is true, we would expect His Apostle Paul to reveal it in his ministry... and he does:

### C. Paul's Clear and Central Purpose in Philippians

1. Paul's prayer life for the Philippians... focused immediately on their growth in salvation... BUT focused ULTIMATELY on God's glory

***Philippians 1:9-11 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, 10 so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ-- to the glory and praise of God.***

2. Paul's own life of suffering for Christ had the same ultimate end

***Philippians 1:20 I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.***

Paul is suffering in prison for the preaching of the gospel

Paul wants the Philippians to know that his suffering has really served to advance the gospel

Paul also wants the Philippians to know 1) that he is facing his own death, 2) how (with what attitude he is facing his own death)

Paul doesn't really care ULTIMATELY whether he lives or dies... what matters is one thing above all else

***Philippians 1:20 I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.***

The word means "magnify", "make greater"

Literally means: "to make great, enlarge, make bigger"... used of a child growing up, used of a King enlarging his territory through conquest, used of a man's fame and reputation spreading far and wide, used of the size of one's opportunities getting larger

Paul's deepest desire is that CHRIST would be enlarged, be greater, be EXALTED and grow immense

***NASB Psalm 34:3 O magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together.***"

Literally, let's get together and make God BIGGER, make His name GREATER

Question: How can you make an infinite God BIGGER?

***Jeremiah 23:24 Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?" declares the LORD. "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" declares the LORD.***

Universe is immeasurably vast, able to hold trillions and trillions of immense stars... and yet God "fills" the entire universe

How can sinful human beings like us MAKE GOD BIGGER???

Illus. “Magnify” the Lord = make Him bigger in our own estimation... not in reality!! He is already immense and the angels know it

The issue is... He is too small to us, because we are too far from Him!

### 3. Paul’s benediction at the end of Philippians

***Philippians 4:20 To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.***

#### D. What Does it Mean to “Glorify” God and Christ?

1. To “glorify” = to make glorious
2. To “magnify” = to make greater or larger
3. We can not do anything to the sun to make it brighter, nor to make it larger
4. But we glorify God and magnify Him by REVEALING His nature and by PROCLAIMING His nature and His mighty works in creation and in Christ
5. When we are willing to lay down our lives for the salvation of others, we reveal God’s nature of love and compassion... when we are joyfully willing to suffer the loss of all things for Christ, we glorify Christ by showing His immense value to us... and a watching world notices and glorifies Christ too
6. When we PROCLAIM Christ crucified, we are glorifying God in Christ the most... we reveal God to be just and holy and wrathful, because He would not tolerate sin; we reveal God also to be loving and gentle and gracious and compassionate in that His only begotten Son took the penalty we sinners deserve
7. When we magnify and glorify Christ, lost sinners get found; rebels become loyal subjects of King Jesus; idolaters become God-worshipers; enemies become friends

So... Paul’s goal here is the same as God’s... glorify God in the person and work of Christ

## II. Two Journeys to Accomplish One Glory

### A. Internal Journey: Progress in the Faith

***Philippians 1:25 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith***

### B. External Journey: Progress of the Gospel

***NIV Philippians 1:12 Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel.***

***NASB Philippians 1:12 Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel***

Both of these verses use the same Greek word: **προκοπη** ...

The word means gradual progress, advancement

Internal progress: Philippians 1:25 “progress and joy in the faith”... becoming more and more conformed to the image of Christ... a gradual transformation into Christlikeness

External progress: Philippians 1:12 Paul’s imprisonment has served to advance the gospel because more and more people are preaching Christ boldly, and more and more people are hearing the message clearly

C. These Two Journeys Have One Goal in Mind: The Glory of God in the Perfection of God’s Chosen People

### III. The Internal Journey Described

A. A Journey Begun and Perfected by God: Philippians 1:6

***Philippians 1:6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.***

1. Salvation is God’s work from beginning to end
2. Jesus’ name is “Salvation is from the Lord”
3. What God begins, He never rests until it is finished

Illus. I have many books I have begun to read and not finished; I have models that are half assembled; I’ve begun letters and not finished them; but what God starts, He always finishes

***Luke 14:28-30 "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? 29 For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, 30 saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'***

God will get all the glory for the complete salvation of His people

He has staked the glory of His name of this:

***John 6:39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.***

Thus the energy and drive for your salvation day by day comes from an inexhaustible source

Illus. Nimitz class aircraft carrier powered by two General Electric pressurized water reactors driving four turbines of 260,000hp (194MW) and four shafts. It can cruise on oceans around the world for ten years without refueling; and the new reactor cores are designed to last over fifty years without refueling!

That's nothing compared to the seemingly limitless power of the sun, which puts out trillions of times that amount of power every second without ever diminishing

But no physical example can compare with the energy and power of God to complete these two journeys:

***Colossians 1:29 To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.***

***1 Corinthians 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them-- yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.***

B. A Journey Motivated by a Consuming Desire to Know and Be Like Christ: Philippians 3:7-11

***Philippians 3:7-11 I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ-- the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. 10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.***

1. Nothing else in all the universe meant more to Paul than this one thing: to know Christ and be like Him
2. It was Paul's most consuming desire... from the moment he saw the glory of the resurrected Christ, this one passion drove him every day of his life
3. I WANT TO KNOW CHRIST... I yearn to know you, Lord... whatever it may cost me, whatever pain I have to suffer, even if it costs me my reputation, all my friends, my career, all my possessions, all my earthly comforts, my freedom, my health, even my life... I WANT TO KNOW CHRIST, and be conformed to His image

C. A Journey Toward Total Perfection in Christlikeness: Philippians

***NASB Philippians 1:6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.***

***Philippians 3:10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death***

***Philippians 3:12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.***

1. Starting point: Perfect in Positional Righteousness

***Philippians 3:8-9 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 is through faith in Christ-- the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.***

2. Journey to Perfection in Holiness

loving righteousness

hating wickedness

perfect purity inside and out... the very focus of Paul's daily life for himself and his prayer life for the Philippians

***Philippians 1:11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ-- to the glory and praise of God.***

3. Journey to Perfection in Love and Humility

***Philippians 2:1-8 If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!***

4. Journey to Perfection in Body

***Philippians 3:20-21 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.***

D. A Journey Made Through Great Effort and Striving

***Philippians 2:12-13 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed-- not only in my presence, but now much 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 according to his good purpose.***

***Philippians 3:12-14 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers, 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.***

E. A Journey Made With Total Confidence in Christ But No Confidence in Self

1. Confidence in God and in Christ

***NASB Philippians 1:6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.***

***Philippians 2:13 continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.***

***Philippians 3:12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.***

2. Absolutely no confidence in our own efforts and righteousness

***Philippians 3:3 For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh***

Illus. Self-confidence is the central religion of American popular culture: “Believe in yourself, and all will be well!!”

“If it is to be, it’s up to me!!”

Paul says NO!!! This confidence in self-effort leads directly to hell

Putting no confidence in the flesh leads directly to Christ

Not “I think I can, I think I can...” but “I know Christ will, I know Christ will!!”

Not the power of positive thinking but the certainty of faith in a risen Christ to finish what He started

F. A Journey in which Supernatural Joy and Contentment is Possible But Not Guaranteed

***Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!***

***Philippians 4:11-13 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.***

1. A lasting, consistent abiding joy and contentment in Christ is possible

- Five times he says he rejoices
- Three times he says he is laboring for their joy
- Five times he commands them to rejoice
- He says he knows how to be content no matter what is happening to him

2. However, it is not guaranteed... it is a secret Paul only learned through faith-filled suffering

#### IV. The External Journey Described

The starting point clearly depicted:

***Luke 24:46-47 He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.***

The roadmap clearly depicted:

***Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."***

The most thrilling story in human history... the story of the gradual conquest of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ! Across mountain ridges, raging streams, stormy and wide oceans...

But how would the journey be conducted? What does Philippians teach us about the external progress of the Gospel?

##### A. A Journey Carried On by the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

***Philippians 1:12-18 Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. 13 As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. 14 Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly. 15 It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. 16 The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. 17 The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. 18 But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice,***

1. The external journey is a journey of PROCLAMATION!!! Christ must be preached verbally!!



2. The gospel itself must be defended and confirmed before a watching world
3. Christ and Him crucified must be clearly depicted through words
4. This is the **“power of God for the salvation of all who believe”**... without the verbal proclamation of this message, the external journey cannot make progress

B. A Journey Advanced by People who Model the Transforming Power of the Gospel

1. God could have preached this message daily from heaven
2. He could have sent mysterious angels suddenly to pop into a village and preach Christ
3. Angels can do this... but God ordained a different way: witnesses, messengers, real-live people whose lives have been transformed by the Gospel Message

***Philippians 1:27 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel***

***Philippians 2:22 But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel.***

***Philippians 3:17 Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.***

***Philippians 4:9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me-- put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.***

C. A Journey Opposed Every Step of the Way by Enemies

1. Paul and Silas had preached the gospel in Philippi and were bitterly opposed
2. They were beaten before the very eyes of their new converts and thrown into prison
3. Now, again, Paul was in chains for Christ, probably in Rome waiting to die for Christ
4. The external advance of the gospel will be opposed every step of the way by enemies
5. The Philippians themselves were now holding out the word of life to enemies and were getting persecuted as well

He wanted them to act faithfully for the gospel...

***Philippians 1:27-28 contending as one man for the faith of the gospel 28 without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved-- and that by God.***

6. The advance of the gospel would not be a Sunday stroll down a spring lane with blossoming fruit trees along the way... NO!!! It would be more like the march of Christ to Golgotha

D. A Journey of Great Suffering and Great Courage

***Philippians 1:29-30 For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, 30 since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.***

***Philippians 3:10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death***

1. God has ordained that the blood of Christian martyrs is the seed of the church
2. God has ordained that Christian witness be done in the face of great opposition, and that when Christians show courage and love to their captors the gospel makes AMAZING PROGRESS
3. The Royal Tapestry of our brothers and sisters in Christ who have suffered for the gospel is rich and lasting

E. A Journey in Which Enemies Amazingly Become Worshipers

Paul himself was the prime example of this... formerly breathing out threats and murder against the Lord's disciples, he became the most loyal of Christ's subjects

The Philippians had already seen this with the amazing conversion of the Philippian jailer and his entire household... a man who had been among the persecutors became one of their brothers in Christ

Now in this letter, Paul hints at a remarkable thing: conversions among the Praetorian guards

***NASB Philippians 1:13 so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else,***

1. Praetorian guard the Emperor's personal bodyguard
2. Selected from among the finest troops in the entire Roman army
3. Tough, beyond reproach in their loyalty to the emperor... yet Paul seems to hint that some of them, and perhaps even of Caesar's own family had come to faith in Christ

***Philippians 4:22 All the saints send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.***

4. Theologically, every singly Christian on the face of the earth began as an enemy of God

***Philippians 3:18 For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.***

***Colossians 1:21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.***

5. The gospel alone has power to convert enemies of God to children of God

***Romans 5:10 For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!***

#### F. A Journey Accomplished Best by a Unified Church

1. Paul's consistent appeal to the Philippian church is to perfectly united in mind and thought
2. An arguing, complaining church cannot lead sinners to Christ
3. Philippians 2:1-16 has as its entire purpose an appeal to the Philippians to be humble and others centered like Christ so they can evangelize better

***Philippians 2:14-16 Do everything without complaining or arguing, 15 so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe 16 as you hold out the word of life-- in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing.***

4. So also Paul pleads with Euodia and Syntyche to agree with each other in Christ so they can continue to labor with him in the Lord

## V. The Two Journeys Indissolubly Linked

### A. Linking Texts in Philippians

1. Many verses in Philippians link these two journeys indissolubly
2. Philippians 1:27-30 links the internal courage of the Philippians and their effectiveness in leading their persecutors to Christ
3. Philippians 2:1-16 links the unity and humility of the Philippians and the progress they are making in their own salvation, specifically in the issue of unity, humility, arguing and complaining with their ability to hold out the word of life to lost people

### B. Progress in External Journey Impossible without Progress in Internal Journey

1. If you are not growing as a Christian, you will be a hindrance to the gospel advance
2. Most new Christians do SOME evangelism just from the novelty of it and their excitement
3. It takes genuine sanctification and growth internally to keep evangelizing YEAR AFTER YEAR
4. Evangelism is one of the first things to go from a church when it begins to decline

#### C. Progress in Internal Journey Impossible without Progress in External Journey

1. Conversely, you can't make progress in Christlike maturity with energetic activity in the Great Commission
2. Just reading good theology books will not mature you in Christlikeness
3. Just memorizing verses of Scripture will not mature you in Christlikeness
4. Just listening to good preaching will not mature you in Christlikeness
5. Going to good Christian conferences will not mature you in Christlikeness
6. There MUST be spiritual warfare, vigorous conflict with the forces of Satan, or you will grow soft and lazy in the Christian life

**THE TWO JOURNEYS ARE INDISSOLUBLY LINKED...** If you just focus on evangelism and neglect your personal growth, or if you just get people to pray the sinner's prayer and don't disciple them into Christlike maturity, **YOU WILL MAKE NO LASTING CONTRIBUTION TO THE ADVANCE OF THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST**

If you focus on your own personal holiness and internal prayer life and forsake courageous sacrificial involvement in evangelism and missions, **YOU WILL ACTUALLY STOP GROWING AND BECOME LAZY AND INEFFECTIVE IN YOUR CHRISTIAN LIFE**

#### D. Both Journeys Have Same Finish Line: Complete Perfection for All God's Chosen People

## VI. Summary and Applications

### A. Summary of the Book of Philippians

One Overall Purpose: The Glory of God in Christ

Two Journeys to Accomplish One Glory

The Internal Journey Described

- A Journey Begun and Perfected by God

- A Journey Motivated by a Consuming Desire to Know and Be Like Christ
- A Journey Toward Total Perfection in Christlikeness
- A Journey Made Through Great Effort and Striving
- A Journey Made With Total Confidence in Christ But No Confidence in Self
- A Journey in which Supernatural Joy and Contentment is Possible But Not Guaranteed

#### The External Journey Described

- A Journey Carried On by the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- A Journey Advanced by People who Model the Transforming Power of the Gospel
- A Journey Opposed Every Step of the Way by Enemies
- A Journey of Great Suffering and Great Courage
- A Journey in Which Enemies Amazingly Become Worshipers
- A Journey Accomplished Best by a Unified Church

#### The Two Journeys Indissolubly Linked

#### B. Questions

##### 1. Are you making progress internally?

Do you have absolute confidence that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion

Are you growing more and more in Christlike maturity? Is Christ more and more the treasure and pleasure of your life, or are you more consumed by other things?

Do you have a hunger and thirst to be perfect like Christ, free from all sin; to be conformed to Christ in holiness, humility, love; do you set your hope fully on your resurrection body, when you will be transformed like His resurrection body?

Are you working out your salvation with fear and trembling? Are you actively forgetting what is behind and striving and straining toward what is ahead? Or have you gotten lazy in your Christian growth?

Are you trusting fully in Christ to sanctify you, or do you rely more on your own efforts? Do you trust in yourself and your own good deeds?

Have you learned the secret of being content in any and every situation? Are you characterized by consistent heavenly focus and joy? Or do you grumble and complain frequently?

Are you making progress in your internal journey?

2. Are you helping to make progress in the external journey?

Have you shared the gospel of Jesus Christ crucified and risen with anyone in the last six months?

Are you willing to disciple others, saying “follow my example as I follow the example of Christ?” Are you willing to go to where non-Christians are, or are you secluded from all unbelievers as much as you can?

Have you ever been persecuted for Christ? Have you taken any risks such that you might be opposed or hated for the gospel? Perhaps at work, or in your neighborhood, or with a relative, or even with a total stranger? Are you involved personally in advancing the gospel of Christ? Are you willing to suffer to bring someone else to Christ? Or are you content to stay comfortable and leave the risky witnessing to someone else?

How about your financial life? Have you been sacrificial and generous in giving to help advance the gospel to the ends of the earth? **GLOBAL PRIORITY MISSIONS FUND**

Do you really believe that Christ-haters can be genuinely converted into Christ lovers? Do you pray for the Muslim world, even for terrorists to come to faith?

Are you at peace with other Christians? Is there unity in this church? Are you making every effort to maintain that unity without sacrificing doctrinal truth?

Bottom line: Are you advancing the Kingdom of Christ?

*Philippians 4:23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.*