

Come As You Are (CAYA) Service
2nd Anniversary of CAYA
January 05, 2011
Rev. Howard-John Wesley, Alfred Street Baptist Church

Something's Gotta Give

Scripture Reference: Philippians 3:7-15 (New International Version)

7 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.
8 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order 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 comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—
10 that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,
11 that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.
Straining Toward the Goal (Listen)
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.

Notes on scripture above from the ESV Study Bible:

Phil. 3:7–8 **gain ... loss**. Paul's accounting, however, has now changed completely: what formerly went into the gain column—his power, prestige, and “obedience”—now goes into the loss column. Likewise, the crucified Messiah, whom he had assumed must be a “loss,” is now seen as the ultimate “gain.” The language of loss and gain probably alludes to Jesus' teaching (see Matt. 16:25–26).

Phil. 3:9 **Found in him** means being spiritually united to Christ and therefore found not guilty before God as divine judge. Paul had trusted in **a righteousness of my own** based on obedience to the law rather than the right standing before God that **comes through faith in Christ**. God “imputes” Christ's lifelong record of perfect obedience to the person who trusts in him for salvation; that is, he thinks of Christ's obedience as belonging to that person, and therefore that person stands before God not as “guilty” but as “righteous.” This is the basis on which justification by faith alone is considered “fair” in God's sight. As explained in Rom. 10:1–8, righteousness cannot come by the law because all human beings sin, and therefore right standing before God as the divine judge is possible only through faith in Jesus Christ, who is the believer's righteousness before God. See note on Gal. 2:16.

Phil. 3:10–11 The goal of trusting in Christ is to **know him**, that is, to know Christ in a personal relationship, and also to know **the power of his resurrection**—namely, the power Christ exerts now from the right hand of God. But this power is made known as the believer shares the same kind of sufferings Jesus faced—the sufferings that attend faithful witness in a fallen world. The good

news is that those who suffer with and for Christ will **attain the resurrection from the dead**, even as he did.

Phil. 3:12–16 **Paul's Progress in the Gospel: Through Christ, Not the Law.** Paul emphasizes the need for progress in Christian living, presenting himself as one who continually reaches ahead to see God's kingdom expanded.

Phil. 3:12 Paul stresses that he is not **already perfect**—he is still involved in the struggles of life in a fallen world and hence he still sins; the full glory of the resurrection remains in the future. **I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.** There is a balance of faith and works, of God's call and the believer's response.

Phil. 3:14 **Goal** (Gk. skopos) could also refer to the finish line in a race or an archery target. Paul's life is purposeful, for he constantly aims toward a heavenly goal. **The prize** is the fullness of blessings and rewards in the age to come, most especially being in perfect fellowship with Christ forever.

Phil. 3:15 **are mature.** “Mature” (Gk. teleios) is the same adjective translated “perfect” in v. 12 (“not ... perfect”). Thus, Paul is saying, in effect, “If you are really perfect/mature, you will realize you are not yet perfect/mature!”

- God was always on our side; Because of that, we’ve made it through with His grace and mercy.
- No one could have charged our life with God in 2010.
 - By God’s mercy, He didn’t strike us dead
 - Question: Why would God spare our life for another year?
 - God is not finished with us yet! Paul said, “Eyes have not seen.....”
- This year could be our best year, yet, and God can blow our minds.
- Because God wants to do it, it won’t be automatic.
- We’ve got to make some difficult choices this year.
- God has put some of us in a place where something has got to give! He has a way of pushing us where we don’t have a choice.

Three Areas Where God Will Allow Deterioration in Life

1. Those things that are unholy
 - a. God will allow absence of His presence
 - i. There are times when all of us feel distant from God
 - b. Psalm 66 – regard iniquity in our life and felt most during our time of prayer
 - c. You can’t fake being Holy on your knees with God.
 - i. Some, though, have learned to balance
2. When Your Level of Unhealthiness Raises
 - a. When you begin to feel it physically (no sleep, blood pressure raises, losing hair, etc.)
3. Unhappiness
 - a. We are not called to live a life that is unhappy.
 - b. Wherever you are lacking joy, that is not a place/space where God wants you to be.
 - c. Misery is not of God; Struggle is necessary.

NOTE: It’s a shame to make a decision at the age of 65 that should have been made at 25!

Marching Orders (not easy, but must be done)

1. Get serious about your relationship with God.

- We all know the areas of our life where we are deficient with God.

Question: How serious are you with your walk with God? Does your Bible stay in your car from Sunday to Sunday?

- At this point in our life, we ought to see the devil coming!
 - i. We should know some things at this point.
- Stay out of environments where your weakness becomes your wickedness.
- Biggest fallacy of being a young adult is believing that we have more time!
- Most seniors will tell us they will have a better life had they gotten more serious with God in their 20s!

2. Difficult conversation(s) with someone

- Some of us are in unholy and unhappy places because we are scared to have a difficult conversation.

BOLDNESS: courageous enough to say what someone does not want to hear; it's not being emotionally constipated.

- i. From scripture reference: Elijah goes on to kill 450 men; When God puts us in a situation to kill off some stuff, He will always give us the proper armor!
 - ii. Bravery to kill off stuff that we've been attached to for a while.
 - iii. Presence of God will destroy some stuff in our lives automatically; we won't have to do a thing!
- Relationships that aren't based on God.
 - i. Don't let the fear of being hypocritical keep us in a situation that isn't of Him.

3. Stand Alone

- God will exit people in your life when get serious about Him!
 - i. Think of the analogy to riding a bus. There are stops along the way; some folks stay on, some get off, some new get on!
- Fight the fear of loneliness – we invite non-ordained people in our lives, sometimes.
- God says He's got us alone for a REASON!

4. Be careful not to burn out

- Devil keeps us very busy.
- You can't hear God on the METRO between meetings!
- A burned out vessel can't receive God's will.

Question: When you don't care for yourself, what does grace have to bless?
- We only have ONE body.
- If we obey what God has called us to, He will bring us through it!

Whatever "it" is, be prepared for some folks around you to not understand.

- Be careful of who you counsel with stuff in your life!
- People will judge you by what *they* would have done.

Question: Are you strong enough to handle people who will not understand what decisions you've made?

Housekeeping notes



- CAYA – <http://www.comeaya.com> and click on
- Singles Ministry ASBCsingles_ministry@googlegroups.com
- YAM - join Alfred Street YAM facebook page, or email asbcyam@aol.com