

# Imitation Christians?!

## Philippians: Fighting for Joy

2021-01-10 by Ben Deaver at Tallgrass Church on Philippians 3:17-21

### CG Flow:

- Rejoice (5 min.)
- Who You Say I Am (5 min.)
- Dismiss to Sprouts & Mingle (5 min.)
- Preach (40 min.)
- Dilan's Sharing (10 min.)
- King of Kings (5 min.)
- Forever (We Sing Hallelujah) (5 min.)

*Rejoice*

*Who You Say I Am*

*Pray and dismiss to Sprouts and intro Mingle*

### Announcements:

- PPP forgiven!
- The Tallgrass Women's Group starts back up on Tuesday, January 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Grab a Bible and notepad

*Mingle Questions—What's your 2021 Word of the Year or at least a word you're considering?*

*Philippians: Fighting for Joy*

## Imitation Crab

- Does anyone know what this is?
- Our culture loves novelty, the new, over the tried and true.
- But imitation is how most skills develop that pave the way for good innovation.
- “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”
- Imitation crab and imitation leather are both not that awesome.

*Imitation Christians*—You can either be an imitation Christian in that you’re fake or an imitation Christian in that you’ve imitated those who follow Christ and will eventually imitate Christ Himself!

**Philippians 3:17-19** <sup>17</sup> Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. <sup>18</sup> For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. <sup>19</sup> Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.

**Philippians 3:20-21** <sup>20</sup> But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> 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.

## PRAY!

## Chiastic Burger—Chiastic Structure

- A Become like Paul (17a)
- B Eyes fixed on those walking with Jesus (17b)
  - C Many walk as enemies of the cross, end is destruction, god is their belly, earthly loyalty (18-19)
  - D But (20a)—BIG WORD!
  - C’ Our loyalty/citizenship is heavenly (20a)
- B’ Eyes fixed on Jesus (20b)
- A’ Become like Jesus (21)

- “join” is “be” in KJV—ginomai (1096) = “to become”
  - Some word as “to be like his glorious body”, “to become like Jesus’ glorious body”
- Eyes fixed on Jesus but also on those who are walking closely with Jesus!
  - Hebrews 12:2a ...looking to Jesus... or ...fixing our eyes on Jesus...
- The Greek word for “citizenship” here is “politeuma”. Where we get political from. This is the only place it’s used in the Bible. Think about the setting Paul’s writing into and from. Remember, he’s in prison, under Emperor Nero, writing to people living under Nero’s reign. Philippi is an old war town, remember? Lots of retired military generals live there. They knew all about political loyalties and fighting earthly battles. Paul writes into that environment very boldly.

## Simplified:

- A Imitate Paul (17a)

- B Imitate those walking with Jesus (17b)
  - C Many have earthly loyalties (18-19)
    - D But (20a)
      - C' We have heavenly loyalties (20a)
  - B' Imitate Jesus (20b)
- A' Imitate Jesus (21)

Examples of Imitation:

- Kids
- Music
  - Tim Schartz
- Gym
  - Cory Field and protein
- Spiritual disciplines

## *More on Imitation:*

- **1 Corinthians 11:1-2** Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. <sup>2</sup> Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you.
- **1 Corinthians 11:1-2 MSG** It pleases me that you continue to remember and honor me by keeping up the traditions of the faith I taught you.
- **1 Corinthians 4:14-17** <sup>14</sup> I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. <sup>15</sup> For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. <sup>16</sup> I urge you, then, be imitators of me. <sup>17</sup> That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church.
- **2 Timothy 2:2** ...and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.
- **2 Thessalonians 2:15** So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.
- **2 Thessalonians 3:6-7a, 9** <sup>6</sup> Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. <sup>7a</sup> For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us... <sup>9</sup> It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate.
- **Philippians 4:9** What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.
- **Jeremiah 6:16** Thus says the LORD:  
 “Stand by the roads, and look,  
 and ask for the ancient paths,  
 where the good way is; and walk in it,  
 and find rest for your souls.  
 But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’”

## *But... Our Citizenship is in Heaven!*

- Paul’s tears over the enemies of the cross of Christ.

- I find it interesting that he doesn't call them enemies of Christ but enemies of the cross of Christ. It seems that everyone thinks they love Jesus but it's the cross part they have a tough time with.
- The Worldly
  - Their end is destruction
  - Their god is their belly
  - They glory in their shame
  - Their minds are set on earthly things
- But our citizenship is...in heaven! Let this statement speak to your political sensibilities.
- We have a King! We are to actively await our King's second Advent.
- Where are your allegiances?
- I have some strong political opinions in this moment but I'm not going to share those.
- I had a cousin recently comment that they were surprised that it seemed we thought so differently on certain issues. I was surprised that he was surprised. He's lived in rural NE his whole life and I moved from Smalltown, NE to inner city Kansas City when I was nine.
- I went to high school in inner city Kansas City at Sumner Academy of Arts and Science, a school that was all black until desegregation changed that in the late '70s. I learned a little of the history of Charles Sumner, the namesake of my high school who was a very strong abolitionist whose image hangs in the halls of Congress. I'm learning more of that history this week.
- I've had international student friends from across this globe.
- I have friends of all shapes and size, colors and backgrounds, who've shared with me really difficult scenes in their lives this past year.
- Our experiences are part of what shapes us. We desperately need to learn to sit down with one another and listen to one another's stories, my friends!
- I'm not a trained historian, psychologist, or cultural anthropologist. I'm definitely not a politician nor do I have any political science background beyond a single class at K-State (if I remember correctly). I'm not even an academic when it comes to theology, although I do love studying theology.
- If you've opened up the Interwebs this week you've probably had a chance to see many "experts" speak to the realities we're facing in 2021. BTW, weren't we putting the pandemic and the politics behind us on January 1<sup>st</sup>?!
- I'm not an expert in any of these fields. I am, however, a pastor of this church. And I'm preaching to you all this morning on this text in front of us—Philippians 3:17-21.
- I remember sitting in the American Baptist Church I grew up in in Chadron, NE as an eight year and wondering why the American flag and Christian flag flew on either side of the stage.
- I remember when first studying Philippians and coming across this verse and thinking, "Things can get very bad when Christ-followers confuse the priority of their allegiances."
- You can scan history and see all sorts of times when God's people became loyal to earthly things rather than God Himself.
  - Jesus was born into an environment when many if not most of the Jewish leadership had totally sold out for either political protection or political power. Just think of Herod the Great, the one who wanted to find the Christ Child so he could "worship" Him.
  - Nazi Germany in the '40s
  - The Iranian Revolution of the late '70s
- We live in a seemingly complex and confusing time and this last week and the next few weeks to come might be the pinnacle of that chaos. So this passage couldn't be more timely for us to sit in

together just a bit and strain to hear the voice of Jesus cut through all of the other voices competing for your loyalty.

- Does anyone remember what happened this past Wednesday, January 6<sup>th</sup>?
- Wednesday, January 6<sup>th</sup>, was what is called by many in Western Christianity, Epiphany. Eastern Christians call it Theophany. An epiphany and a theophany are the same thing, an appearance of a deity, a manifestation of the divine.
- Some call it Three Kings' Day and commemorate the visit of the Magi, the Wisemen from Babylon, who came to worship Jesus Christ as an infant.
- The Good News of Three Kings' Day is not just that these Magi from the East came into relationship with Jesus Christ but that Jesus Christ is a kind and loving and peace-bringing King for the whole world, not just the Jews. The visit of the Magi undermines any politically driven religious fervor that exists. While the Magi worshiped Christ, Herod the Great was plotting and scheming his next political power move which was in his case to slaughter all the boys under the age of two in the region.
- Herod the Great and the religious leadership that opposed Jesus later in His life were Imitation Jews. They weren't really after the things of God but their own earthly pursuit.
- Whatever you call it and whenever you celebrate it it's important to remember that God revealed Himself to the whole world in Christ very shortly after Jesus' birth.
- So I find it very ironic and tragic that on Epiphany 2021 we saw Christian Nationalism play out before our very eyes.
  - So many flags were flying this past Wednesday. Those flags represent all sorts of loyalties.
  - <https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/09/us/capitol-hill-insurrection-extremist-flags-soh/index.html>
- How does Philippians 3:20 impact our neighboring efforts? What citizenship informs our actions? What are we willing to die for? How broadly do we want to invite people into the citizenship we most enjoy?
- I want to take a few moments for us to ask Jesus what Philippians 3:20 means for you...today and over the next ten days.

*PAUSE and REFLECT!*

**Philippians 3:18-20** <sup>18</sup> For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. <sup>19</sup> Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. <sup>20</sup> But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ...

1. How will you *fight for joy*...over the next ten days?
2. What enemy of the cross do you need to weep over, over the next ten days? We can all become enemies of the cross at times. Perhaps you need to weep over yourself.
3. How will you fight for tears over anger and vitriol?
4. How will you recalibrate your hope to be place in Jesus above all this year?
5. How will you be a person of peace in the spaces you live and operate? In person? Online?
6. What good works has God prepared for you to walk in over the next ten days (Eph. 2:10)?
7. Who can you sit with in conversation over the next few weeks?
8. What kind of character do you want to exude this year? What kind of character do you want to be known for?
9. How can you stir up others to love and good deeds when we gather (Heb. 10:24-25)?

## *A Savior?!*

- A Savior? Didn't Jesus already come as Savior? Yes, He came to deliver us from the penalty and partially deliver us from the power of sin. But He will come again as Savior, to totally save us from the power of sin AND the presence of sin!
- We will imitate Christ in His physical resurrection!
- <sup>21</sup> 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.
  - Transformation of our lowly body to be like His glorious body! Remember my monarch butterfly Lula? Such a beautiful transformation and one seemingly made with such ease...no striving. I can't wait!
  - **Philippians 2:9-11** <sup>9</sup>Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup>so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

*Imitation Christians*—You can either be an imitation Christian in that you're fake or an imitation Christian in that you've imitated those who follow Christ and will eventually imitate Christ Himself!

**PRAY!**

*Homework:*

## 1. Memorize and meditate on Philippians 3:20 over the next ten days.

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ...

## 2. Imitate someone (aka discipleship)

- Begin (or continue) Discipleship 101!
- 2021 WOTYs
- Reading the *Whole Bible Under 2 Years*
  - There's almost 40 of us in this reading plan together.
  - The questions and comments have been great.
  - We've read through Genesis 9 and a handful of New Testament passages thus far so it's not too late to jump in.

## 3. Consider *Sexual Integrity: 101*

- The enemies of the cross live for their carnal pleasures—whether that's their bellies or their sexual appetites. We understand our sexuality is a powerful gift that God has given us.

## *Have Dilan Oglesby share with us!*

- Dilan's the Tallgrass Youth Pastor and all-around good guy. Another tidbit about Dilan is that he started his first day at Konza Strength with me this past Friday so we'll get to see that transformation occur in the months ahead.
- Dilan shared some of his story with the guys at Guys Group this past Tuesday and he also shared at our Central Gathering over the summer.
- I've invited him to share with us again.

## *PRAY!*

**Ephesians 1:15-23** <sup>15</sup>For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, <sup>16</sup>I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, <sup>17</sup>that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, <sup>18</sup>having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup>and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might <sup>20</sup>that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup>far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. <sup>22</sup>And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, <sup>23</sup>which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

## *Then sing King of Kings + Forever (We Sing Hallelujah)*

Pray Prophetic Promises

<b>Encounter with God/ Who You Are!</b>	<b>The Defining Passage</b>	<b>The Limbic Lie From Hell</b>	<b>The Prophetic Promise</b>
Watching “Luther” and sharing it with EmmaHouse friends at the Stone Barn (2004?)	1 Thess. 1:5 ...because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.	You’re a maverick. You’re the problem. You shouldn’t bring who you are.	You’re a man of conviction who God is using to bring the gospel in word in power in the Holy Spirit and in full conviction.
Holding the lamb in China (summer of 2005)	Ps 23:1 The Lord is my shepherd...	God doesn’t really care about you. He’s too busy taking care of the other sheep and so are His undershepherds.	I care so very much about YOU!
Utilizing Romans 8:1 to battle for peace in the middle of the night. (2009-2011)	Rom. 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.	You’re worthless!	There’s no condemnation.
Exodus 14:13-14 hitting me hard when doing Soul Care with Ken Goodyear. (Fall of 2017)	Ex. 14:13b-14 <sup>13b</sup> “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. <sup>14</sup> The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.”	You have to figure things out on your own. You’re alone.	God is the Way Maker!
Watching the monarch butterfly Lula emerge from its cocoon. (9/6/14—9/17/14)	2 Cor. 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.	You’ll be sunk by anxiety like others before you. It’s just a matter of time before something bad happens.	I’m a NEW creation! I’m being transformed.
Walking at the Konza when God said, “You’ve done enough!” (4/29/20)	Matt. 25:21, 23 “His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’”	You’ve squandered and wasted your life. You had so much potential but didn’t live up to it because of your fear of failure.	Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.
Time at St. Benedict’s Abbey—“relational capacity” and “allow others to love you” (10/24/19—10/25/19)	Luke 7:47 “Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.”		