

“...walk worthily...” from the Book of Philippians

Scripture Block: Pp 1:1-11

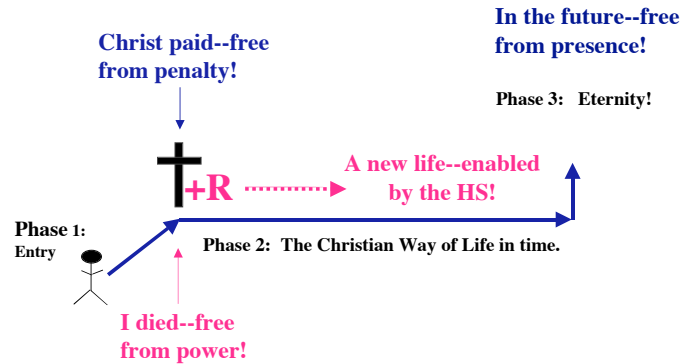
Theme: GOD’S EXPECTATION OF FRUITFUL SERVICE

Life verse: Pp 1:9-11

Today’s passage: Pp 1:11

Notes Comments

As a way of reviewing, consider the following graphic:



Christ’s work on the cross sets us free from the penalty of sin, while our identification with his death and burial is the means God has provided to free us from the power of sin. What remains, is for the Spirit to manifest the new life through us, which will in turn lead to the manifestation of the fruit of imputed righteousness in our lives—all through Jesus Christ, which takes us back to our passage.

What that means, is that the many passages we typically interpret as a work-list for the believer, are instead meant to be descriptive of the new life and what God intends to do. Consider for example Col 3:12

Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. .

If our hearts are sensitive, it is easy to respond by trying our best to become more compassionate, kind, humble, gentle and patient. It is always a mistake for the Christian to attempt to force himself to become “better.” This is just another attempt to change self, and self (the old nature) is incurably corrupt. The passage itself contains a clue as to how we are to accomplish these things, and the context connects with what we saw in Rm 6-8. Notice, the passage says to “clothe” ourselves with these things. The word “clothe” is used as a synonym for the new life. In other words, look to the new life for the manifestation of these qualities. The context makes this clearer still: vs 3-4 reminds us that Christ is our life; vs 5 reminds us to put to death the acts of the sinful nature, i.e. consider ourselves dead to sin (Rm 6:11); vs 9 describes the truths of Rm 6 using an analogy related to

clothing, i.e. “take off” the old nature and “put on” the new life. Our passage in vs 12 then, naturally flows as the outworking of the new life.

Application

When you come to any of the Scriptural lists of character or behavior qualities—you know, those lists that sound so good, but are so difficult to permanently weave into your live, here is how I suggest that you treat them:

1) Consider them like a musical score that describes what the new life is like. Our first job as believers, is to become as familiar with the “music” of the new life as possible.

2) As we become thoroughly familiar with the tune, we can shift to trusting in the truth of Pp 1:6 and the enabling ministry of the Holy Spirit (Rm 8:4). Continuing the analogy, as we are led we can begin to “hum along”, i.e. naturally work the fruits of character into our lives.

3) As we grow in our ability to trust in the finished work of the cross, in terms of nullifying the old man; and become increasingly dependent upon the Spirit working the qualities of the Christ-life within, we will ever-more manifest the fruit of righteousness becoming conformed to the likeness of our Savior.

God provides the means, we depend upon him in faith and receive the blessing—that’s grace!