

Pentecost

XXI

October 4-5,

2008

***“Living with God’s Heart”***

Text: Philippians 3:4-14, 18-21

The time had finally come. For 35 years, the house had been home to the family. It was once their new home and now “mom” had sold the home.

There were pleasant memories however, yet those memories made it hard to part with the home. Yet the mother’s words to her son made the transition much easier. She said that when the family had first moved into the brick house that Dad was so proud of he told her, *“This is my last move, the next move is up.”*

And once again, the son realized that his father was right. When he died in the bedroom of that same house, he immediately to a far greater place. He moved to the place that St. Paul talks about in our text.

It is very easy to get caught up with life around us instead of focusing upon life ahead of us-life in heaven. As we hear the words of our text, we remind ourselves once again that life on earth is only temporary and that God has eternal plans for us. As we live each day and enjoy what God has provided for us it is most important that we have-

**LIVING WITH GOD’S HEART**

**I. Life in Heaven is our goal**

**II. God’s love transforms our life**

## I.

In the words preceding our text, St. Paul talks about the difference in his life before and after knowing Jesus Christ. He had everything, or so it seemed. He goes on to say, "*I consider everything a loss to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things.*" He goes on to say that he considers everything else as "rubbish" compared to his relationship with Jesus Christ.

Can we say the same today? We live in a very material. As one singer of some years ago said, "*We live in a material world, and I am a material girl!*" That pretty much sums up life today in 1996 doesn't it? Evidently, the day of the first century wasn't much different, they had their distractions too.

St. Paul had a goal in mind. It was living the life that Jesus Christ had called him to. He said that he wanted to take hold of that life. He makes a very important distinction though, when he points out that Jesus Christ did the first acting by taking hold of him as he also has done with you and me. He was pressing on toward that goal. He was straining toward that goal of life in Christ now and that final goal of heaven.

That says to you and me that there are struggles in our lives as Christian people. Temptations surround us. We are coaxed to give in and leave everything behind for the temporary joy of the here and now. Remember that

everything that attempts to sway us has a temporary solution and not long term and certainly not eternal.

## 2

It has been said, “*To make the most of today, keep eternity in mind.*” This is the goal that we always must keep in mind for our lives now. St. Paul said it earlier in this epistle, “*For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.*” (Philippians 1:21) Because we have been called by our Savior we live out our lives with that goal in mind and we are changed.

## II.

As he speaks of the goal that he has in mind, the apostle now shows us how that makes a difference in our lives now. This is, by the way, the unspoken and always observed question of those who are not Christians. How are you different? Are you any better? We sometimes forget that for we know the Gospel and forgiveness, while the world around us only knows the law.

This is not “works righteousness”, for St. Paul says very clearly in verse 16, “*Only let us live up to what we have already attained.*” The working here is God’s in Jesus Christ, not our perfection. St. Paul draws attention to himself, not in a self-centered, arrogant way, but to show how God was at work in and through him.

It is important that we set ourselves as godly examples to follow and follow those who are. There are plenty of other examples in the world around today. Both in the time of our text and in our world of today there are plenty who live for themselves and are opposed to the cross

of Jesus Christ. As you heard last week, there are governments opposed to Christ and Christian principles

### 3

and in our own country certainly groups and philosophies that oppose Christ.

What you and I have and what we live for is indeed different from all of that. St. Paul says, “*our citizenship is in heaven*” This is our goal for life here and what makes our attitude and approach toward life different from those around us. Our text sums that up by saying, “*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.*”

A young man in college had an unusual ability but somehow never could seem to organize himself so as to get his work done effectively. One day, in a science laboratory, he saw the professor take a magnifying glass and concentrate all the energies of the sun in one spot. Suddenly, he spontaneously shouted, “*I see it now. That’s what I need to do.*” He realized that he had been spreading himself over too many things and doing none of them well. He saw that he needed to choose priorities and then “zero in” on the most important things with complete dedication and concentration.

Where is your heart? Where are your priorities? You are important to God. He has called you as His very own in Christ. Celebrate that life you have in Him through joyous Christian living. Like St. Paul, aim for your home Your Father is calling you and he calls you to a life that is rich and full, one that has countless joys and never ends. Amen.

