

REDO

Lessons from Philippians 3

Back in 4th grade, one of my favorite recess games was Kickball. It's similar to baseball only instead of hitting a small white ball with a bat, you kick a big red ball with your foot.

On our playground, the most impressive kickball feat was for someone to kick a "roof ball." In this instance, a ball would be kicked so high and so long that it went to the roof of our 2-story school building.

During one particular game of kickball, I was feeling a bit cocky.

*I decided to point to the roof to signal my impending "roofball."
I was calling my shot.*

*My teammates started chanting my name.
The pitcher pitched ball.
I ran forward and...*

Dribbled a bunt to the first baseman for an easy out.

*I remember almost immediately asking for a REDO.
That is...*

*Another try.
A second chance.
A do over.*

*Because I wasn't ready.
Or something.*

Do you wish you could REDO 2020?
Maybe you weren't ready for what 2020 threw to us.

2021 is a great chance for a REDO.
And even more so, because in Jesus we get countless REDOs.

Our goal? To learn from Scripture, to grow in faith, to make the most of the REDO God has afforded us.

Before we begin, a prayer: **O Lord, strengthen us by the truth. Your Word is the truth. Open our eyes to see what you want us to see; open our ears to hear what you want us to hear; and open our hearts to believe what you would have us believe. Amen.**

I. The Philippian Redo

The lesson we are looking at is found in Philippians. Philippians is a letter written by a pastor named Paul to a congregation that lived in Philippi. This congregation had been going through a rough year. For starters, they had been dealing with **persecutions to their church**. (Philippians 1:27-28) The Roman government had begun cracking down on Christianity.

It meant soldiers would interrupt their church meetings to tell them to stop.
It meant they had to be sneaky about whom they told they were a believer.
It meant that they probably lost some of their membership to jail.

In addition, the group had been **dealing with racism**. The majority of the congregation was Greek. They had been told by a segment of Jewish believers that God would never fully love them unless they started practicing Jewish custom. Even then – it might not be the full kind of love that God has for Jewish people. (3:1-3)

Finally, the anxiety from the threat of arrest and the stress caused by these racist statements led the church group to be **bitter with one another**.

To attack one another.

To bad mouth one another.

And they didn't even have Facebook.

Pastor Paul writes them a letter because he wants to give them a **REDO**. This redo won't change the challenges they were facing, but it was an opportunity to change how they were responding to these challenges. Same thing for us.

If you want your REDO not to result in the same, old traps you fell into last year, listen to Paul's Holy Spirit inspired words.

“Whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.” (v.7)

With this statement, Paul is acknowledging they had lost quite a few things this past year:

They'd lost a sense of security.

They'd lost members to jailtime.

Probably they lost income and jobs and friendships.

Paul says, “I feel you. I've lost things too.”

I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord for whose sake I have lost all things. (v.8b)

Paul used to be a bigwig in the Jewish faith.

He used to be a Pharisee. The Pharisees were big wig, impressive members of Jewish society.

When Paul was a Pharisees, he had gained a lot!

A higher income.

A more impressive position.

Friends in high place.

A good reputation.

Safety.

Political clout.

A career path.

But now Paul has a different perspective about them.

Notice that last sentence.

Paul had been a Pharisee with all the Pharisaical perks!

But the Pharisees were against Jesus.

So...

When Paul started following Jesus, he lost it all.

He lost income.

He lost his position.

He lost friends in high places.

He lost the good reputation.

He lost safety.

He lost political standing.
He lost a career path.

I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him (v.)

Christmas creates a lot of garbage, doesn't it?

Torn up wrapping paper.
Crinkled gift bags.
Plastic packaging for new toys.
Burnt cookies.
The little bit of eggnog that got left out overnight.

Whatever it is you consider garbage, you have no problem throwing it into the garbage can, having it hauled off to the dump and never seeing it again.

Paul says that is how he feels about what he's lost.
Because what he's lost never will compare to what he's gained.

Jesus.

TRUTH:

There is no greater GAIN than Jesus.

Think about what you've lost this year.
If you've got Jesus, you'll still come out ahead.
Because nothing is more valuable than Jesus.

Jesus is greater than crowd noise at a football game.
Jesus is greater than skin that isn't dried out due to hand sanitizer.
Jesus is greater than hugs, kisses and even – high fives!

Jesus is greater than a 40 hour a week job.
Jesus is greater than a booming economy.
Jesus is greater than a bulging bank account.

Jesus is greater than the freedom not to wear masks.
Jesus is greater than being able to gather in groups of 20.
Jesus is greater than free samples at Whole Foods!

Jesus is greater than your family.
Jesus is greater than your friends.
Jesus is greater than anything lost in 2020.

Why do I say that so confidently?
Why does Paul say that so confidently?

Two reasons:

TRUTH:

In Jesus you gain RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Because when sinful people get hit by challenges, they tend to respond sinfully.
2020 had lots of challenge and people responded in lots of sinful ways.

Maybe that was you:

Shouting matches with your spouse because of the close quarters.
Losing it on your kids because they can't figure out online school.

Four letter names to acquaintances on Facebook because they have a different opinion than you.

Racist comments.

Suicidal thoughts.

Developing a new addiction to porn, alcohol, or telling everybody how awesome you are!

Planning to stay connected to God and his Word and his church.

But ultimately, staying more connected to spoilers for the Mandalorian.

Reflecting on all of this at the end of the year can make you feel *really* guilty.

It can be overwhelming.

As if you're wearing it.

But in Jesus, you aren't wearing your guilt.

In Jesus, you wear something else.

...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 on the basis of faith. (v.9b)

Do you see that?

God knew about all the unrighteous things we would do in 2020.

He knew about them and he took care of them way back in 35.

He lived for you.

He died for you.

He rose for you.

Then, he gave you his righteousness as a covering.

And God's good at sewing together righteous clothing.

It's not like the pair of pants that was only like fifteen dollars. Seemed like a steal. But when you wore them a couple of times, washed, them and put them back on you noticed...

There's some fading on the knee.

A hole is forming!

God's righteous clothing is much better.

There's no hole in the righteousness in which God covers you.

This means:

God sees you as pure because he only sees Jesus' purity.

God sees you as forgiven because he sees none of your 2020 sin.

God sees you as his because you are.

This leads to a second reason there is no greater gain than Jesus:

TRUTH:

In Jesus you gain ETERNAL LIFE.

According to CDC.gov, the COVID vaccine is going to be helpful. It helps your body create an antibody response to the virus and gives it immunity that is needed to come in contact with the virus, not get sick, and not spread it to others.

Granted --Scientists are still unclear how long the immunity may last. As more people have it and they are able to study its long-term effects, they will be able to learn more, produce a better vaccine and any booster shots.

But there is one thing that Scientists do know.

The vaccine only works on people who are alive.
It doesn't raise the dead.

But Jesus does.

I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. (v.10-11)

There is nothing that you lost in 2020 that can raise the dead.
Only Jesus can raise the dead.
And he didn't go anywhere.

If you've got Jesus, you've got everything.

II. What Now?

1) Reconsider your Losses

For example, I was talking to someone a while back. They told me that they had recently lost their job. They had lost their income. They had lost the plans they had for providing a nice vacation for their family in 2020.

I said, "I'm sorry."
They said, "Why? This is one of the best things to ever happen to me!

"I've gained more time with my family .

"I've gained more time with my God.

"I've gained a stronger faith.

"I've gained more time to share that stronger faith with my kids and provide them something that lasts a lot longer than a week at Disney."

That's what Paul is talking about.
Reconsider your losses.
Praise God for the gains among the losses.

2) Forget What's Behind

Because if you are in a race you don't do very well by turning around and running backwards. In fact, you will probably make the "worst of" on ESPN's Sportscenter.

It's the same thing in life. Paul says this, **"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."** (v.13)

The start of a new year presents us with the unique opportunity to START OVER.

But you won't do that very well if you dwell in the past.

Make this conscious, God-inspired decision right now.

Don't dwell on the past.
Don't dwell on the woulda, coulda, shoulda's.

Instead, look ahead.
In fact, here's your final what now.

3) Strive Ahead

Do you know where Paul was when he wrote these words?

Prison.

But he didn't sit around in prison lamenting about what he LOST.
He spent time in prison excited about what he GAINED.

A great chance to be in quiet prayer with God.
Awesome opportunities to share Jesus with his cellmates.
The time needed to write down a God inspired piece of God's Word that will bless people two thousand years in the future.

Good choice Paul.

He finishes:

"I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." (v.14)

Look forward.

What opportunities do you have this year?

What chance do you have to share Jesus?

What unique things about your situation here in 2021 might God work through to bring people into his kingdom?

It's the same thing here at church.

Because things have changed a lot here thanks to the pandemic.

Online presence has increased.

Group studies have moved online.

We do communion differently.

We spent our evangelism funding differently.

At some point, some of might turn back to the way we did it previously.

But some of it? Won't.

Understand this --

Our goal as a church is not to get things back to the way things were.

Our goal as a church is to share Jesus in the way things are.

Again --

Our goal as a church is not to get things back to the way things were.

Our goal as a church is to share Jesus in the way things are.

And the way things are?

Is an incredible blessing.

I'm excited for 2021.

I hope you are too.

May God bless us in this REDO. Amen.