

*I press on  
toward the goal to  
win the prize for  
which God has  
called me  
heavenward  
in Christ  
Jesus.*

Philippians 3:14

Following the upward call through Philipians ...

## Glory and Praise

When an individual is immersed into Christ Jesus, he is clothed with Christ (Galatians 3:26,27). It follows, then, that he is thus clothed also with the righteousness of Christ. This is the *imputed righteousness* that some scholars speak of in talking about those who have been redeemed. "But now apart from the Law," said the apostle Paul to the Roman congregation, "the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God" which comes through the system of thought called "the faith of Christ" (Romans 3:21,22). The sinner

has no righteousness of his own which would recommend him for an eternity of fellowship with God; hence God has to provide it through Christ. God's goal, however, is not that the former sinner remain in the same abject condition in which he was called through the gospel. "What benefit," asked Paul of the saints at Rome, "were you then deriving of the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death" (Romans 6:21). The follower of Christ is to follow Christ — upward, and out of a life of sin and into a life of practicing righteousness.

- ◆ **Fruit of righteousness** — In writing to the Philippian brethren, the apostle has a list of building blocks for the saints. His desire first is that their love would abound, that this would result more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, that through these the brethren would be able to approve the things that are excellent, and that these necessary steps would be taken that the Christians would be able to be sincere and blameless, and hold that blamelessness until the day of Jesus' return. But he, having stacked these building blocks in their correct order for the personal growth of the brethren, still has more to place on the stack. He further describes them as "having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:11). The "righteousness of God," which is "reckoned" to the saint as a result of his being in Christ, is to result in what Paul and the Holy Spirit call "the fruit of righteousness." Jesus was given His name — Yahweh our Savior — before His birth, one of those announcements being given by an angel to Joseph. The reason given for that name: "It is He," pronounced the angel, "who will save His people *from* their sins" (Matthew 1:21). He was not going to save His people *in* their sins, but *from* their sins! The power of the righteousness of God through Jesus Christ is strong enough actually to produce a people who exhibit the fruit of that righteousness, who present themselves before the world as a righteous and blameless people, holy in thought, word, and action!

*Saints' exhibiting the  
fruit of righteous-  
ness is what is really  
for God's praise and  
glory*

- ◆ **For God's glory** — Is God glorified through a bunch of hypocrites? Is His name lifted up and truly exalted before a hostile and darkened world through those who claim the name of Christ but are in fact sloshing around in the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life? "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" was Paul's statement (Romans 1:18). The Almighty's and the All Wise' clear desire is to produce a special people who would exhibit the character of Christ to an unbelieving world. As the apostle Peter put it, God has done these magnificent things through Christ, "that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust" (2 Peter 1:4). Thus the saints, edified through the building blocks in the stack Paul revealed, are "filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, *to the praise and glory of God*" (Philippians 1:11).

The musicians playing their trumpets, minstrels strumming their stringed instruments, the Levites singing God's praises — all from the Old Testament — are not necessarily what glorifies God. What is really for His praise and glory is when the saints exhibit the fruit of righteousness, which is a much deeper character issue than simply being able to belt out a tune.

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