

## **The Tree of Life**

### **A summary of teaching from the week ending June 04, 2000**

In our study of Philippians chapter three, we saw in verse 10 the tremendous opportunity we have to know the Lord Jesus Christ and the power behind His resurrection. We saw the tremendous privilege we have to come to know Him and to participate in His sufferings and being conformed to His death.

Phi 3:10 “That I may come to know Him, and the power of [behind] His resurrection and the participation of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;”

We are now ready for Philippians 3:11 “if, in some way, I may attain to the resurrection away from the dead ones.”

The Bible must be taught based upon three principles; we use the acronym ICE which stands for: Isagogics or the historical setting of the passage. Categorical or the systematic theology developed from combining and comparing Scripture with Scripture. Exegesis or the grammatical and syntactical analysis of the passage from the original languages. We will use this process in looking at Phi 3:11. We begin with the historical setting of the passage, Paul is in jail at the time that he was writing this and he desired to continue to live so that he could have the opportunity to experience resurrection life before he died. Under the principle of categorical doctrine, which is developed from combining Scripture with Scripture, our resurrection does not depend in any way on our merit. Under the principle of exegesis we have the apostle Paul saying “that I may attain to the resurrection”, and he used the Greek verb “katantao” . The word means to attain, to arrive at a location, to achieve an objective or a goal. The Greek tense that is used refers to a point of time or a goal that Paul is desiring to reach before he dies and goes home to be face to face with the Lord. He wants to experience the ultimate in the spiritual life, resurrection life in time and blessings and decorations in the resurrection body for the eternal state. The verb is used in

the subjunctive mood and means that maybe he will, maybe he will not, that all depends upon whether or not Mar 12:30 is a reality in our life.

Mar 12:30 “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.”

Paul wanted to arrive at a location; he had an objective or goal. Paul wanted to experience the resurrected life of Jesus Christ before he died. Resurrection life refers to an extraordinary peace that God desires for us to experience. Even in time, we have the ability to begin to experience resurrection life within us. This experience and sense of peace will ebb and flow because this new life is released by God the Holy Spirit little by little as we experience the two sides of the Cross. The first side is death to the old sin nature; the second side is having the privilege to experience a glimpse of resurrection life now in time. God has a plan for our lives which enables us to embrace an inward death to self, despite all of the opposition, as a part of that plan He also gives us the opportunity to experience resurrection life which is the other side of the Cross. If we stay with the plan of God, we will have times when we will experience not just death to the self-life but also the experience of the newness of life, resurrection life. There is a difference between living the spiritual life and experiencing the resurrection life of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul was living in the new creature under the filling of the Spirit, but he still wanted to attain or to experience the resurrection life in time (compare Gal 6:14-16 with Phi 3:11). There is also a difference between believing on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation and believing upon Him to experience eternal life in this life.

Joh 20:31 “But these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing you may have life in His name.”

Anyone who believes in Christ alone by faith alone is saved and will go to heaven and will experience eternal life for all of eternity, Acts 16:31. However, if anyone keeps on believing on Him, in the sense of following His word and applying it to their personal lives, living inside the plan for their

lives, they will have the privilege of experiencing eternal life right now in time. It is important to note that in the Greek, which is the original language of the New Testament, that the most popular tense of the verb is the aorist tense. The basic significance of this tense is to denote an action as simply occurring once without reference to its progress. Simply, it means an action is performed at one point of time. There is also the present tense. The basic concept of the present tense is of progress, or progression. It refers to something that is a continual action. The verb in view here is “pisteuo” which means to believe, to have faith in, to be convinced of, to trust, to rely on, or to have confidence in. We are just going to look at the word in the sense of believing.

Act 16:30-31 “And after he brought them out, he said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household.”

Notice the word “believe” and also the word “saved.” Salvation is in view in this passage by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the Greek word “pisteuo” or faith alone in Christ alone. The words eternal life are not in this passage. This does mean that anyone who believes in Christ does not have eternal life, they do. You can believe on the Lord Jesus Christ but never experience your eternal life until you die. In this verse, the word believe or pisteuo is in the aorist tense, a one shot decision to believe and we are saved. Making this one shot decision doesn’t guarantee that we will experience the spiritual or eternal life in this life.

John 1:6-7 “There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. He came for a witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him.”

Again “pisteuo” or believe is in the aorist tense so that a one shot decision is made to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and we are saved, born again.

Joh 3:14-15 “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life.”

Now in this verse we have the word “believe” but we also have the words eternal life. The tense of the word believe or pisteuo this time is in the present which means that if we continually keep on believing and continue with His word then we will have the privilege of experiencing a part of eternal life now on this earth, we don’t have to wait until we die. If that were not true, then this verse would be saying we have to keep on believing in Him or else we would lose our salvation and that would contradict the other verses that teach that salvation is a one shot decision, faith alone, in Christ alone. The Bible does not contradict itself. The experience of resurrection life in time is a reward for living the ultimate spiritual life in time by habitually and continually following His word. Sometimes believing in Him has a reference to following Him after salvation.

1Pe 1:8 “and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,”

The word believe is in the present tense meaning that if we continually keep on believing in Him and continue with His word then we will have the privilege of greatly rejoicing with a joy inexpressible and full of glory. One of the most frequently quoted verses in the Bible is Joh 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” In this verse we have the word believe again and we also have the words eternal life. The tense of the word believe or pisteuo is a present tense, meaning that if I continually keep on believing and continue with His word then I will have the privilege of experiencing part of eternal life now on this earth and I don’t have to wait until I die. This is not just living the spiritual life but going forward to having the privilege of experiencing the life within that we receive because of our union with the resurrected Christ. Joh 4:39 “And from that city many of the

Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all the things that I {have} done.” There’s our word believe again, and no mention of eternal life, the tense here is aorist tense. They made a one shot decision to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and they were saved. However, there’s no present tense here for them continuing to believe. This does not mean some of them did not continue in the present tense, but in this verse salvation is the issue and not living in eternal life and therefore the aorist tense is used and not the present. Remember someone can be saved by making a one shot decision. Believing in Christ alone by faith alone will save us and we will go to heaven and will experience eternal life for all of eternity, Act 16:31. However, if anyone keeps on believing on Him in the sense following His word and applying to their personal lives, they will have the privilege of experiencing eternal life right now in time. In Joh 6:40 “For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.” The present tense of the verb here means that it is the will of God the Father that if anyone continually keeps on believing and continues with His word, they will have the privilege of experiencing some of eternal life now on this earth. Also see Joh 7:39, Joh 12:46, Joh 14:1, Joh 14:12, as examples of the present tense. To be a Christian and be saved because you recognize that you’re a sinner and you need to be saved. Believe is in the aorist tense, make that one shot decision at one point of time. But to experience the life of Christ and live the spiritual life ultimately reaching the goal of resurrected life, then a present tense is used, keep on going forward in the plan of God. So Philippians 3:11 has a dual connotation; it has to do with experiencing resurrection life now in time and it also has to do with all that God has for you in your resurrection body in the eternal state. The eternal state is not a place of equality but rather inequality. Paul said in Phi 3:14 “I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” This should be the goal that all born again believers have, not to prove their love, but rather as a result of their love for the Lord Jesus Christ. God has His highest and best in mind for each and every one of us. God has blessed us with fantastic blessings in eternity past. Eph 1:4 “just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.” He did all of this in eternity

past and as a part of attaining to the resurrection, we should all aspire to receiving all the blessings that He has designed us to have for all of the eternal state.

There is coming a time when all members of the Royal family of God will stand before God in their resurrection bodies to either lose or receive rewards for the deeds done in the body. Attaining to the resurrection also has to do with receiving all of these rewards God prepared for us in eternity past. You will never lose your fantastic happiness at the Judgment Seat of Christ even if you receive no reward, due to your failure in life. However, attaining all that God has for you in the resurrection has to do with receiving all of those rewards for the eternal state. Again this is why the apostle Paul said, “that I may attain to the resurrection.” He not only wanted to experience a part of the resurrection life in time, his ultimate goal was to reach the objective which was to glorify God in time and receive blessings and rewards that stagger the imagination covering the resurrection body for all of eternity. Paul’s motivation was correct, it was not because he wanted to be rewarded, and it was because he loved God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Joh 20:31 “but these have been written so that you may believe (aorist tense) that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing (present tense) you may have life in His name.”