

## FROM SALVATION TO SANCTIFICATION!

Friday, May 8th 2020

### *Philippians 3:14-16*

*"I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently that too God will make clear to you. Only let us live up to what we have already attained."*

When I read through these verses, I have to admit I was a bit confused. Paul's words here from prison are full of determination and encouragement. I find myself asking though what the apostle means when he says to **press on toward the goal to win the prize**.

On the one hand, our salvation is free and there's nothing we could ever do to earn it. It's a very expensive gift God bought for us through the precious blood of Jesus Christ. I can't add anything to that. At the same time Paul speaks here of some sort of contest, where we struggle to gain a prize. That sounds like it requires effort! Among Christians there seems to be an uncertainty between the free grace of God and our spiritual struggle to follow and live like Jesus.

Galileo Galilei once pointed out appropriately that two truths cannot contradict each other, so how do we understand Paul's call here to give it everything we got to win the prize of **being in Heaven with Christ**? We can only hope to understand this dualism of free grace and spiritual struggle when we grasp the difference between **salvation** and **sanctification**.

As Jesus died on the cross for our sins, He bought our salvation. When we accept Him as our Lord and Savior, we become free, unconditionally loved children of God. Our salvation remains free of charge into eternity! But salvation isn't the end of the story; it's the beginning! After salvation comes the rocky and often challenging process of sanctification. The Lord in all His mercy doesn't leave us how we are but is committed to mold our character as a potter slowly molds a vessel. No matter how often we fall, we can always jump back into the battle because God is patient. But here is where our attitude is crucial. Sin is not some small triviality. We should take it seriously and immediately repent! God doesn't overlook our favorite little sins, even when we tell ourselves, **"Well, it's not that bad... Everyone does it."**

God is righteous and will not be mocked; He doesn't turn a blind eye to sin, but rather shows us the way to overcome it in His strength, not our own. Sanctification means we take this process seriously and give God room in our lives to train us; not out of compulsion, but love, because we know how much our salvation cost Him. It's now our hearts' deepest desire to live a life that brings the Father joy, as Paul writes: **Only let us live up to what we have already attained**. Let's not let go of that! Let's instead return to our first Love and trust God at His word when He says He will perfect His work in us until the day of Christ Jesus. (Phil. 1:6)

**Prayer:** *God, I thank You that you have bought my freedom and saved me. Please give me a new fascination for Your love and sacrifice for me. I lay my life before You so You can change me and train me in Your ways. Give me strength to press on towards the goal to win the prize! Amen.*

-Solveig Küssert-

