

Pastor's Ponderings

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"What's Really Important?"

by

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¹⁰For I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until Christ returns. ¹¹May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation—those good things that are produced in your life by Jesus Christ—for this will bring much glory and praise to God. Philippians 1:10-11 (NLT)

You know, this is the time of year when we all become overwhelmed with too many tasks, too little time, and too much trying to meet other people's expectations. It seems like it just wouldn't be the Christmas season if we weren't hurrying and scurrying about doing our best to make others happier. And the truth of the matter is ... we probably impose our expectations on others as well. We all get caught up in the madness, marketing, and mayhem of Christmas. What can we do to avoid succumbing to the "craziness of Christmas" this year? Let's look at what the Apostle Paul tells the church at Philippi. He's not writing about Christmas, he's writing about all of life. I think especially at this time of year, it's a good reminder for us.

Paul tells us to ***live pure and blameless lives until Christ returns***. I know that seems like an impossible request. None of us are perfect now and we will not achieve perfection in this life. But that is not what Paul asks us to do. He asks us to be ***pure and blameless***. The Greek word translated ***pure*** in the NLT is translated ***sincere*** in the KJV. The Greek word translated ***blameless*** in the NLT is translated ***without offence*** in the KJV. If you think it may be next to impossible to be pure and blameless, can you be sincere and inoffensive? I think you can, not only this Christmas, but until the

return of Christ! Paul was a man of prayer and he was praying that the people in the church at Philippi would do just that. He had confidence they could ... in Jesus Christ. I think we can too, if we concentrate on what's really important.

Paul knew he was asking the people of the church to do something impossible without the help of Jesus. That is why he said for them to ***...be filled with the fruit of your salvation---those good things that are produced in your life by Jesus Christ...*** Paul knew, and I think you do to, that we need Jesus' help to keep our priorities and perspective right. We need to rely on Jesus. Without Jesus Christ in our lives, we'll never be right with God and we'll never be able to allow Jesus to produce the fruit of our salvation. It seems a bit redundant to say it, but without Christ in our lives, our lives cannot be what God intended and will not bring God ***much glory and praise***. That is what's really important; ***to bring much glory and praise to God***.

So, this Christmas season, let's determine in our hearts to really let the light of Christ shine in our lives. Jesus said, "***You are the light of the world***." Let's not hide our light under a basket, but allow it to be set upon a hill for all to see, be attracted to, and give glory to our Father who is in heaven. (Matt 5:14-16). Let's not allow the busyness of Christmas to become more important than the reason for Christmas; to ***bring much glory and praise to God***.

My prayer for you is the same as the Apostle Paul's was for the church at Philippi; ***May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation—those good things that are produced in your life by Jesus Christ—for this will bring much glory and praise to God***.

Merry Christmas! May you ***live pure and blameless lives until Christ returns!!!*** Christ will return. He is coming again. ***Much glory and praise to God***.