

19 June 2026

## THE LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS “Living with our eyes fixed on the goal”

In the passage we meditated on yesterday, St. Paul emphasized that it was not the Law that saved him—even though, as a devout Jew, he had always strictly observed it—but rather the undeserved gift of faith in Jesus Christ. In the following verses, he reiterates this point:

Phil 3:9-21

*Not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith; [I seek to] know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature be thus minded; and if in anything you are otherwise minded, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained. Brethren, join in imitating me, and mark those who so live as you have an example in us. For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is the belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself.*

Like all Christians, the Apostle Paul looks forward to the resurrection of the dead. It is important that we not be misled by the claims of false teachers who seek to reinterpret Christ’s resurrection in a purely spiritual sense. In the First Letter to the Corinthians, the Apostle clearly states:

*Now if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not*

*raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.* (1 Cor 15:12–18)

Unlike those who doubt the resurrection, we must consciously aspire to it. This hope motivates us to take on our responsibility and awakens us from all slumber so that we do not fall asleep like the five foolish virgins in the parable, who had not prepared themselves sufficiently for the Bridegroom's arrival (cf. Mt 25:1–13).

Paul wants to encourage the community in Philippi to follow his example and keep their eyes fixed on the goal. At the same time, he is aware that he is not yet perfect. But that does not prevent him from pressing on toward the goal: *“forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal.”*

These words of St. Paul invite us to reflect on an essential aspect of following Christ. It makes little sense to dwell too much on the past, for that paralyzes us and prevents us from focusing on the goal. It is better to place our entire past under His mercy and concentrate on what lies ahead. We must consciously draw closer to this goal—full union with God—day by day. To do so, the Christians in Philippi—and the same applies to us—need role models who have lived this way. If we do not have such models on earth, we can always turn to the countless witnesses throughout the history of our Catholic Church, whose lives of holiness were focused on that goal: eternal union with Christ in the life to come. The community in Philippi has before its eyes the example of the Apostle Paul himself, who urges them to be his imitators.

On the other hand, even the bad examples in the community, however painful they may be, can serve at least as a warning. These are those who have become enemies of Christ.

After this brief reference to those who have gone astray, the Apostle returns to what is essential. The community's path must be oriented toward Heaven, *“from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself.”*

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Meditation on the reading of the day: <https://en.elijamission.net/the-consequences-of-sin/>

Meditation on the Gospel of the day: <https://en.elijamission.net/a-lesson-for-the-spiritual-life-2/>