NEW FOUNDATION CHURCH
DES MOINES

Rejoicing in a Growing Relationship with Jesus

Scripture Reading: Philippians 3:1–21
Big Idea: Christ-followers can experience unshakable joy by prioritizing an ever-deepening relationship with Jesus above all earthly credentials and by living as citizens of heaven.

Key Passage

"More than that, I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord... My goal is to know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death..."
— **Philippians 3:8, 10**

Reflection

1. Relationship Over Credentials (Philippians 3:1–9)

It is easy to treat our faith like a trophy case—a list of achievements, religious pedigree, family background, or moral accomplishments. The Apostle Paul had every reason to boast in his earthly résumé as a Hebrew of Hebrews and a Pharisee. Yet, Paul recognized that putting confidence in the flesh is skin-deep and distracting. He counted all his credentials as loss for the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus Christ. True joy begins when we stop striving to prove ourselves and instead rest entirely in the righteousness that comes through faith in Christ.

2. Straining Toward the Goal (Philippians 3:10–16)

Spiritual maturity is not claiming to have arrived or achieved perfection; it is recognizing how far we have yet to go and eagerly pressing on. Paul reminds us to forget what lies behind—both past failures that weigh us down and past accomplishments that breed complacency—and strain forward to what lies ahead. Because Christ has taken hold of us, we can make every effort to take hold of the prize of God's heavenly calling, growing daily in knowing Him and the power of His resurrection.

3. Living as Outposts of Heaven (Philippians 3:17–21)

For believers, our ultimate identity and citizenship are in heaven. Just as an ancient colony represented its homeland, we are called to be a colony of heaven on earth—embodying the culture, values, and love of God's kingdom wherever we are. While many set their minds on earthly appetites and temporary things, we eagerly wait for our Savior, Jesus Christ, who will transform our humble condition and make all things new. Knowing that our future is secure in Him gives us reason to rejoice even in dark or difficult seasons.

Personal Reflection & Application

1. **Surrender Your Résumé:** What achievements, credentials, or past failures are you tempted to rely on or be defined by? How can you surrender them to focus fully on Christ today?
2. **Pressing Forward:** What is one practical step you can take this week to forget what is behind and strain forward in your relationship with Jesus?
3. **Heavenly Citizenship:** How can your decisions, relationships, and priorities reflect the culture of the Kingdom of Heaven in your daily environment?

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for the surpassing value of knowing Jesus Christ. Forgive us for the times we place our confidence in our own achievements or allow past mistakes to keep us from growing. Remind us that we are Your cherished children and citizens of Your heavenly kingdom. Help us to strain forward with joy, trusting in the power of Christ's resurrection and living out Your love in the world around us. In Jesus' name, Amen.