Introduction: Our journey to joy requires us to count differently than this world counts. vs. 1-11
It requires us to run the race to win the upward call of God: knowing Him! vs. 12-16
And today our journey to joy requires us to walk as aliens here, for our home is not here.
Therefore, we are to walk like an alien in this world.

What does it mean to walk like an alien?

We walk by faith, not by sight.
2 Corinthians 5:7
This passage contrasts the way we are to walk, as an alien, and how the rest of those who are professed believers walk.

This is the journey to joy. To learn to walk differently, uniquely by faith. When you learn to walk this way, joy overflows into our lives.

Let’s stand and read and pray for the Lord to teach us how to walk like an alien.

I. Walking like an Enemy. vs. 18-19
   a. Hatred for the Cross of Jesus. They will not die to themselves.
Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Matthew 7:22-23 KJV

George Müller 1805-1898

There was a day when I died, utterly died – died to George Müller, his opinions, preferences, tastes, and will; died to the world, its approval or censure; died to the approval or blame even of my brethren and friends. And since then I have only to show myself approved to God.
i. Where are they headed?
   1. Destruction.
ii. What do they serve?
   1. Their pleasure.
      a. Which can never be filled, because a stomach has an opening and an exit. Fill it now, refill it later.

iii. What do they long for?
   1. Glorifying that which should be shameful, that which is dishonorable.
   2. Romans 1:27: “Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.”

iv. What are they thinking?
   1. Things of this world. Possessions, power, fame, money, success, worldly accolades.

2. Mark 10:17-22
   17 Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” 18 So Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. 19 You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not bear false witness,’ ‘Do not defraud,’ ‘Honor your
father and your mother.’” 20 And he answered and said to Him, “Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth.” 21 Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.” 22 But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

**II. Walking like an Alien. vs. 17, 20-21:** Why do you walk like an alien? Because you are a citizen of heaven!

a. **Tour the Hall of Faith. v. 17:** Hebrews 11
b. **Be familiar with your destination. v. 20**
   i. Why? Because you are citizens of Heaven, not citizens of Earth.
   1. Your passport has been stamped tetelestai!

2. **HEAVEN PASSPORT**

3. ii. Your name is written in Heaven. Philippians 4:3
a.

iii. We speak Heaven’s language: The Word of God!

1. 1 John 4:5-6: They are of the world. Therefore, they speak as of the world, and the world hears them.  

   6 We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

2. Deuteronomy 6:4-9

3. “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!  

   5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.  

   6 “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.  

   7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.  

   8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.  

   9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

iv. We live by Heaven’s law.
1. Matthew 6:33

c. Learn how to wait eagerly. v. 21
   i. We can learn to wait eagerly because we are waiting for someone, not something. Jesus!

1. He will transform from lowly to glory! I Corinthians 15:51-57
   a. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So
when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” 55 “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” 56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. He will transform us equal to His great power, not out of His great power!

a. 

b. All the pain and suffering we have been enduring cannot compare to the glory that is coming…

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Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.
1 John 3:2
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Our present sufferings are not worth comparing to the glory that will be revealed in us
Romans 8:18
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c.

Conclusion: Walk like an alien here, for we are not home yet.

You’re Not Home Yet

An old missionary couple had been working in Africa for years, and they were returning to New York City to retire. They had no pension; their health was broken; they were defeated, discouraged, and afraid. They discovered they were booked on the same ship as President Teddy Roosevelt, who was returning from one of his big-game hunting expeditions.

No one paid much attention to them. They watched the fanfare that accompanied the President’s entourage, with passengers trying to catch a glimpse of the great man.

As the ship moved across the ocean, the old missionary said to his wife, "Something is wrong. Why should we have given our lives in faithful service for God in Africa all these many years and have no one care a thing about us? Here this man comes back from a
hunting trip and everybody makes much over him, but nobody gives two hoots about us."

"Dear, you shouldn’t feel that way," his wife said.

"I can’t help it; it doesn’t seem right."

When the ship docked in New York, a band was waiting to greet the President. The mayor and other dignitaries were there. The papers were full of the President’s arrival, but no one noticed this missionary couple. They slipped off the ship and found a cheap flat on the East side, hoping the next day to see what they could do to make a living in the city.

That night, the man’s spirit broke. He said to his wife, "I can’t take this; God is not treating us fairly."

His wife replied, "Why don’t you go into the bedroom and tell that to the Lord?"

A short time later he came out from the bedroom, but now his face was completely different. His wife asked, "Dear, what happened?"

"The Lord settled it with me," he said. "I told him how bitter I was that the President should receive this tremendous homecoming, when no one met us as we returned home. And when I finished, it seemed as though the Lord put his hand on my shoulder and simply said, ‘But you’re not home yet!’"

Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.
(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:)

Philippians 3:17, 18

- How strange, in a letter devoted to joy, to find Paul weeping! Not for himself, not for his treatment by the Romans, but for others. He was heartbroken over the way some professed Christians are living, people who "mind earthly things."

Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.
Philippians 3:19

For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:
Philippians 3:20

- As we discussed in an earlier session, the Greek word, πολίτευμα politeuma, translated "conversation" means "citizenship," it is the word from which we get the English word, "politics."

- As we mentioned earlier, Philippi was particularly fond of its privileged status as if on Roman soil. Just as Philippi was a colony of Rome on foreign soil, so the church is a "colony of heaven" on earth.
- I like the way Donald Barnhouse summarized us:
  - A group of displaced persons, uprooted from their natural home, and on their way to an extraterrestrial destination; not of this planet, neither in roots nor in its ideals.

Donald Grey Barnhouse

Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.
Philippians 3:21

- "Vile": ὑπατείνωσις tapeinosis: lowness, humiliation; low estate.

- Because Abraham looked for a city, he was content to live in a tent:
  - For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.... These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.
  - For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

Hebrews 11:10, 13-16
C. Walking the walk.

1. (Phil 3:17) The good example of walking the walk: Paul and others.

Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.

a. Join in following my example: We shouldn’t think that Paul was being egotistical here. He knew that he was not a sinless or perfect example, yet he was still a good example. He could say as he also did in 1 Corinthians 11:1 – Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

i. We need concrete examples. While it is wrong to put our trust in any man, it is hypocritical for any Christian to say, “Do as I say, not as I do.”

b. And note those who so walk: As well, Paul wasn’t so proud to think that he was the only one who could be such an example. He told the Philippians to note those who so walk in the way he spoke...
of, and he noted that the Philippians had us as a pattern (instead of saying that Paul was the only pattern).


For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame; who set their mind on earthly things.

a. For many walk: With great sadness, Paul realizes that there are many who walk in a manner contrary to what he teaches. He regards these people as enemies of the cross of Christ.

i. The enemies of the cross were really the opposite of the legalists, who celebrated their supposed liberty in Christ to the indulgence of their flesh.

ii. Paul had to contend with people like this in 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 and Romans 6, who thought that salvation comes without repentance and conversion, and who thought that as long as your soul was saved, it didn’t matter what you did with your body.

iii. When we say that men are enemies of the cross, we do not mean that they are enemies of a physical representation of the cross. We mean that they are enemies of the Biblical truth of the atonement Jesus made for us on the cross and its ongoing power and effect in our life.

iv. These people were truly enemies of the cross of Christ, who did not want to follow Jesus by taking up His cross of self-denial (Matthew 16:24-26).

b. And now tell you even weeping: The work and the end of these enemies was that they, in their disregard for God’s holiness, gave ammunition to the legalist’s accusation that Paul preached a cheap grace that required no commitment of the life. This is what grieved Paul so at their teaching.

i. Spurgeon thought that Paul wept for three reasons. First, on account of the guilt of these enemies of the cross of Christ. Second, on account of the ill effects of their conduct. Finally, on account of their doom.

ii. “I never read that the apostle wept when he was persecuted. Though they ploughed his back with furrows, I do believe that never a tear was seen to gush from his eye while the soldiers scourged him. Though he was cast into prison, we read of his singing, never of his groaning. I do not believe he ever wept on account of any sufferings or dangers to which he himself was exposed for Christ’s sake. I call this an extraordinary sorrow, because the man who wept was no soft piece of sentiment, and seldom shed a tear even under grievous trials.” (Spurgeon)
iii. “Professors of religion, who get into the church, and yet lead ungodly lives, are the worst enemies that the cross of Christ has. These are the sort of men who bring tears into the minister’s eyes; these are they who break his heart; they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.” (Spurgeon)

c. **Whose end is destruction:** The word translated **destruction** is the same word used for **perdition** in other places (such as Philippians 1:28). This can refer to either their ultimate damnation or to the present destruction of their lives. Probably their ultimate damnation is more in view.

d. **Whose god is their belly:** This describes the idolatry of these **enemies**. Not that they were necessarily focused on what they eat, but **belly** here has a broader reference to sensual indulgence in general. They live for the pleasures of the body, mind, and soul.

e. **Whose glory is in their shame:** This shows the misplaced priorities of these **enemies**. They gloried about things they should have been ashamed about.

f. **Who set their mind on earthly things:** This describes the focus of their life. It was not to please and worship God, but to get along in **this** world. Their attitude was the same as the rich fool in Luke 12:16-21.

3. (Phil 3:20) Our citizenship and our Lord.

**For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,**

a. **For our citizenship is in heaven:** We need to appreciate all this would meant to the Philippians, who greatly valued their Roman citizenship. Just as the Philippians could consider themselves citizens of Rome and were under Roman laws and customs (even though they were in fact far from Rome) so Christians should consider themselves citizens of heaven.

i. One paraphrase of **citizenship is in heaven** reads like this: “We have our home in heaven, and here on earth we are a colony of heaven’s citizens.” Paul is saying: “Just as the Roman colonists never forgot that they belong to Rome, you must never forget that you are citizens of heaven; and your conduct must match your citizenship.” (Barclay)

ii. If we are citizens of heaven, it means that we are resident aliens on earth. Foreigners are distinct in whatever foreign land they go. Christians must be so marked by their heavenly citizenship that they are noticed as different.

- Aliens should seek to do good works in the land they sojourn in.
- Aliens should not seek to interfere in the affairs of the land they sojourn in.
· Aliens have privileges as well as duties; they are not under the same obligations as citizens of the land they sojourn in.
· Aliens are not eligible for the same rewards and recognitions as the citizens of the land that they sojourn in.
· Aliens should not focus on building riches in the land they sojourn in.

iii. We also have a certain character as citizens of heaven.

· As citizens we are under the government of heaven.
· As citizens we share in heaven’s honors.
· As citizens we have property rights in heaven.
· As citizens we enjoy the pleasures of heaven.
· As citizens of heaven we love heaven and feel attached there.
· As citizens of heaven we keep in communication with our native home.

iv. “How heartily the Germans sing of the dear old fatherland; but they cannot, with all their Germanic patriotism, they cannot beat the genial glow of the Briton’s heart, when he thinks of his fatherland too. The Scotchman, too, wherever he may be, remembers the land of ‘brown heath and shaggy wood.’ And the Irishman, too, let him be where he will, still thinks the ‘Emerald Isle’ the first gem of the sea. It is right that the patriot should love his country. Does not our love fervently flame towards heaven?” (Spurgeon)

v. There is a significant contrast between the citizens of earth as described in Philippians 3:18-19 and the citizens of heaven as described in Philippians 3:20-21.

b. From which we also eagerly wait for the Savior: As Philippians would eagerly await a visit from the emperor in Rome, even more so should Christians eagerly await the coming of their King – Jesus Christ.

i. Savior was a title given to the Caesars. In 48 b.c. Julius Caesar was declared to be “the universal savior of mankind.” It then became a common title for the ruling Caesar. Paul means something when he applies the title to Jesus in the context of citizenship.

c. The Lord Jesus Christ: The title Lord was also applied to the Roman Caesar. It wasn’t long after the time of Paul that Christians were martyred for refusing to call Caesar Lord, claiming that Jesus was the only Lord.


Who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

a. Who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body: Our Savior can do and will do something that no Caesar can. When we are resurrected, we will have the same type of body that Jesus Himself had when he was resurrected.
i. Jesus was not merely resuscitated from the dead in the same body. He was resurrected in a new body, patterned after the old yet equipped and fitted for heaven.

b. **According to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself**: This is possible only because the God we serve is omnipotent. **He is able even to subdue all things to Himself** and accomplish something as amazing as the resurrection of our bodies after the pattern of Jesus’ resurrection.

i. Jesus really can subdue all things. “There may be sins within your heart that have long resisted control. Do with them as you will, they still defy you.... But if you will hand over the conflict to Jesus, He will subdue them; He will bring them under his strong, subjecting hand. Be of good cheer. What you cannot do, He can.” (Meyer)

G. Paul's call to them.
   1. Be followers of me.
   2. Watch those that are walking this way that you might have an example.

H. Paul's warning. He gets quite emotional about this.
   1. Many whose walk marks them as enemies of the cross of Christ.
      a. They may talk of the power and the glory, but they know nothing of the crucified life.
      b. Their end is destruction. Jesus at the end will deny knowing them. They have never fellowshipped with His suffering.
      c. Their real gods is their belly, for their mind is after earthly things.

I. The marks of the true believer.
   1. Our conversation is in heaven. Manner of living. They have a heavenly mind set.
   2. They are looking for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ to come from heaven.
   3. They are anticipating the change from this vile body, to the new body that is fashioned after the glorious body of Jesus Christ. This they know will be accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit.
      a. We with open face, beholding the glory of the Lord are being changed from glory to glory by the power of the Spirit.

**Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample [Phil. 3:17].**

I wish I could say that. I can’t, but Paul could. He says, “If you want to know how to do it, watch me.” This is not to be an imitation. What he means is that you learn to share the power of Christ in the body of Christ, the church.

I believe it is proper for a believer to function within a Christian organization, a church. It doesn’t have to be a building with a tall steeple on it. Many folk think they must go to a certain type of building. That is not necessary. You can function within a Christian organization. My feeling is that if there is a good Bible church in
your community where the Word of God is given out, you are out of the will of God if you are not identified with it. If there is a good Christian organization in your town through which God is working, and you are not supporting it, I think you are out of the will of God. This, I believe, is what Paul means here and what he says elsewhere.

Now Paul discusses the negative side.

(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:

Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.) [Phil. 3:18–19].

This is as severe a condemnation as you can find of those who profess to be Christians. They claim to be Christian, yet they contradict their profession by their lives. Their God is their belly—that’s an awful thing! This means that they are led by their appetites. Some professing Christians have an appetite for money. They will do most anything for the almighty dollar. Others have such an appetite for sex that it becomes actually their god. Others covet—that is the cause of much of the strife and vainglory. The basic cause of it is that they have their hearts and minds on earthly things. They live for self and self only, and they actually glory in this. They are proud of what they should be ashamed.

Paul is saying that if you have trusted Christ, if you have had that kind of revolution that happened to him on the Damascus road, if Christ is the all-absorbing thinking of your mind and your time and your talent and your possessions, then this will tell in your life. James put it like this: “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works” (James 2:17–18). In other words, my friend, if you haven’t any works you are not going to convince your neighbor. He will judge your faith by your works. As Calvin said, “Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is not alone.” Some folk feel that the statement “whose God is their belly” is crude. Well, the statement is not crude, but the condition it speaks of is certainly crude. How tragic it is to see Christians who are given over to the passing things of this world, who “mind earthly things.”

PAUL CHANGED HIS HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ [Phil. 3:20].

A better translation for “conversation” is citizenship. It means the total way of life; it means a new life–style. An even better translation is that made by Mrs. Montgomery: “For our city home is in heaven.” Probably that is closer to what Paul is saying. The Greek word for “conversation” is politeuo, meaning “to act as a citizen.” The city of Philippi was a Roman colony. In Philippi the laws of Rome were enforced. The people wore the same kind of styles that were worn in Rome. They spoke Latin. Everything in Philippi was like Rome because it was a colonial city.

Today, believers, collectively called the church, should be a colony of heaven, and they ought to act like they act in heaven and speak the language of heaven. Unfortunately, this is not always the case, but it should be our goal. Paul is saying that we are ambassadors of Christ here on this earth; we are to represent heaven and heaven’s message here upon earth today, because “our citizenship is in heaven.”

“From whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.” Paul expresses the hope of the believer on the high plane of praise to God. It is the joyful anticipation of His return.

The hope of the believer in the New Testament is never the Great Tribulation Period. After he says our citizenship is in heaven, he says that from there “we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.” He doesn’t say anything about going through the Great Tribulation Period, which will be a time of judgment, and the church is delivered from judgment. Believers will not go through the Great Tribulation any more than Enoch went through the Flood. Many folk maintain that the Lord can preserve the church through the Great Tribulation. Yes, He can; God kept Noah in a boat through the Flood, but He took Enoch out of the world. There will be two
groups of people who will be His during the Great Tribulation Period. One will be taken out, as He says to the church in Philadelphia: “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth” (Rev. 3:10). The other group will be going through the Great Tribulation. There will be a great company of Gentiles and there will be 144,000 of Israel who will go through the Great Tribulation Period because they are to be sealed by God.

Let me digress to say that the teaching that the church is to go through the Great Tribulation is becoming increasingly absurd to me. The advocates of this theory maintain that there is not a verse in Scripture that says the church will not go through the Great Tribulation. While it is true that it doesn’t say it in those words, neither is there a verse in Scripture that has anything to say about the church not doing other things. For instance, I am confident that we are all going to have a position, a job to do, throughout eternity, but Scripture does not go into detail on that sort of thing. However, Scripture is very clear on the fact that the church has a glorious, wonderful hope for the future. It seems to many of us that it is tissue-thin between where we are now and the Rapture of the church. However, Scripture does not tell us when Christ will come. Apparently Paul felt that during his lifetime the Lord could come, and there is no record of Paul’s expecting to first go through the Great Tribulation. He experienced a lot of trouble during his life, but he never interpreted that as the Great Tribulation. With a note of glad expectancy Paul says, “For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ”—after we go through the real Tribulation? It doesn’t say that in my Bible. Nowhere does it say the church is going through the Great Tribulation, my friend. Paul’s joyful expectancy makes it very clear that he was looking for Christ’s return, not for the Great Tribulation.

Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself [Phil. 3:21].

“Our vile body” might be better translated “body of humiliation” or “body of corruption.” It means that He shall change our earthly body. This body that we have is an earthly body, subject to all kinds of limitations. It is adapted to this earth. We are not naturally equipped to go up into space. Our bodies are earthly bodies.

“That it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.” These bodies are corruptible bodies. One of these days you and I will move out of these bodies. We will leave them because they are corruptible. They are going to be changed—I’d like to trade mine in right now—“fashioned like unto his glorious body.” It will be a body like the one the Lord Jesus had after His resurrection. It will be a glorified body. Paul speaks of it in his letter to the Corinthians: “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump …” (1 Cor. 15:51–52). The point is that it will be sudden—when the trumpet shall sound.

While I am dealing with misinterpretations of this passage, let me say that some folk assume that one of the angels spoken of in the Book of Revelation is to blow this trumpet. However, the one blowing the trumpet is not indicated here. The Book of Revelation deals with Israel. In the Old Testament we read that Israel was moved on the wilderness march by the blowing of two silver trumpets. Israel is accustomed to trumpets; we are not. Perhaps you are remembering that the “last trump” is mentioned in connection with the Rapture in 1 Thessalonians: “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God …” (1 Thess. 4:16). Notice it is the trump of God. Whoever turned it over to Gabriel and said Gabriel will blow his horn? I question if Gabriel even owns a horn. It is the Lord who will descend with the voice of an archangel and the trump of God. Both speak of the dignity and the majesty of that shout of His. His voice will be penetrating and awe-inspiring. Listen to the way John describes the voice of the glorified Christ: “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet” (Rev. 1:10). And when he turned to see who was speaking, he saw the glorified Christ. It was His voice that John heard. There are no trumpets connected with the church.

Today Christ’s word to us is this: “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Rev. 3:20). It is His invitation to the evening meal—the last call for dinner. It is an invitation to come to Him before the night of the Great Tribulation falls. When the door is opened, there will go from this earth a group of people who have been put on the launching pad of faith—and they won’t go through the Great Tribulation Period. May I say to you that those
who expect the church to go through the Tribulation have, in my judgment, the flimsiest theory that is abroad, yet there are many intelligent men who hold this view. However, I find that these men spend more time with philosophy and psychology and history and related subjects than they do with the study of the Word of God.

“Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.” This is exactly the same thought that John had: “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2). Christ hasn’t appeared yet, but when He appears, we shall be like Him. Notice the high hope, the expectancy and excitement, the great anticipation of Christ’s return. (There is not the slightest suggestion that either Paul or John expected to first go through the Great Tribulation Period.)

Paul had a hope for the future. What is your hope for the future? The Great Tribulation Period? My friend, if that is your prospect, you are about as hopeless as the man who has no hope!

Taking a trip recently to the Hawaiian Islands, instead of flying the direct route, we came in from the north. The reason the pilot gave us was that there was a storm front on the southern route, and he skirted it, although it made us about thirty minutes late. I appreciated the fact that he went around the storm. It used to be that a pilot would say, “There is a storm front ahead of us, and we are going to have turbulence for the next thirty minutes.”

I didn’t look forward to that—it was no blessed hope for me! But it surely is nice to have him say we are taking another route so we will miss the storm. And the Lord says to the church, “We’re going to miss the storm, the Great Tribulation.” My friend, you can twist it around to suit your own theory, but that is what He says. “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.” That was Paul’s hope for the future, and it is our hope!

**Phl 3:17-21** Matthew Henry

He closes the chapter with warnings and exhortations.

- I. He warns them against following the examples of seducers and evil teachers (**v. 18, 19**): *Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.* Observe,
  - 1. There are many called by Christ's name who are enemies to Christ's cross, and the design and intention of it. Their walk is a surer evidence what they are than their profession. By *their fruits you shall know them,* **Mt. 7:20.** The apostle warns people against such,
    - (1.) Very frequently: *I have told you often.* We so little heed the warnings given us that we have need to have them repeated. **To write the same things is safe, v. 1.**
    - (2.) Feelingly and affectionately: *I now tell you weeping.* Paul was upon proper occasions a weeping preacher, as Jeremiah was a weeping prophet. Observe, An old sermon may be preached with new affections; what we say often we may say again, if we say it affectionately, and are ourselves under the power of it.
  - 2. He gives us the characters of those who were the enemies of the cross of Christ.
    - (1.) Whose God is their belly. They minded nothing but their sensual appetites. A wretched idol it is, and a scandal for any, but especially

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for Christians, to sacrifice the favour of God, the peace of their conscience, and their eternal happiness to it. Gluttons and drunkards make a god of their belly, and all their care is to please it and make provision for it. The same observance which good people give to God epicures give to their appetites. Of such he says, *They serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies*, Rom. 16:18.

- (2.) They glory in their shame. They not only sinned, but boasted of it and gloried in that of which they ought to have been ashamed. Sin is the sinner's shame, especially when it is gloried in. "They value themselves for what is their blemish and reproach.'

- (3.) They mind earthly things. Christ came by his cross to *crucify the world to us and us to the world*; and those who mind earthly things act directly contrary to the cross of Christ, and this great design of it. They relish earthly things, and have no relish of the things which are spiritual and heavenly. They set their hearts and affections on earthly things; they love them, and even dote upon them, and have a confidence and complacency in them. He gives them this character, to show how absurd it would be for Christians to follow the example of such or be led away by them; and, to deter us all from so doing, he reads their doom.

- (4.) Whose end is destruction. Their way seems pleasant, but death and hell are at the end of it. *What fruit had you then in those things whereof you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death*, Rom. 6:21. It is dangerous following them, though it is going down the stream; for, if we choose their way, we have reason to fear their end. Perhaps he alludes to the total destruction of the Jewish nation.

II. He proposes himself and his brethren for an example, in opposition to these evil examples: *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark those who walk as you have us for an example*, v. 17. Mark them out for your pattern. He explains himself (v. 20) by their regard to Christ and heaven: *For our conversation is in heaven*. Observe, Good Christians, even while they are here on earth, have their conversation in heaven. Their *citizenship* is there, politeuma. As if he had said, We stand related the that world, and are citizens of the New Jerusalem. This world is not our home, but that is. There our greatest privileges and concerns lie. And, because our citizenship is there, our conversation is there; being related to that world, we keep up a correspondence with it. The life of a Christian is in heaven, where his head is, and his home is, and where he hopes to be shortly; he *sets his affections upon things above*; and where his heart is there will his conversation be. The apostle had pressed them to follow him and other ministers of Christ: "Why,' might they say, "you are a company of poor, despised, persecuted people, who make no figure, and pretend to no advantages
in the world; who will follow you?' "Nay,' says he, "but our conversation is in heaven. We have a near relation and a great pretension to the other world, and are not so mean and despicable as we are represented.' It is good having fellowship with those who have fellowship with Christ, and conversation with those whose conversation is in heaven.

1. Because we look for the Saviour from heaven (v. 20): Whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is not here, he has ascended, he has entered within the veil for us; and we expect his second coming thence, to gather in all the citizens of that New Jerusalem to himself.

2. Because at the second coming of Christ we expect to be happy and glorified there. There is good reason to have our conversation in heaven, not only because Christ is now there, but because we hope to be there shortly: Who shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, v. 21. There is a glory reserved for the bodies of the saints, which they will be instated in at the resurrection. The body is now at the best a vile body, to σώμα τέμσ ταπεινομεσομέν-σώμα τῆς θανάτου: it has its rise and origin from the earth, it is supported out of the earth, and is subject to many diseases and to death at last. Besides, it is often the occasion and instrument of much sin, which is called the body of this death, Rom. 7:24. Or it may be understood of its vileness when it lies in the grave; at the resurrection it will be found a vile body, resolved into rottenness and dust; the dust will return to the earth as it was, Eccl. 12:7. But it will be made a glorious body; and not only raised again to life, but raised to great advantage. Observe,

   (1.) The sample of this change, and that is, the glorious body of Christ; when he was transfigured upon the mount, his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light, Mt. 17:2. He went to heaven clothed with a body, that he might take possession of the inheritance in our nature, and be not only the first-born from the dead, but the first-born of the children of the resurrection. We shall be conformed to the image of his Son, that he may be the first-born among many brethren, Rom. 8:29.

   (2.) The power by which this change will be wrought: According to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. There is an efficacy of power, an exceeding greatness of power, and the working of mighty power, Eph. 1:19. It is matter of comfort to us that he can subdue all things to himself, and sooner or later will bring over all into his interest. And the resurrection will be wrought by this power. I will raise him up at the last day, Jn. 6:44. Let this confirm our faith of the resurrection, that we not only have the scriptures, which
assure us it shall be, but we know the power of God, which can effect it, Mt. 22:29. At Christ's resurrection was a glorious instance of the divine power, and therefore he is declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:4), so will our resurrection be: and his resurrection is a standing evidence, as well as pattern, of ours. And then all the enemies of the Redeemer's kingdom will be completely conquered. Not only he who had the power of death, that is, the devil (Heb. 2:14), but the last enemy, shall be destroyed, that is, death, 1 Co. 15:26, shall be swallowed up in victory, v. 54.