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[00:00:02] We have been looking in this epistle to the Colossians In the first instance, the Great Passage, which occupies a half of Colossians chapter one, commencing at verse 12, where we give thanks. Give thanks. We're not asking for anything. It's already ours. That they were made to measure up to every requirement that would fit them for the inheritance of the saints in the light. And then at the finish, echoing the same thought in the body of his flesh through death, verse 22, to present you holy and unblameable and unremovable in his sight. And you cannot conceive of anything more wonderful than that complete preparation for the very presence of God so that we can stand there unashamed and accepted completely. And yet, as you know, we were looking at it. Before the chapter ends, the Apostle is warning every man and teaching every man verse 28, in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Well, it seemed so odd at first when you read that unless you rightly divide the word of truth and you discover that the first part which we looked at in chapter one is all in Christ. And the second part is referring to what we do with it. One is our standing in him and the other is our consequent state as a result. We had read to us Philipians three and the man who wrote Colossians wrote Philipians about the same time. He says, Not as though I were already perfect.

[00:01:48] And yet here, can you get any more perfect than Colossians? One presents you? But there you see he has something else in view. So you notice in verse 28 of chapter one, he says, warning every man, Will you warn somebody because there's a possibility of mistaking or a danger. And he says in verse, in chapter two, verse eight, Beware. There's another warning. Lest any man spoil you and further down verse. 16. It says, Let no man, therefore judge you in meat or drink, and ultimately in verse 18, let there be no man beguile you of your reward. Well, that brings us that verse brings us to the first link we can have. Because if you were reading the original and not reading the English, you would be aware that the word beguile of your reward introduces the very same word that comes in Philipians, which is the prize. Now let's put that back in. You need not write it in your Bible, remember? Let no man be guide you of the prize. It's not altering it very much, but it's linking it. So Philipians is not telling you of your position in Christ, but urging you to walk worthy of it, to run with patience. The race set before you. A prize is an addition to that which is the sheer gift of God. So you see, while we can boast and boast, we should in our perfect acceptance in the Son of God.

[00:03:31] Then comes the next point. How far are we running? With patience, the race set before us. How far are we qualifying for the added prize? Now you see the Apostle Paul, he says. Not as though I were already perfect. I don't claim that. I do claim that I'm accepted in the beloved. Absolutely. But he said, there's many of us. And not until he wrote his last epistle. Was he able confidently to say, I have finished my course. I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown. So there we have these two thoughts. And it is that that I want to dwell upon now this morning and perhaps take it a stage further presently. This question of going on unto perfection. Or otherwise is stressful. Us in Philippians three that we looked at our brother read for us and so we will just cast our eye back again there and see what he says. In verse 11, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Now, that must have caused a good deal of worry in some folks minds, because if the Apostle Paul himself wasn't sure that God would ever raise him from the dead, what hope have we got? We may think we are fairly well taught and seek to serve God, but surely the apostle, if he was seeking, I wasn't sure. And then of course, again you say now we are very thankful for the authorized version, the revised version or any other version, but it does good sometimes to go to the trouble of finding out just exactly what Paul said or anybody else.

[00:05:24] So let me remind you that we have here a peculiar statement. The word resurrection is anti-status adagh up status, apart the word to stand up. But that isn't the word here. What it is here. But it is supplemented. In this verse, the word ek comes twice. Once it's X because it comes in front of a vowel, but it's the word out of. So let's read it again. If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection that which is out from among the dead. He stresses it. Now keep that in mind and go to Hebrews Chapter 11. Hebrews. Chapter 11. Is bringing before us. Those who, through faith, overcame, through faith, inherited promises, through faith, who was willing to dwell in a tent because they looked for the city. And here he comes to this point. Verse 35 women received their dead, raised to life again, and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance that they may obtain a better resurrection. So here again, we have not merely the resurrection, which is the gift of God in connection with salvation, pure and simple, but here consequent upon standing firm and not giving way and suffering, if needs be, they obtain a better resurrection.

[00:07:01] So here we have a balance between Philippians, the out resurrection, which is out from among the dead and a better resurrection which the Hebrews puts instead. But not only so. This epistle to the Hebrews. Now, if we can think of a geometrical figure, we have a circle and a circle as the the. What's the word I want? Center? Yes, the center. Just one spot. And if you look at the epistle to the Hebrews as a circle, Christ is the center. The priesthood. Their shadows. The priesthood never brought anything to perfection. The priest stands daily, offering the same sacrifice that ever takes away sin. But this man, there's the emphasis. Christ, the center. But if you have another figure, an ellipse. Not to lips are not saying and ellipse. Then you have to have two focal points. Foci. I want you to look at those two in Hebrews and see then by parallel how they help out Philippians and this problem. Chapter six Therefore leaving the principles of the Doctrine of Christ. And that I must ask you to correct in your mind because today to leave the principles of the Doctrine of Christ means to forsake the truth of God. And we are sad as we read and we hear of those who are ordained to preach the gospel, standing up at their pulpit, urging that they should give up this and give up that and give up the other. But that isn't what it says Here again.

[00:08:49] We'll put it more literally, therefore leaving the word of the beginning of Christ. Let us go on unto the end. Now you see a person who read Greek as his ordinary language would see that it was in contrast to the word beginning, that the word perfect comes. I've already mentioned, haven't I, that the root word of the word perfect is telos. The end. It's not getting better and better, but it's running a race and touching the tape at the end. So he says therefore leaving the word at the beginning of Christ. And this applies to some of those good souls of God who never get out of the gospel of Matthew. The gospel of Matthew is a part of God's word. But it's the beginning. It's the beginning. And the Apostle Paul came along later, says, I've got a revelation from God which has never been given to anybody else. So you don't always please God by stopping at the beginning if there's something further revealed. So he's urging them. He says, Let us go on unto perfection. Now, the I've said the Ellipse has got two focal points like that. What is the other one? Chapter ten. At the close of the chapter, he says. Verse 38. Now the just shall live by faith. But if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition.

[00:10:27] Now to leave that just as it is. By the way, the word perdition is used today would suggest that the apostle Paul that said that these people could draw back until

they lost their salvation. But that isn't the meaning. That isn't the meaning. The word perdition occurs in Matthew, where the disciples murmured at the breaking of the alabaster box of ointment, and they said, to what purpose is this waste? Waste? Not hellfire, not eternal punishment, but waste. So the Christian may be going on to completeness and fullness in experience and experimental truth, or it may be just drawing back to waste. It doesn't affect the gift of eternal life, which you can either win or lose. It doesn't alter your standing in Christ, which is a sheer gift of God. But it does have something to say with regard to the possibility of an added prize, an added reward, an added crown. Now, are you those who say, Oh, I'm so heavenly minded that I wouldn't possibly think of running for a crown? But friends, would you put yourself up against a man like the apostle Paul, or would you put yourself up against the Son of God who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame and is set down at the right hand of God? Will you remember that Philippians three is prefaced by Philippians two and he who thought it not robbery to be on perfect equality with God came down the seven steps until he reached the death of the cross.

[00:12:15] Wherefore God hath highly exalted him and given him the name which is above every name. And so the next chapter says that just as my savior came down seven steps, so says the Apostle Paul. In my small measure, I came down seven steps. I was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. I was a Pharisee of the Pharisees. I came right down to the very self. Same position. And then not only so, but we have these two words, two key words around which Hebrews revolves in its teaching. You get these two words in Philippians three. Now, if you were reading the original, it would strike you. If you're not, it may not be so obvious. So should we make it our own? What are the two words we are thinking about? Perfection and perdition. Well, I suppose we are conscious that the word perdition doesn't come in Philippians. We know that perfection does, because he says verse 15, for instance, let us therefore as many as be perfect. And I think you'll see that the true translation is let us therefore as many as would be perfect be thus minded. See, because they are pressing on the apostle is toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Verse 14, Ephesians reveals What is the hope of the calling.

[00:13:42] Philippians goes on and says, and it is an added prize of the calling. There is no possibility of forfeiting the hope if you belong to this redeemed company. Is a gift of God. But he says there's something added. Why Jews manifested interest in the fact

that God will not only save you by grace, but will reward the effort and the endeavor to manifest. You belong to him in an antagonistic world. He will not let that go without a recognition, and it will please him. So he says, Let us, therefore as many as would be perfect, be thus minded. And then he gives them a word of warning. Brethren, verse 17. Be followers together of me. And mark them which walk so as you have us. For example. So now he's got something that he's got to set before them, of which he was an example. I don't know what the difference between an N sample is and an X sample. It's rather too difficult to try to explain it all, but at the same thing at the end, so far as we are concerned. So don't worry if you don't know whether you're an example or an end sample, be both and then you'll be on the safe side. See, for it says 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. Now, have I got to remind you, or does it come into your mind that Hebrews says a certain type they trampled under foot the Son of God? They crucify to themselves the son of God, afresh.

[00:15:24] Don't you see a church like Philippians where they had reached a high standard? We're not being warned that they shouldn't follow the ungodly crowd. They were told that the very believer sometimes falls into this trap, as Hebrews suggests and as this suggests, 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. Now there's the word in chapter three of Philippians. You go on unto perfection or you get you attain the end, which is perdition, which is here. Translated destruction. The same two words in Philippians three and the same two words in Hebrews six and ten. Now a further addition. Whose end is perdition? Whose God is their belly? Well, would you look at Hebrews again when it speaks about these things? Chapter 12. Verse 16. Lest there be any fornicator or profane person as Esau. The word profane, pro alongside and feign a holy building. We speak about a fine today of a church. He was an outsider. He never entered into the glory of the calling, he said, lest there be any fornicator or profane person as Esau, whose God was his belly, says Philippians, who for one morsel of meat, sold his birthright.

[00:17:19] For one morsel of meat. That's the same figure, isn't it? He so discounted the value that he just swapped it for a mess of pottage. Oh, he said. How sad to see the child of God for one morsel of meat selling his birthright. Now this birthright is associated with the heavenly Jerusalem. Chapter 11. Uh, I'm sorry. I ought to have said

in this same chapter 12. Verse 22. But ye are come unto Mount Zion and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, not the earthly one to an innumerable company of angels, to the General Assembly and Church of the firstborn. Now, that's a similar word to the word birthright. First for the birthright. This church is the church of those who have the birthright. And it could be forfeited by swapping the birthright for a mess of pottage to retranslate into the modern terms, to lose the glory of the birthright position by shirking a certain amount of endurance. For Christ's sake. Here. It's nothing whatever to do with salvation. The gift of God remains eternal. Life is the gift of God. Justification by faith is yours in Christ and cannot be altered. But all with God in his super abundant mercy as not only giving you this high and holy calling, but as added to it the possibility of a prize or a crown. Will you not seek to please him? Those of you who are parents and those of you who are maybe uncles or aunts or friends, if one of the children come home with a prize at the end of school term.

[00:19:21] Why Father's got a prize, hasn't he? Mother's got a prize. Auntie So-and-so has got a prize. They've all got a prize because the youngsters got one. Don't you feel that our Father in heaven? Will also rejoice if you are able to rejoice before him in this sense. So you see, we could echo the words of that hymn Not for weight of glory. Not for crown or Palm. Enter. We the Army raise the Warrior Psalm. It's not because we want to get something. God has said. I'll give it to you. If only you run with patience. The race that is set before you. So here we have then this emphasis in the epistle to the Hebrews of a perfection which is beyond or apart from your standing in Christ. And it is rather what you do with it. Well, I have a feeling that we should be helped. Oh, I haven't said further. The when we come back to Philippians, we got a citizenship there which balances the emphasis upon the city in the Hebrews. But there again, it is masked by the translation. It says in chapter three, verse 20, for our conversation is in heaven. Now our conversation today has become reduced to sitting and having a talk.

[00:20:50] It may be a very good conversation. It may be just a lot of quibbles. That isn't the word here. The word is polite humor. The word polite in our use today is borrowed from a city with the idea that a person who was born in a city would be polite. Polis, in contrast to the villager who was rather bad with regard to his manners and his manner of speech. So the word conversation means your manner of life and looks to the thought that you are a citizen of no mean city and you're expected to walk as though it were so. So here is a citizenship. This word conversation is used in another little slightly different

form. When the apostle Paul said he was a citizen of no mean city. And the soldier was rather surprised to think that he could claim to be a Roman citizen. Oh, that was something he says of the citizenship here, which is ever so much beyond the possibility of a Roman citizenship. Our citizenship is in heaven from whence also we look for the savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change this body of our humiliation. You noticed our brother here? He couldn't help himself. He put the two words in. That is good. The word vile today is generally used for something which is wicked and monstrous. The word vile is the opposite of the word city. A person lived in the city was contrasted with a person who lived in the village, and the person who lived in the village was a villain.

[00:22:34] Of course, today a villain doesn't necessarily live in a village, but he originally did. So it's go back to the authorized version days. And this means. A contrast to the citizenship. Who shall change this body of our humiliation? Here. That it may be. Fashioned like unto his body of glory there. And to add to this, he says in chapter two, let this mind be in you. That was also in Christ Jesus. How sad to see a little child growing up and the mind and the body are not coordinated. How awful to think of the possibility of a believer having a body like unto the glorified body of Christ and a mind that was set on earthly things. Oh, friends, it cannot be. The mind of Christ now. The body of Christ then, and they are connected with the prize of the high calling. Now, I have a feeling that Abby, what started like this, I should be unwise if I said, Well, that's good enough or leave it. I don't think so. I have a feeling we should be profited if we take the epistle to the Hebrews or these Sunday mornings for a little period looking at other things apart from the reward and the prize and the heavenly Jerusalem. Because these other things are the things that make that possibility. We couldn't run with patience.

[00:24:13] The race set before us if we had not already been given life in Christ and a blessed hope. So when we come together for the next few Sunday mornings, we do expect to be prepared to be turned to the Epistle, to the Hebrews, as a sort of a running commentary and exposition of this wonderful fact that not only have we been perfected now I'm quoting Hebrews by his one offering perfected and to perpetuity. That's Chapter ten. That's the effect of the sacrifice of Christ. But we could go on unto perfection as we realize and put the truth we've received into practice in a crude form. However, rich, your dining table may be, however many vitamins and I don't know what else is there represented by the food provided. If you don't eat it, it might just as well not be there.

And it doesn't matter how rich the grace of God in Christ. If you do not put it into practice and use it, it might just as well not be there. And so we begin to get truth in balance. First of all, the gift of God. First of all, Colossians one presented absolutely spotless in the sight of God. And then the apostle coming along and saying, Now I want to present you perfect. And he is not spoiling. He is only saying, I want you now to put these things into daily practice, to run with patience. The race that is set before you.