

## A Study of the Book of Philippians

**Theme:**

**“OUR PARTNERSHIP  
IN THE GOSPEL!”**

Trinity Lutheran Church Norman, OK.

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**Lesson: 23**

**Chapter 3:14**

**Date: 2-23-20**

**BIBLE TEXT:**

(1) Finally, my brothers, rejoice in **the Lord**. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you. (2) Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. (3) For we are the real circumcision, who worship by the **Spirit of God** and glory in **Christ Jesus** and put no confidence in the flesh—

(4) though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: (5) circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; (6) as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness, under the law blameless.

(7) But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of **Christ**. (8) Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing **Christ Jesus my Lord**. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain **Christ**

(9) and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in **Christ**, the righteousness from **God** that depends on faith-- (10) that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

(11) that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. (12) 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. (13) Brothers, 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,

**(14) I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.**

(15) Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, **God** will reveal that also to you. (16) Only let us hold true to what we have attained. (17) Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. (18) For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of **the cross of Christ**. (19) Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.

(20) But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a **Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ**, (21) who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.



## STUDY NOTES:

The upward heavenly call and prize of God in Christ Jesus

(Jn 1:12,13; 6:44; 12:32; Acts 9:5,6; Rom 8:28; 1 Cor 9:24-27;  
Col 3:1,2; 1 Pet. 5:10; 1 John 5:4,5; Rev 2:10; 3:11)

## LIFE APPLICATION:

How do you press on to make it your own, forgetting what lies behind, straining forward to what lies ahead, you press on toward the goal for the prize of **the upward call of God in Christ Jesus?**

## LUTHER'S WORKS: Vol. 25, pp. 371–372 – The Upward Call of Election / Predestination

28. *We know that to those who love God, who according to His purpose, etc...* For He wills that to the elect who are loved by God and who love God the Spirit works all things for good, even things which in themselves are evil. He approaches, yes, from this point on begins to discuss the matter of **predestination and election**, which is not as deep a subject as is commonly thought, but rather is a wonderfully sweet thing for those who have the Spirit, but a bitter thing and harsh above all things for the prudence of the flesh.

For there is no other reason or cause why numerous adversities and evils do not separate the saints from the love of God except the fact that they have not only been **called but “called according to His purpose,”** and therefore to them alone and to no others “He works all things for good.” For if it were not the purpose of God, and if our salvation depended upon our will and works, it would depend upon chance, a chance which—I do not say all of these evils together—but one of them might easily hinder or overturn! But now when he says: “Who will bring a charge? Who will condemn? Who will separate?” (vv. 33–35), he is showing that the elect are not saved by chance but by necessity.

Here we are shown that neither chance nor wonderfully strong resistance against so many evils impede our salvation. Indeed He saves us in this way and exposes His elect to as many rapacious forces as are mentioned here, all of which are striving to pull the elect down into damnation so that they might be lost, in order to show that He saves us not by our own merits, but purely by **His own election and immutable will**, in the very face of so many rapacious and terrifying adversaries who try in vain to harm us.

For if He did not lead us through so many frightful things, He would leave much room for high opinions concerning our own merits. But now He shows that we are saved by His immutable love. And thereby He gives approval not to our will but to His own unchanging and **firm will of predestination**. For how could a man possibly break through all of these things in which he would lose hope a thousand times, unless the eternal and fixed love of God led him through them and the Spirit were present to aid our infirmity and to intercede for us with groanings which cannot be uttered?

For in such situations man does not even know what he should do or ask for. Indeed he might pray that he not come into these troubles, and this would be foolish, because it would work against his salvation. Therefore “we do not know how to pray,” especially in our weaknesses, that is, in these sufferings.