

Introduction

- 1 Many have watched the Olympics on TV – amazing what athletes achieve at all levels – **4 examples**
- 2 Whatever stage each reaches in their sport each has given it their best shot, some win, most lose
- 3 But no-one can criticise their **commitment** to achieve their very best, after facing many challenges
- 4 Commitment is not limited to the competitors, but also to the spectators present & those at home
- 5 Most people support athletes from the countries in which they were born rather than where they live
- 6 Today we'll look at what false & true commitment to Jesus Christ is, according to Paul in Phil 3:1-11

I 3:1 Overall theme of Philippians

- 1 Paul again encourages Christians to rejoice in the Lord - joy in various forms mentioned 16 times
- 2 He wrote the letter whilst in jail where living conditions were bad-cold, damp, limited food...
- 3 Didn't rejoice in all that happened to him, but for God's blessings amidst these negative things
- 4 His captors couldn't remove God's joy in his heart, as Holy Spirit helped him overcome hardship **eg**

II 3:2-6 Wrong Commitment

A 3:2-3 Jews were committed to law-based Righteousness, not Christ-based righteousness

- 1 3:2 Jews in those days often called non-Jewish people "dogs", and treated them with contempt
- 2 **Watch out** for these Jews who falsely insisted Chns must follow Jewish circumcision, other laws
- 3 These Jews believed Gentile Chns must fulfil OT laws based on works, and then trust in Jesus.
- 4 They didn't accept God had replaced His Old Cov't with Israel with a new Cov. for all peoples
- 5 In many Chn churches worldwide, people believe they can become Chns by things they do themselves **eg** be baptised/confirmed, attend Holy Communion, pray regularly, lead good life...
- 6 3:3 Whereas Chns are the true circumcision-they truly worship God by faith from the heart with Holy Spirit's help and do not rely on any good works **or** obeying any laws to be reconciled to God

B 3:4-6 Paul satisfied all legal requirements through his family, religious enthusiasm, but ...

- 1 3:4-5 Paul was more qualified than most to become a Chn if this depended on confidence in flesh
 - a Everything a Jew was required to do by obeying the law, Paul had done –circumcised on 8th day
 - b His background made him a real Jew – Right nation Israel; Right tribe – Benjamin; Right culture - Hebrew; although born in Tarsus, present day Turkey and not Jerusalem; Religious - Pharisee
 - c Pharisees including Saul regarded themselves as superior to ordinary Jews **eg** Religious fanatics
- d 3:6 Saul had been very zealous by persecuting Chns, whom Pharisees regarded as false teachers
- e According to Jewish law, Saul proved to himself that he had obeyed law 100%, was perfect- **But**

III 3:7-8 Major change of attitude was needed for true New Covenant Commitment

- 1 People talk re having a Damascus Rd. experience -have been changed by some very dramatic event
- 2 Saul/Paul was changed 180 degrees in an amazing way when he met Jesus on road to Damascus
- 3 From greatest persecutor of the Chr'n church in his early life Paul became its greatest ambassador
- 4 3:7 Once Saul repented, believed in Lord Jesus, his life was completely changed, lived by new values
- 5 From being 100% anti-Chn, Paul attitude changed dramatically - became **fully committed** to Jesus
- 6 Whatever he regarded as very good profit to his life, now became in fact **total loss** for Christ's sake
- 7 3:8 Compared to what he had received by knowing Jesus as Lord in his life, all else faded away
- 8 To Paul, knowing Christ as Lord of his life was his greatest treasure-nothing else compares with it
- 9 Whatever privileges and position he held before as Jew & Pharisee, he now considers as rubbish
- 10 Have you/I changed like this since trusting Jesus as Lord-turned back on past ways made fresh start
- 11 Isn't it great to know that God has forgiven all your past guilt, mistakes/sins because of Jesus' death

IV 3:8b-11 Striving towards true Christian Commitment

A 3:8b-9a Our Relationship with Jesus

- 1 If you have repented/believed in Jesus **this is the most important decision you will ever make**
- 2 Paul shows he wants to grow spiritually as he now belongs to Jesus, which brings greater security
- 3 No matter what people did to Paul nothing could remove his total trust and faith in Jesus.

4 Jesus has promised to be with Chns every day of their lives whether they feel His presence or not

B 3:9b Based on Righteousness that comes from God – 2 Corinthians 5:21*

- 1 Paul teaches that to be found in Christ there is both wrong and correct righteousness
 - a **Wrong works/law based righteousness**—Can never be reconciled to God by works/things I do
 - b **Correct grace righteousness**—**Clothed** with Christ's perfect right'ness when receive him by faith
- 2 As everyone is born a sinner, it is not possible to please God 100% by anything we do. **Rom 6:23**
- 3 Righteousness comes from God because Jesus dealt with our sin thru' his death & resurrection
- 4 He paid the price for our sin as a perfect sacrifice—gain benefit when we repent, believe in Him
- 5 To be in Jesus, His righteousness becomes our right'ness—God looks on His right'ness not ours*

C 3:11 This leads to trust in His resurrection life, which is eternal

- 1 For a person to know Christ means there'll be a future reward to which Chns can look forward
- 2 **3:21** Their earthly bodies will later be transformed into new glorious heavenly bodies like his body

D 3:10 Summary of the Right Type of Commitment

- 1 **"I want to know Christ"** – Requires obed, determination, with desire within to love, please Him
 - a It requires effort/discipline—With Jesus as ruler of his life, Paul wants deeper rela'ship with Him
 - b How can we Chns "know Christ" better? **1** Regularly read God's Word **2** Daily prayer **3** Read Chn books **4** Attend a Bible study group, if possible **5** Attend church **f** Listen to sermons, tapes
 - c **John 14:23-24** "If we love Jesus we will obey His teaching, if we don't obey, show don't love Him
 - d Bible teaches blessing comes with obed. How committed are you and I to know Christ better?
- 2 **I want to know the power of His resurrection, which will mean change**
 - a Having gained Christ, been found in Him, we grow spiritually as He **changes** our thoughts/acts
 - b As Chns take up their cross to follow Jesus, so resurrection means a completely new way of life
 - c Chns now look at everything with completely new eyes as Holy Spirit comes to live within each
 - d **2 Cor 3:18** He **changes** Chn's mind, convicts them of sin, shows them God's plan eg Joseph Msweli
- 3 **I want to know the fellowship of sharing in His suffering which is a challenge - 2 Cor 11:23-29**
 - a Jesus told his disciples to expect persecution; Paul fully prepared for this as he shared gospel
 - b People were challenged to change their self-centred ways, comfortable lifestyles –resistance
 - c In Australia we don't really have to suffer persecution as experienced by Chns in M-E, Asia ..
 - d Chns in these areas face discrimination in homes, villages, employment, food, water, schools, famine relief, burning of homes, churches, Bibles, possible death for trusting in Jesus
 - e Whatever form persecution & suffering for Christ takes is to be seen as suffering with Christ
- 4 **Becoming like him in His death, rising to a new way of life - Colossians 3:23**
 - a For this to happen, Chns must give up sinful ways, obey Bible & live in new ways pleasing to God
 - b Some years back at youth camp in cold April – free time to swim - 4 different types of people
 - 1 Those who stood on side, water too cold to go near it
 - 2 Those who stood up to ankles
 - 3 Braver -committed to water up to knees, no further
 - 4 Committed to swim - full immersion
 - b **Picture of 4 Levels of Chn Commitment**—**1** Stand on side watching **2** Ankles deep – limited
 - 3 Become involved in a few things, **But ..**
 - 4 Make oneself fully available to be used by God
 - c **How committed** are we to allow Jesus **change** us-become more like Him, leave sin, serve him

OR use this No. 4
- 4
 - a Are we prepared to die for Jesus if ordered to give up our faith in Jesus or die like Debbie?
 - b Grew up in Asia as Muslim, her father was Imam at mosque, went to UK to study, became Chn
 - c Told her family, was kidnapped to renounce Chy return home or die – escaped, lived with Chns
 - d Applied for protection visa, papers lost forced to return home, at home airport, computer down
 - e Attended Bible School, married, both imprisoned several times for faith, continued to witness
 - f **How committed are we** to allow Jesus **change** us-become more like Him, leave sin, serve him