

A Christmas Carol
Message 1- "The Ghost of Christmas Past"
Philippians 3:4-16
December 6, 2009

Paul Had to Confront Some Very REAL Ghosts

1. Haunting Vs. 4-6

"Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners-of whom I am the worst. 16 But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display His unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on Him and receive eternal life. 17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen." 1 Tim. 1:15-17

IT'S THE GHOST OF A CHRISTLESS PAST...

2. Haunting Acts 15:36-41, 2 Tim. 4:9-11

2 Cor. 2:5-11 "If anyone has caused grief...you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8 I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him. 9 The reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. 10 If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven-if there was anything to forgive-I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, 11 in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes."

3. Haunting Vs. 4-7, Acts 7:59-8:1

"While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' 60 Then he fell on his knees and cried out, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' When he had said this, he fell asleep. 8:1 And Saul was there, giving approval to his death."

THREE POWERFUL CHOICES IN CONFRONTING OUR GHOSTS

Phil. 3:7-13

I choose to Vs. 13b-14

"...and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

Four Dangers I Know Can Come from Living in the Past

Contentment- which leads to

Pride- which leads to a

Guilt- which leads to a life of

Anger- which leads to

2. I choose to Vs. 13

"Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind..."

What Paul is saying is: "I choose to place my past -----".

3. I choose a -----. Vs. 7-11, 12-14

"...all the things I once thought were so important are gone from my life. Compared to the high privilege of knowing Christ Jesus as my Master, firsthand, everything I once thought I had going for me is insignificant-dog dung. I've dumped it all in the trash so that I could embrace Christ and be embraced by Him. I didn't want some petty, inferior brand of righteousness that comes from keeping a list of rules when I could get the robust kind that comes from trusting Christ-God's righteousness." Message vs. 8-9

My purpose is to know Him. Vs. 8

My purpose is to fellowship with Him. Vs. 9

My purpose is to be like Him. Vs. 10

Rom. 8:28-30 "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. 29 For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers."

NOTICE VS. 1

"Finally my brothers, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you." Phil. 3:1

"In order to properly deal with my past, I must come to grips with my past, I must acknowledge my past, I must take responsibility for my past, I must ask forgiveness for my past, I must give forgiveness from my past and I must surrender my past...BUT the one thing I dare not do with my past is deny it..." Pastor Phil Whetstone