

Philippians 1:20c-24. 27a

I feel fairly clean today. I did take a shower this morning, but I feel even cleaner because I had reconciliation with my confessor yesterday. I emptied out my sins and I feel better. I will try to be more conscious of my habitual sins, but I know I will always be in need of God's abundant mercy. My confessor introduced me to a term that made sense, but I wasn't real familiar with. He told me that we should strive to be downwardly mobile. Meaning that instead of always pursuing worldly greatness or material wealth, we should strive to live like Jesus did. It sounds like he didn't generate a big income and relied on women to support his monetary needs. He lived a simple life of prayer and preaching the Gospel. He healed and taught out of love. He was made low by the cross and the grave, but he was raised from the dead to destroy sin and death.

St. Paul knew of this lowliness. He knew his time was almost up. Paul had fiercely proclaimed the Gospel throughout the Gentile world. Many came to believe on account of him introducing Jesus to the people. The Christians of Philippi were among those he influenced. They responded well. They cared for Paul's needs. We don't know exactly what the community did for Paul, but he was very grateful. Sometimes scholars refer to Paul's letter to the Philippians as a big thank you letter. It is fairly short and expresses gratitude well. There are also many nuggets of truth in the letter designed to teach the faith. This is why this letter is so valuable. We have this positive letter for the next couple of weeks. Paul is greeting the Christians and telling them to live their lives for Christ. Paul sounds like he wants to be downwardly mobile.

We are called to imitate Christ through our close reading of the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament that plainly shares how we are to live our lives for Jesus. The Old Testament holds many riches as well, but sometimes they are harder to mine out. If someone is in the early stages of praying with the Bible, they should read the Gospel of Matthew or Luke. Pauline letters like Romans, both Corinthians letters, and the featured letter to the Philippians can be great additions to try and use scripture to pray. We should live to gain insights and to deepen our relationship with Jesus Christ.