

Pressing On

Philippians 3:12-14

12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

“Paul then explains how his present life is a pursuit in this new direction. But he does not want to be misunderstood. He is not claiming that his conversion has already brought him to his final goal. He has not already received all he longs for nor has he been brought to that perfect completeness to which he has aspired. . . . Paul understands clearly that he has a continuing responsibility to pursue the purposes Christ had chosen him for. Spiritual progress is ever the imperative Christians must follow.” EBCNT

- I. Paul is not already perfect.
 - A. He had not been made perfect by keeping the law.
 - B. He had not been able to be perfect by good works.
 - C. He had not been able to be perfect since he came to Jesus.
 - 1. There may have been some in Philippi that had thought they were perfect.
- II. He presses on to lay hold of what Christ has laid hold of him for.
 - A. Paul understand that Jesus had a great purpose in calling him to salvation.
 - 1. God does not save us just to keep us from punishment.
 - 2. First He saves us because He loves us.
 - 3. But He also saves us because He has a purpose for us.
 - 4. Paul was working out the purpose in his life.
 - B. To Paul the journey was important.
 - 1. He wanted to achieve all that God had for him.
 - 2. He wanted to experience all that God had for him.
 - a. This past week Nancy and I went to adventure land so that we could spend \$80 to take a train ride and sit on a park bench for most of the rest of the day. Now the park had all types of things for us but we were not interested.
 - b. Some Christians seem to not be interested in all that God has prepared for them in this life.

- c. Some are waiting for departure time by setting on the park bench all their lives.
 - C. But this is not for Paul.
 - 1. He wanted to pursue what Christ had pursued him for.
 - 2. To know Him and the power of His resurrection.
 - 3. To even know Him in the fellowship of His suffering.
 - 4. Paul was there for all that the journey had for him.
- III. He must not regard the things that are behind.
 - A. But he had to cut off his past.
 - 1. The Jewish patterns of life.
 - 2. The Jewish goals that he once sought.
 - 3. The righteousness that he thought he had through the law.
 - B. I am sure he had to leave behind his regrets.
 - 1. Paul had not only been mistaken, he had sinned gravely.
 - 2. What was he to do with that, he must accept the forgiveness of God.
 - C. We must leave behind those things we cannot change.
 - 1. Some things we can make right and we need to do it.
 - 2. Other things are done and no matter what we do they we cannot make it right.
 - D. We may never be able to truly forget those things but we can confess them and put them under the blood.
 - 1. 1 John 1:8-10 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. NKJV
 - 2. We put it under the blood when we confess it and forsake it.
- IV. He presses for the goal for the prize.
 - A. There is a reward for faithfulness.
 - 1. Salvation is by grace, but that does not mean we do not press on.
 - 2. But there is a prize to gain by faithfulness.

3. 2 Tim 4:7-8 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.⁸ Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. NKJV
4. Rev 3:21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. NKJV
5. 1 Cor 9:24-27; Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.²⁵ And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.²⁶ Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.²⁷ But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. NKJV

V. His is a heavenly calling.

- A. There is no higher calling.
 1. Not by a king or a country or a president.
 2. There no higher calling.
- B. We have all been called by the same Savior.
 1. We might not have been called to the same thing for in the body there needs to be many parts.
 2. We need to find what it is that Christ has apprehended us for and do it.
 3. None of us would work at a place and not do the job we could do.
 4. We would not want to be unsuccessful.
- C. So let it be in our kingdom work.
 1. Will you come work in the Father's vinyard.
 2. The rewards are great.
 3. The hours are long.
 4. There sometimes to be little reward in this life.
 5. But we lay up treasure against the day that will never end.
 6. Don't you long to be a part of that.
 7. To have your name written in the roll call of the faithful.