

## Phil. 3:13 Looking back to press forward?

### INTRO:

- Year's end. Back to Mark in two weeks,
- Why has God saved me? What is his purpose for my life, His goal for me?
- Am I fully sanctified, have I reached the fulness of my spiritual maturity?  
NO!
- How do we go forward.
- Paul examples this for us in Philippians chapter 3

### **Read Phil. 3:4-**

### **VS. 12**

- It is obvious that Paul was a saved man when he wrote this letter to the Philippians.
- Let's look at his testimony in Vs. 7-10.
- Yet having this assurance of eternal salvation, he did not sit and rest, he did not coast on in life, retire, or take a spiritual growth sabbatical or vacation.
- Paul knew that there was more in Christ for him, there was more of what God had saved him for, more growth, more maturity.
- He knew his work was not done, and he knew Gods' work in him was not done.
- There seemed to be some in Philippi that either thought Paul had reached Christian perfection, or that they had reached it.
- But Paul says no. we are far from God's finished design for us.
- Paul was amazing; though he had been and still was greatly used by God in the building up of His church, and the spreading of the gospel.
- And his walk with Christ, his communion with Christ, his prayer life was tremendous, he yet is aware and confesses that there is still imperfections in his spiritual life. an incompleteness, unfinished work in him.
- What a picture of humility and an example of determination and consistence.
- This great apostle does not count himself to have arrived, he sees himself as being short of Gods' goal for him. In his soul and in his work.
- Paul did not count himself or come to the conclusion that he had arrived, reached the personal perfection God had intended for him.
- There was still more of Paul for God to conquer.
- He knew there was yet more work to be done in his life. Do we realize this? Are we willing for this?
- If this giant of a saint, an apostle, felt there was more, that his life in Christ was still unfinished, what about mine?

## VS. 13

- **BRETHREN:** Literally those who have come from the same womb. All true born-again children of God.
- Paul uses this personal plural noun to arrest their attention, something important is coming. Listen.
- **COUNT:** To recon, compute, calculate, a process of careful study and reasoning with the result of arriving at a sound conclusion.
- **APPREHENDED; LAID HOLD OF:** To seize, to take possession of.
- Paul uses it here figuratively to describe taking a firm grasp, to hold onto an object and do, so aggressively, that it has become his possession.
- An example of the word can be found in **Mark's** gospel, **9:18**.
- Paul was not cast down by the knowledge that he needed more growth.
- He did not sit down and pout, saying God expects too much from me. My walk is too difficult for me.
- No Rather than being cast down or giving up he was drawn up.
- Let us not be satisfied or comfortable with a knowledge of our salvation or settle for just knowing something of imperfections and accepting them and giving up,
- Or settle for finishing our race as we are and being less than God's intention for us. Press on, follow after.
- Now if we would go on with Christ and please Him, we must follow Paul's example.
- Paul gives us two great directives under one heading.
- Paul's "this one thing I do, and is carried out by two actions.
- Forgetting and Reaching.
  - 1) "Forgetting those things that are behind."
  - 2) Reaching forward to those things which are ahead.

### 1) Forgetting:

- Paul calls them to forget things that are behind, in the past.
- Paul needed to forget his past, the good and the bad.
  - **VS. 5-6**
- **Forgetting:** not to recall information, or the act of neglecting thoughts, to give little attention to them.
- This is an intentional and conscious choice not to recall, not to dwell on them. In the Greek it is stronger, meaning completely forgetting.
- It is in the present tense meaning, Paul was continually choosing to be forgetting, by deliberate choice. A conscious refusal to be absorbed by them.
- Not letting the past have a negative present influence.
- What things in my past are still hindering my present? Pulling me down, holding me back, discouraging me?
  - Failures, mistakes...
  - Hurts... Heart aches.
  - Sins...
  - Discouragements, disappointments, dashed hopes and plans.
  - Regrets...

- Learn but don't be crippled or continue to beat yourself up.
- Don't let the devil abuse or accuse you with that which you have confessed and brought under the blood of Christ.
  - **Rom. 8:1, 33, 34**
- We may also need to forget things positive, works, which lead to pride.
- Times in the past where I really met with God and I am living off the old, emotional memory instead of the living Christ, trusting in old wells that have long since dried up.
- Satan tries to bind us to the past, while Christ draws us and liberates us for the future.
- Paul needed to forget the past to reach a victorious future.
- Lot's wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt.

## 2) REACHING FORWARD:

- Paul having reckoned, taken inventory of his life in Christ he is determined in his mind and heart to press forward in Christ.
- reaching forward to that which is ahead, the maturing and a purer conformity to the image of Christ Jesus. To know Him in greater measure and experience.
- **REACHING:** To extend, to stretch, literally to overextend. Used only here.
- Paul uses again a picture from athletics. The picture is of a foot race, in which the runner's head, shoulders and chest are bent forward and his eye fixed upon the goal, the tape at the end of the race so as to be the first one across the goal.
- Often a race is decided by a fraction of an inch, and the runner who is able to throw himself across the finish line by extending himself may be crowned the victor.
- ***The miracle mile: On August 7, 1954, during the British Empire Games in Vancouver, Canada, the greatest mile-run matchup ever took place. It was touted as the "MIRACLE MILE" because Britisher Roger Bannister and Australian John Landy were the only two sub-four-minute milers in the world.***
- ***Then came the famous moment (replayed thousands of times in print and flickering black-and-white celluloid) as at the last stride before the homestretch the crowds roared. Landy could not hear Bannister's footfall and looked back, a fatal lapse of concentration, Bannister launched his attack and won the Empire Games that day.***
- What does it mean to me to be reaching forward, after God?
  - Stay in the race,
  - Embrace obedience, regardless of the cost.
  - Embrace the cross, that is the putting to death of the old man, the old nature.
  - We must decrease that He may increase.