

PHILIPPIANS 3:12-14 PRESSING FORWARD TO LAY-HOLD

INTRO:

- May we as we begin 2024, make a conscious decision to renew our desire and effort to pursue that for which we have been apprehended for.
- To press forward to our high calling in Christ.
- In Paul's writings, the Christian life is likened to a warrior, a boxer, a soldier, a workman, and here a runner.
- The wording in these verses is taken from the Greek games and are a metaphor of the Christian life.
- It is interesting to know that in the Greek games a participant must be a citizen. (Phil 3:20)
- But every metaphor is one of progress and growth. First the blade, then the ear, then the grain in the ear. The athlete is always advancing toward his goal. (2 Peter 1:5-9)
- Paul writes while in prison and he is not as a novice, but as a seasoned disciple and apostle of the Lord and within just a couple of years he will have finished his race.
 - 2 Tim. 4:6-8
- Remember, God laid hold of us for a purpose, He has a goal for us to attain by His grace.
- In these verses, Paul deals with all 3 tenses, past (forgetting what lays behind) the present, (I have not yet attained, but I press forward now.) and the future, (that I may apprehend that for which I have been apprehended for.)
- We are each, if born again, on the track, we have been given the necessary legs needed for the race, we are born to run the heavenly race. Each of us on the track and in his designated lane.

REVIEW:

READ PHIL 3:12-14

- As far as acceptance with God is concerned a Christian is complete in Christ the moment he believes.
- The work of Christ for us is perfect and complete and there is nothing we can add to it, yet the work of the Holy Spirit in us is not perfect,
- His work is continually carried on day by day until the moment of our death.
- This is basically what Paul is declaring here, God is not done with me yet, there is yet more work for Him to do in me, I have imperfections. I am complete in Him, yet I am incomplete. Being conformed...

I have broken these verses into 3 headings; DISSATISFACTION, DETERMINATION AND DIRECTION.

1) **DISSATISFACTION**: VS. 12a & 13a Not that I have already attained or am already perfected ¹³ Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended;

- Paul does not give us a catalog of his imperfections or an inventory, he acknowledges he has not attained yet, then immediately turns his eye upward declaring with a burning eagerness his desire for a greater conformity to Christ, the goal of his life.
- We must know a divine dissatisfaction.
 - Ps. 42:1-2; As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. ² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?
- The man who tells us in these verses he had not attained or apprehended yet is vastly more superior in spirituality and Christlikeness than any of us.
- And yet he is not finished, he continues to pursue, press on.
- Among those born of a woman, perhaps there is none greater than Paul the apostle, none greater in labors, sufferings, tribulation, ministry, and martyrdom.
- None of us have reached our goal either, our goal like Paul's was absolute perfection, maturity, to be like Christ.
 - "Be you perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Mt. 5:48)
- We might well ask, "will I ever reach this state of perfection?"
- Yes, just like thousands and millions have reached it before me, even as they stand before the holy throne of God in robes made white washed in the blood of the Lamb.

2) **DETERMINATION**: VS. 13b but one thing *I do*, ¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

- Ps. 27:4; One *thing* I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire in His temple.
 - Dt. 15:16-17
- See vs. 7-8.
- The eye fixed on the goal, locked in on it, not looking backwards, but always ahead.
- To this goal we are to press:
- **Press**: an intense endeavor, used to describe a hunter eagerly pursuing his prey.
- Paul was using the same zeal to press on after the Lord as he used to persecute the church. (vs 6)
- Eph. 6:10-18

3) DIRECTION: VS. 13c forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,

- **Forgetting;** to forget in this Christian sense means to no longer be influenced by or affected by the past.
- When God says He will remember no more, (Heb. 10:17) He is not having a bad memory, what He is saying is "I will not longer hold their sins against them."
- Our past sins can no longer affect our standing with God or influence His attitude towards us.
- The power of the past can only be broken by the greater power, the power of the forgiveness of God, the cleansing of Christ's blood, then living for the future to the pleasure of God.
- Paul knew this: **1 Tim. 1:12-17**
- Not looking back but reaching forward to those things which are ahead.
- What things? Not a material crown but an eternal heavenly crown.
- The high calling or upward call is the call which is from heaven, above, it has come from on High.
- It is not an earthly call, a downward call but a heavenly call. this call bids us, summons us "get up and come up." (Rev. 4:1)
- The call of God to the Christian is from heaven and to heaven.
 - Prov. 15:24; The way of life *winds* upward for the wise, that he may turn away from hell below.
- The prize at which we aim is not an earth-bound goal, but a heavenly, it is a high, an upward one.
- The eternal reward of glory, the, "well done thou good and faithful servant."
- Freedom from self, freedom from the presence of sin, and death, to join with the holy assembly in heaven and to gaze upon the Holy Trinity forever.
- **READ 32 REDEMPTION HYMNAL.**

CONCLUSION:

- Can we say, will we say with Paul, "this one thing I do."
- The grace that made Paul a saved man is the same grace that made him a holy man, and the same is true for us.
- Let us consider our lives, our race, taking time like Paul and do an honest inventory before God.
- Does my upward call receive my zeal as much as my earthly pursuits? My job, my hobbies, by joys?
- Where am I, have I matured in Him, am I growing in Him, where may I need to mature?
- Be intentional, Husbands be an example and a help to your wives, wives be an example and a help to your husbands.