

**The Book of Philippians**  
**“Pressing On”**  
**8/28/2016 Sunday AM**

**Scripture Verses: Philippians 3:12-21**

**Sermon Notes**

- Last week we spoke about Counting it all as Loss. We saw where Paul listed many things that made him great in the eyes of the world, but in the end he counted all of those things as loss for Christ.
- Nothing in this world should be added to our Profit column except for Jesus Christ, everything else in this world is a loss. When we can get that into perspective, our entire worldview will change.
- This morning we will discuss Pressing On.

**Philippians 3:12-21**

<sup>12</sup>Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. <sup>13</sup>Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, <sup>14</sup>I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup>All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. <sup>16</sup>Only let us live up to what we have already attained. <sup>17</sup>Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. <sup>18</sup>For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. <sup>19</sup>Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. <sup>20</sup>But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup>who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

- Paul likes to use sports references as he mentions many times about running a race in his letters.
- You can see that imagery in this passage we are studying today as he says twice “press on”. The Greek word he uses here is *dioko* which means “to pursue.”
- It is best illustrated if you think about a runner that is racing towards the finish line.
- In v. 12 Paul speaks of not being “made perfect”. The Greek word that he uses here is *teleioō* and it means to accomplish a goal, to complete something.
- Paul goes on to say that he will “press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.”
- To understand this statement, you have to ask yourself what is it that Paul is trying to take hold of?
- Is it salvation, or something different? It really cannot be salvation, because this is something Paul already has. He is saying that he is reaching to take hold of something that was the reason Christ took hold of him.
- So why did Christ “take hold” of Paul? The same reason he “takes hold” of you and me, to be like him.
- We spoke of this several weeks ago when we talked about sanctification and being Christlike.
- God saves us when we surrender our lives to him. Then the process of sanctification begins as we strive to conform ourselves to Christ’s example and put off the ways of the world.
- This is what Paul is talking about he is pressing on to in v. 12, he is pursuing to be Christlike in every way.
- **How about you, is this something that you are pursuing or striving for in every way, every day?**
- Paul goes on to tell the Philippians in v. 13 that he has not reached this goal yet either..
- He says, “But one thing I do:...” Pay close attention to this because Paul is summing up his pursuit of sanctification into one action: “...Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead.”
- The one thing Paul does is to forget all of the things in his past that may hinder his future. This means those good things like his heritage and status, as well as mistakes and failures.
- He is not saying that you forget them to the point you cannot learn from your past successes and failures, but they should not be a ball and chain on you where you cannot “straining toward what is ahead.”

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- In v.14 Paul says, “I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”
- He is “straining toward” and “pressing on” toward this goal of Christlikeness and to the promises of God.
- It is not easy, it requires effort and perseverance through tough times of trials and tribulations.
- **It may not be easy, but nothing that is really meaningful is easy. However, it sure is worth it**
  
- In vv. 15-17 Paul calls the Philippian church to have the same attitude and to follow his example.
- We too should be striving to follow Paul’s example as we seek to become more and more like Christ.
- We must also come to the same mindset as he did, that this comes with counting many things we hold dear as loss.
- Paul had a lot of reason to boast and be proud of where he was and the status he had achieved, to many people in the world around him, he had reached his goal.
- But Paul was reaching for a finish line that could not be found on this earth or attained with earthly material.
- He had his eyes set heavenward. Not only achieving Christlikeness while on earth, but enjoying an eternity with Christ.
  
- Vv. 18-21 show us the distinction between people that follow Paul’s example and the example of Christ and those that do not and live for the world.
- V.19 is a powerful condemnation of people that live only for themselves and the things of this world. It says, “Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things.”
- They are destined to destruction because their pursuit is in the wrong direction. Not all paths lead to the same destination, not matter what people tell you.
- Hallelujah vv. 20-21 says, “**But our citizenship is in heaven.** And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.”
- There is coming a day where we will realize our full citizenship rights in heaven and Christ will give us our new bodies that will be like his body. That is the moment we will reach the finish line to the fullest extent as we strive to be like Christ.
- No more barriers of sinful flesh and a fallen world, we will be complete and perfect just like God always intended for us from the beginning.
  
- You may be going through something right now and in the midst of the storm it may seem like you will never see sunshine again.
- God promises us that we will “see sunshine” again in this life and certainly in the eternity.
- What we have to do is learn to put all of these things that we are dealing with in this life aside and “press on” toward Christ and his plan for our life.
- Set your goal on Christ and pursue him, you will find that when you model yourself after him the things of this life simply fall into place.
- Our problem is we tend to take a side road and get off of the path or get distracted by the things of this world. When that happens we spend countless years sometimes wandering towards nothingness.
- **Let’s not waste time and walk in circles, let’s press on toward the goal!**