

Sunday, May 22, 2022

Philippians 3:11-16

Please turn to Philippians 3:12-16, pg. 981 in the Pew Bibles.

INTRO

Stereotype-H.S. quarter back living in the past. He lets his past success remind him of his current failures. Mike Robinson was this guy. He almost made it to the big league. His entire life he dreamed of playing professional baseball. AND he made it. He became a catcher for the Angels BUT as fast as the dream was realized, he lost it. He told me of the following days lived in bitterness and anger. Then a hippie approached this bitter jock in a 7-11, gave him a pamphlet and led him through the 4 spiritual laws (*walk through them*). He prayed to receive Jesus that day. Soon he had a new dream.

This was the man who mentored me, and the same guy who when we had a near death experience with one of these... **(Pic of Large Truck) (briefly show full screen on live stream)** Found only on Maui, the 14-foot-tall, 84-foot-long behemoth¹ came out the sugar cane fields, overshot the shoulder and came into our lane, barely missing us... **I will never forget what Mike said (full screen video) said "You can't scare me with Heaven!**

His new dream was this...

"That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead." Philippians 3:10-11

This is the context of our text this morning. This is the **Hope for the Good Guy**

Last week the Apostle Paul told the church in Philippi to take no confidence in your works, but in Christ's work. Paul was like, *"Want to boast in the flesh? Let's do this!"*, and lists his accolades but then says, these things are like dog poop

¹ <https://www.mauinews.com/the-last-harvest/2017/01/tourna haulers/>

compared to the surpassing worth of knowing Christ! Relying on my works to find worth... well, it stinks. Our hope, our identity and our future is in Christ!

Spiritual Maturity then, is become more reliant of Christ, not more self-reliant.

MAIN POINT TODAY IS - **Strive to Arrive for Christ is Alive!**

Please stand for the reading of God's word, Pray

#1.You're not there yet

#2.Let it go

#3.Press on

#4.God's got this, so get it

#1.You're not there yet

2x Paul states this.

[12] Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect,

[13] Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own.

What has he not obtained or made his own? The obvious reference is the resurrection stated in verse 11, but he's also speaking to spiritual maturity, given the larger context.

"The reality is, the more we come to know Christ, the more we will come to sense our need to grow." R. Kent Hughes

Learning to walk. Step by step (Celebrate the step, not the fall)

We won't make perfection or wholeness this side of heaven. These 2 statements of Paul are huge to dismantle the "Prosperity Gospel" theology.

SO if we'll never make it, maybe we shouldn't try? Yeah, if Jesus didn't rise from the dead, there's no reason to try. But he did. He saved you and me. And he's alive now beckoning to walk, run, towards the upward call of Christ Jesus.

Why? For it is in these efforts that we come to know him more and more and power of his resurrection!

Strive to Arrive for Christ is Alive!

#1.You're not there yet

#2.Let it go

I believe there is a dual context here...

-Paul says in verse 13, **But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead**

One thing: Emphatic and abrupt. One of the only places in Paul's writing that's abrupt.

-The obvious context is Paul forgets his past successes. He testifies that the way he is calling us to live, to take no stock in our works, but to fully rely on Christ's work, is the way he lives.

-The other, maybe not so obvious context is failures. Paul mentions it in his accolades: Phil. 3:6-as to zeal, a persecutor of the church.

-Story of Stephen

Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. Acts 7:58

Saul oversaw the murder of this Godly man. What failure is holding you back? Things you've done or things done to you? It's time to move on, to let it go. To not look back and look up to Christ, to know HIM and the power of his resurrection!

Strive to Arrive for Christ is Alive!

#1.You're not there yet

#2.Let it go

#3.Press on

Read 13b-14

The wording takes us to that of an athletic competition. Straining forward.

Show video

for the righteous falls seven times and rises again, Proverbs 24:16

#1.You're not there yet

#2.Let it go

#3.Press on

#4.God's got this, so get it

Vs. 15 with 12b

To make it my own; to acquire, with the implication of significant effort

APPLICATION

Vs. 16

"Hold true to what we have attained". GOD'S GOT THIS, SO GET IT!

What is your upward call? Strive for it!

#1.You're not there yet

#2.Let it go

#3.Press on

#4.God's got this, so get it

Strive to Arrive for Christ is Alive!

COMMUNION

BIBLE STUDY NOTES

KEY WORDS—Own 3x, Press on 2x

KEY VERSE—12b, *but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.*

FCF—The fallen condition is implied by dwelling in what “lies behind” and not “pressing on”.

■ GENERAL ■ GOD ■ KEY WORDS ■ COMMAND ■ TRUTH ■ SIN

[12] Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. [13] Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, [14] I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. [15] Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. [16] Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

Initial Observations/ Questions

Vs. 12, Not that he has “already obtained” what?

not “Already Perfect”—> Already but not yet / Look up “perfect” in the Greek
Press on to; make it my own, toward the goal. What's the goal? What's the prize?
What's the call?

Indicative—Jesus has made me his own

Vs. 13, One thing I do (emphatic)... What is Paul forgetting?

“Straining”—look up in the greek

Vs. 14, Prize? Attain the resurrection from the dead? (Vs. 11)

Define “upward call”

Vs. 15 **Imperative**—Let those who are mature think this way.

Indicative—God will reveal this thinking (How?)

Course corrections will be done by God

Vs. 16 **Imperative**—Hold true to what we have attained.

Book ends? Obtained (vs. 12) /attain(vs. 16)

Translation Observations

Vs. 12

ESV-Make it my own

NKJV-Laid hold of

NASB-Lay Hold of

NIV-Take hold of

Vs. 13

NIV-Brothers and sisters

—

NKJV-One thing (I do) in italics. Shows disruptive thought in Greek

NASB-Ibid

ESV-Striving

KNJV-Reaching

NIV- Straining

vs. 14

ESV, NKJV-Upward

NIV-Heavenly

vs. 15

ESV-Think this way

NKJV-Have this mind

NASB-Have this attitude

NIV-Take such a view

vs. 16

ESV-Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

NKJV-Nevertheless, to *the degree* that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.

NASB-however, let us keep living by that same *standard* to which we have attained

NIV-Only let us live up to what we have already attained.

The Message Version

I'm not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made. But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me. Friends, don't get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward—to Jesus. I'm off and running, and I'm not turning back.

So let's keep focused on that goal, those of us who want everything God has for us. If any of you have something else in mind, something less than total commitment, God will clear your blurred vision—you'll see it yet! Now that we're on the right track, let's stay on it.

People

The Apostle Paul gives testimony about his spiritual life. We learn; he has not arrived (said twice for emphasis) but he presses on. He intentionally forgets "what lies behind" and strains for what's ahead. This is an upward or heavenly calling. He trusts in God as a matter of maturity to reveal this thinking to those who aren't there yet. He then commands to hold true.

Cross Reference

12 Not that I have already *obtained this or

*Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 1 Timothy 6:12

*thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life. 1 Timothy 6:19

***am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. 13 Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own.**

Since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect. Hebrews 11:40

and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, Hebrews 12:23

And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, Hebrews 5:9

But *one thing I do:

yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist. 1 Corinthians 8:6

***forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,**

Hear, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear: forget your people and your father's house, Psalm 45:10

Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." Luke 9:62

Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, Hebrews 6:1

14 I press on toward the goal for *the prize of the upward

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. 1 Corinthians 9:24

***call of God in Christ Jesus.**

Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, Hebrews 3:1

And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. 1 Peter 5:10

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28

15 Let those of us who are *mature think this way,

Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. 1 Corinthians 2:6

You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Matthew 5:48

and if in anything *you think otherwise,

I have confidence in the Lord that you will take no other view, and the one who is troubling you will bear the penalty, whoever he is. Galatians 5:10

***God will reveal that also to you.**

If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority. John 7:17

16 Only *let us hold true to what we have attained.

And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. Galatians 6:16

Summery

Cross references can help give a greater understanding of a peculiar word in context; like our word "mature" in verse 15 is similar to the word "perfect" in vs. 12.

Note the "forward" or "striving" nature of many of the references. Seeing this commonality in so many other areas of scripture makes me wonder if the application could be summed up in Luke 9:62, Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

Greek Studies

Vs. 12

Obtain; to acquire possession of something—to take, to acquire, to obtain.²

Perfect; Complete, perfect, finish. to be completely successful in accomplishing some goal or attaining some state—to be completely successful, to succeed fully ³

Press on; to impel (drive, force, or urge (someone) to do something) to move quickly and energetically toward some objective—to hasten, to run, to press forward, to press on.' κατὰ σκοπὸν διώκω εἰς τὸ βραβεῖον 'so I run straight toward the goal in order to win the prize' (vs. 14) ⁴

² Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). [Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains](#)

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

To make it my own; to acquire, with the implication of significant effort—"to acquire, to attain, to obtain, to take." οὕτως τρέχετε ἵνα καταλάβητε "run, then, in such a way as to take [the prize]" 1 Cor.9:24.

The same acquire with significant effort is applied to vs 12b "because Christ Jesus has made me his own."

Vs. 13

One; Only rarely is εἷς used as a digit in the NT (e.g., 2 Pt. 3:8).¹ It usually means "single," "once-for-all," "unique" or "only," or "unitary," "unanimous," or "one of two or many,"² "only one."

Its main theological significance is in relation to the formula εἷς θεός. "God is one" is the teaching of the shema in Dt. 6:4: **דַּחַ אַ הוה י**. There is no God beside Him (Mk. 12:29, 32). His uniqueness is especially significant for His people: ἡμῖν εἷς θεός ὁ πατήρ, ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν—καὶ εἷς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς δι' αὐτοῦ (1 C. 8:6). **In the one God the origin and goal of the world, and in the one Christ history and salvation history, are a unity.**

This pregnant εἷς, however, has another significance in early Christianity. It resists all dualism and eliminates any either-or relationship between God and anti-god. Man can serve only one Lord (Mt. 6:24). It denotes the elemental and inviolable union, the henosis, of married couples (Ign. Pol., 5, 2), and also points to a higher union with the Lord (1 C. 6:17; Eph. 5:31; → γάμος, I, 649, 651).

A thought particularly expressed by the emphatic εἷς is that everything depends on one thing, that man's whole way and future are decided by one question (Mk. 10:21; Lk. 10:42 vl.). Thus the keeping of the Law stands or falls with one commandment. We all become disobedient with one transgression. The fulness of the divine will is enclosed in the one commandment of love (Mt. 5:18; Jm. 2:10; Gl. 5:14). It is necessary to be vigilant and strong for one hour. Power is given to evil for one hour. In one hour catastrophe descends on all sides and in all forms.⁴ Early Christianity has a comprehensive awareness of the astonishing import of the single and unique. The particular is not lost in the vastness of the world and history. The individual bears the whole within it and decides once and for all.

NT thinking is neither individual nor collective, but organic. God's will is directed neither to the isolated soul nor the mass as such, but always to the conditioned and conditioning member of a unit—the house, the people, the race, creation (R. 8:19 ff.).⁵

⁵ *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (electronic ed., Vol. 2, p. 434). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Summery Paragraph

Paul strives to arrive because Christ is alive. He's not turning back. If we want all that God has for us, either will we. God's got this, so get it.

Outline

Main idea: Strive to Arrive for Christ is Alive!

#1.You're not there yet

#2.Let it go

#3.Press on

#4.God's got this, so get it

Commentaries

New American Commentary

The best explanation of this desire is that Paul looked ahead to the completion of his salvation. ⁶

It is particularly graphic, bringing to mind the straining muscles, clear focus, and complete dedication of the runner in his race to the prize. Both mental and physical discipline were necessary.

Preaching the Word

"The reality is, the more we come to know Christ, the more we will come to sense our need to grow." ⁷

"The present tense Paul used to describe is an ongoing, grasping, strenuous, pursuit. It is a gritty 'I will not be denied', rough-and-tumble pursuit-a sublime violence-which Christ approved and approves of." (Mat. 11:12)

"Gracious, loving violence"

⁶ Melick, R. R. (1991). *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon* (Vol. 32, p. 138). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

⁷ *Preaching the word*, Kent Hughes

Theological Principles

Already but not yet, Sanctification → Spiritual maturity

"Already but not yet" is primary.

I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Phil 3:12

Application

It's OK that I'm not "there yet".

Letting past failures or success determine my identity only serves to direct me off-course. Press on towards heaven!

- Prideful "arrival"

- Living in the past