

## Sermon – Pressing Toward the Goal

Preached at Cloverdale Church, 8/4/2024

Philippians 3:10-16

Background: Last week we discussed the power of the resurrection and how Paul described the need to have more excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ. We demonstrated how religion is valuable but that tradition can hinder our knowledge of Christ. I commented on how our youth today in large percentages are moving away from the church but more concerning, some deny the knowledge and importance of Christ. We discussed how works cannot come in front of faith, and faith in Christ is the key. We ended last week with demonstrating how we can experience the resurrection in our right now circumstances by simply following the process of Jesus (cross, grave, new life). I know there is life after death because I'm practicing living in and under resurrection power today. I'm better because I practice.

This week, I want to look at what to do with this resurrection power that we can have through Jesus Christ.

### **Pressing Toward the Goal**

**<sup>10</sup> that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, <sup>11</sup> if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.**

**<sup>12</sup> 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.**

Paul talks about wanting to experience the power of the resurrection but then cautions us in verse 12 that we not get comfortable or assume that the journey is over.

He doesn't assume that just because he can experience the resurrection, that he has already achieved perfection or that he has reached the pinnacle of success in this Christian life. Instead, he explains:

- I press on or continue to move forward.
- There is something greater beyond the resurrection that he wants to attain. There is something greater in Jesus that awaits. This beyond just being saved!
- Jesus also has a hold of him. There is a greater hold or desire that Christ wants to have with him.
- Why does Jesus want to grab a hold of us? He wants to use us, to transform us, to give us new life, give us victory, to give us His peace, to demonstrate His great love for us.

He continues:

**<sup>13</sup> 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, <sup>14</sup> I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.**

- Paul doesn't consider himself to have apprehended the main prize.
- Apprehended = achieve, lay hold of, take possession of, attain, comprehend, find, overtake, etc.
- Paul outlines the process or steps he takes to press forward.
  - Forgetting what happened in the past.
  - Look forward to what lies ahead.
  - To press after or pursue. To run after quickly.
- What is Paul running after? The upward call of God which is found in Christ Jesus.

So, again I see the key three step process at work here.

- Recognizing the need for Christ in my life and humbly submitting to him
- Forgetting things which have already happened. What things are behind me?
  - My sins, my mistakes, heartaches, my disappointments, failures.
  - My unforgiveness, revenge, pride, my plans, my way.
  - My success, victories, gains.
- Resurrection power to get up with a new mind, new hope, new direction. To know Christ and have him inside.

So, now what is this prize or higher calling that I'm to pursue? What is God's goal or plan for us?

- To produce fruit for the Kingdom
- To be fishers of men
- To extend mercy and perform the works that bring Him glory
- To be faithful to the end
- To walk in victory and testimony

To press on means to do God's will. You need the power of the Holy Spirit to know, understand, and do His will.

It is a high calling because it comes from God. An example is serving in the military. At first, serving was just a job or career. But after I gained more excellent knowledge, it became a calling. It is a high invitation.

ChatGPT: Military Calling

A military calling refers to a strong sense of duty or purpose that motivates an individual to serve in the armed forces. This concept can encompass several aspects:

1. **Patriotism and Service to Country:** Many people feel a desire to serve and protect their country.
2. **Duty and Honor:** The military places a high value on principles such as duty, honor, and integrity.
3. **Personal and Professional Development:** Personal growth, leadership development, and the acquisition of skills and experiences.
4. **Sense of Belonging and Brotherhood:** The military fosters a strong sense of camaraderie and brotherhood among its members. Those with a military calling often seek the bonds and shared sense of mission that come from being part of a tightly knit unit.

5. **Desire to Make a Difference:** Many individuals with a military calling are motivated by the desire to make a meaningful impact, whether through humanitarian missions, peacekeeping efforts, or direct defense of their nation.

ChatGPT: In essence, a calling is about finding a path in life that resonates deeply with who you are and what you feel compelled to do.

The "high calling in Jesus Christ". It encompasses several interrelated ideas:

1. **Spiritual Pursuit and Transformation:** The high calling involves striving for spiritual maturity and transformation into the likeness of Christ. This means living a life that reflects the character and teachings of Jesus, growing in faith, love, and holiness.
2. **Purpose and Mission:** Believers are called to fulfill God's purpose for their lives, which includes sharing the gospel, serving others, and living out their faith in practical ways. This calling is not just about personal salvation but also about participating in God's mission in the world.
3. **Heavenly Citizenship:** Christians are encouraged to set their minds on heavenly things and to live as citizens of heaven, reflecting their ultimate allegiance to Christ.
4. **Endurance and Reward:** Paul often speaks of the high calling in terms of running a race or striving towards a goal. It involves perseverance, discipline, and dedication, with the assurance of eternal reward and the promise of being with Christ forever.

In summary, the high calling in Jesus Christ is about pursuing a life of spiritual growth, fulfilling God's purpose, focusing on eternal values, and persevering in faith with the hope of eternal reward.

**<sup>15</sup> Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. <sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, to *the degree* that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.**

Paul speaks of believers as being mature who are following this process in pursuit of the higher calling.

Mature believers daily follow the process.

- They operate under this same mindset that Paul describes, the pursuit of the high calling.
- If we are ever dealing with an area in our lives where we may not understand God's will or direction, God will reveal this to us. How? Through His word, through the Holy Spirit, and the testimony of others.
- As mature believers and based upon our degree of maturity that we have attained, let's walk by the same rule and each have the same mind set.

What rule and what mind set?

The steps, the process, the high calling, helping others in their pursuit of the prize....daily.

We are called to produce Kingdom fruit.