

## **PUSH – core training for Discipleship**

**Phil. 3: 8-14**

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Salvation is knowing a Person. We are not saved by anything we do; we experience redemption only through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. By His perfect life and sacrificial death on the cross of Calvary, He provided it for us. No wonder the longing of the apostle Paul's heart was that he might "know Him.

The Youth's Living Ideals magazine related the following story: "An old Christian woman whose age began to tell on her had once known much of the Bible by heart. Eventually only one precious bit stayed with her, 'I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day' (2 Tim. 1:12). By and by part of that slipped its hold, and she would quietly repeat, 'That which I have committed unto him.' At last, as she hovered between this world and heaven, her loved ones noticed her lips moving. They bent down to see if she needed anything. She was repeating over and over again to herself the one word of the text, 'Him, Him, Him.' She had lost the whole Bible but one word. But she had the whole Bible in that one word."

Though her memory had failed, that dying saint of God never lost the One she loved so well. Her salvation was based on a living relation-ship to Jesus Christ. The only way of salvation, is through knowing the Savior.

Knowing the Scriptures is one thing; knowing the Savior is another.

We continue with our series theme – Core discipleship training

### **Pushing Toward the Goal**

It's never easy – to live for Jesus.. Paul talks about his desire to become like Jesus and he says that he has to "press on." We are tempted to quit. We are tempted to relax. Carrying a cross is hard work. But we push on, following the leading of Jesus, and strengthened by His Spirit.

### **The focus for the rest of our lives is...Still in a Work in Progress**

The most common Christian cop-out is: "Well, nobody's perfect." Paul doesn't settle for such a flip answer regarding a serious quest for Christ's fullness.

He acknowledges that he isn't there yet, using two Greek verbs to describe where he hasn't yet arrived:

- **"Obtained"** ""to enter into a close relationship, receive, make one's own,
- **"Made perfect"** bring to its goal/accomplishment, make perfect." Paul realizes that he is **still a work in process.** God is still perfecting him, still pruning and shaping, still opening up for him. His motivating factor...because Jesus Christ has made me His own. The Grace and the cross.

I wonder, was Paul's experience in prison part of God's perfecting process for him? The circumstance that you yourself are in right now may be a blessing in disguise, an opportunity God has selected to further his

### **Pushing to Take Hold**

**Press on** - Literally - *"To run swiftly in order to catch a person, or a thing."* It has the idea of a runner chasing the finish line.. That word means *"to lay hold on"* What Paul is saying is, "I am pursuing the goal of laying hold on all that Jesus laid hold on me for." He realized that he had been saved for a purpose and that God had a plan for his life.

### **Forgetting What Lies Behind**

Thank God for forgiveness! In Christ, we can find forgiveness for our own failings. In Christ we can find the grace to forgive even the deepest hurts. So Paul doesn't look back. "Forgetting" is the Greek means "not to have remembrance of something, forget."<sup>6</sup> In the cross of grace we move forward to live in Christ.

When I was in high school and college I played on the varsity baseball team. How many times my coach would shout at us, "Keep your eye on the ball!" In baseball, a batter must keep his eye on the ball. A Christian must keep his eye on the goal -- fully surrender to and fellowship with Jesus Christ. Live with our eyes and focus on His Grace!

### **Straining Towards the Finish Line**

Another word in this imagery of a race is "straining toward" and "reaching forth" It is the Greek "to exert oneself to the uttermost, stretch out, strain toward something."<sup>8</sup> If you watched a race like in the Olympics, you could see that as the leading runners reached the tape at the goal line, they would lean their body forward. In some of heats, it was that extension of the body to its uttermost that won the race. Paul is seeking Christ and his fullness. He is urgent and disciplines himself so that he will not miss out on the greatest prize of all -- knowing Christ.

### **Pressing on Toward the Goal**

"I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." (3:14)

**I Press Toward The Mark** - The word Mark refers to the "goal that one has in view." In other words, Paul was oblivious to his surroundings, he was just heading for the goal. He wanted to finish well. Notice that when he did reach the end of his life, he was able to leave behind the testimony that he had indeed run well. *"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:"* 2 Tim 4:6-7.)

### **To Win the Prize**

Exactly what is this prize in our Philippians passage? Paul doesn't say specifically. The prize, however, is closely associated grammatically with the "call" of God.

### **The Heavenward Call**

Paul is referring to God's act of calling to salvation, thus the sentence refers to "the prize promised by God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus." in this context the prize is "the full and complete gaining of Christ, for whose sake everything else has been counted loss."

### **In Christ Jesus**

"in Christ Jesus," a familiar phrase that characterizes Paul's epistles. The goal, the prize, and the call are all wrapped up in Messiah Jesus!

**Conc:** in the Christian life and honor God by the lives we live, then we have to run the race His way. We will have to run with our eyes upon Him. We will have to learn to turn a blind eye to the allurements of the world and a deaf ear to the siren song of compromise. It is the Christian life. It will NOT be easy, but in the end, when we see His face, it will be worth it all!