

Pressing On Toward the Goal

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Philippians 3:12-14

At the start of a new year, we focus a lot on GOALS we want to reach in the future (health, work, relationships, etc.). All of these may be good, but we must never lose sight of what should be our PRIMARY goal – “the resurrection” (Philippians 3:11). In our text, Paul described three things he was doing to attain his goal. We need to do the same.

Forget What Lies Behind

- When we become a Christian, certain things must be left behind – we are not to go back to them (2 Peter 2:20-22)
- Our old lives of sin (Rom. 6:6-7) – we must not forget the reality of sin and become overconfident (1 Corinthians 10:12); but we must no longer be slaves of sin (Romans 6:6); our goal is to not sin (1 John 2:1)
- Evil companions (2 Corinthians 6:14) – when we give up sin, we will be different; others will notice (1 Peter 4:3-4); we cannot eliminate all contact with the world (1 Corinthians 5:9-10), but we must guard against evil influences (1 Corinthians 15:33)
- Hopelessness (Ephesians 2:12) – bad things happen to everyone (Christians and non-Christians), but the non-Christian has no lasting comfort because they have no hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13); as Christians, we have something far better awaiting us [more on this later]
- Lack of direction (Jeremiah 10:23) – everyone searches for meaning and purpose; without Christ, we are tossed about (Ephesians 4:14); following Him, we have a solid foundation (Matthew 7:26-27)

Reach Forward to What Lies Ahead

- Forgetting what lies behind does not mean being satisfied where we are – we are to grow
- Maturity (Hebrews 6:1) – maturing in Christ also means becoming more like Him (Galatians 2:20); we are to have the same attitude as He had (Philippians 2:5, 8); this leads to obedience
- Wisdom (Ephesians 5:15-18) – Paul described HOW we are to make the most of our time (understanding the will of God, being filled with the Spirit); this causes us to increase in wisdom
- Hope (Hebrews 6:18-20) – our hope is in heaven; hope of eternal life (Titus 3:7); this is the goal we are striving for

Press On Toward the Goal

- Paul had not obtained the goal when he wrote this – we have not yet reached our goal; it will be after this life; so we need to press on toward the goal; what does this mean for us?
- We need to have endurance (Hebrews 12:1-2) – look to Christ and His example as we run our course; at the end of his life, Paul said he finished the course and kept the faith (2 Timothy 4:7); we must be faithful until death to receive the crown of life (Revelation 2:10)
- We must stay on the right path (Matthew 7:13-14) – the world follows the broad way; we must follow Christ; walk according to the pattern (Philippians 3:17), and follow the example of others who are doing this too
- We have to remember the reward (1 Peter 1:3-4) – our inheritance in heaven is far better than anything we could hope for in this life; whatever we must overcome to obtain that reward will be well worth it

Conclusion

- As we make goals and plans for the future, let us not lose sight of what is truly and eternally important
- Whatever happens in the new year, let us continue to “press on toward the goal” that Paul spoke about – look to Christ and look beyond this life