

Paul's Lockdown

A MIDWEEK STUDY IN PHILIPPIANS

PRESSING ON TO THE PRIZE
Ryan Pfeiffer

Philippians 3:13-21
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13 Brothers and sisters, 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, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

- “Taken hold” of what? (See vss 10-11)
- “Forgetting what is behind” What is Paul “forgetting” and why? (See vss 5-6)
- Paul has not arrived... pressing on... further up and further in.
- He is always looking forward to the greater glory God has for Him... there is no smug “I have arrived” attitude in the spirituality of this great apostle.
- There is no complacency in Paul... he is not anxiously striving, he is striving with the energy that comes not from worry or from pride but from faith and love.
- The role of Longing for God.
- *“He is opposing a relative and progressive 'perfection' which he expects of every Christian to the impossible claim of final perfection which must ever be future while we are still on earth.”* Martin, R. P. (1987). *Philippians: An Introduction and Commentary* (Vol. 11, p. 162).

15 All of us, then, 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. 16 Only let us live up to what we have already attained.

- Suggests a back ground of controversy around Christian “perfection”.
- It seems there were some who viewed that it was possible to be ‘perfect’ in a final sense here and now
- The doctrine of sanctification and the order of salvation.
 - *Justification*: Being made right with God (righteous) through faith in Jesus’s death on the cross and God’s grace. Imputed righteousness. Like someone else’s clothing: Isaiah 61:10
 - *Regeneration*: Spiritual Birth. John 2, 1 Peter 1:3–9 “A momentary act”
 - *Sanctification*: Growth: (2:13) for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. “An ongoing process”
 - *Glorification*: (vss 20-21), John 17:22, 2 Peter 1:4. Our transformed, eternal state.
- The order of Salvation:
 - We have been saved. 2 Tim 1:9
 - We are being saved. 1 Cor 1:18
 - We will be saved. Romans 5:9-10

17 Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do.

- **Examples** or **mentors** are mentioned in Scripture (2 Tim 2:2; 1 Pet 5:3; Tit 2:7; 1 Tim 4:12;). We are to **mimic** them (1 Cor 4:16; Heb 6:12; 13:7; 2 Thes 3:9).
- Examples of Jesus—Philippians 2:5-11
- Discipleship isn’t about being perfect or having it all figured out.
 - Wounded Healers; Imperfect Examples.
 - Paul admits that he himself is unfinished. (vs13,
 - We are unfinished; we still have something to offer.

- We are all called to grow from the example of others and to be an example to others in a discipling relationship.
- Matthew 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

18 For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things.

- Paul is talking about professing believers.
- People who are no longer “pressing on toward the prize”
- They have gotten off the path of sanctification.
- Loyalty to the morality of our new citizenship has ceased to be a core conviction.
- This has happened in the Corinth church. 2 Cor. 11:3–4

20 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 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.

- “we shall share in God’s glory when we are in our resurrected bodies in the new heavens and new earth, experiencing deeper fellowship with God”
 - John 17:21 May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one
- 1 Corinthians 15 42 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; 43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; 44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.
- Jesus will consummate the transformation process that has begun within our hearts.
- This hope was an energizing force in Paul’s spirituality.
- It motivated Paul’s obedience, his suffering, and his morality in this life.
 - Jesus: Mark 13:33 Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.
 - 1 Peter 1:13 Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming.