

**Press Toward the Goal**  
**Phil. 3:12-14**

*Thesis: To encourage us to press toward the goal of heaven.*

**Introduction:**

- A. At times, it can be difficult to remain faithful.
  - 1. One reason is because Satan is always trying to get us to fall to his temptations.
  - 2. Another reason is that sometimes we feel that we have done enough for God and His kingdom.
  
- B. Today, we will notice what Paul has to say about attaining that home in heaven.

**I. We must know that as of yet, we have attained nothing (3:12-13).**

**A. Notice the things that Paul had already done for Christ.**

- 1. Paul was very faithful to Christ.
  - a. As soon as Paul became a Christian, he began to preach.
    - 1) **Acts 9:20** - Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.
    - 2) **Acts 9:26-30** – Paul comes to the apostles and begins to work with them.
  - b. When he was set apart by God, he obeyed.
    - 1) **Acts 13:2** - As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”
    - 2) From that time forward, Paul spent his life in preaching the word of God, and demonstrating that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God.
- 2. Paul had suffered great things for Christ.
  - a. The Jews did not like the things that Paul taught.
  - b. They did everything they could to stop him from preaching.
  - c. **II Cor. 11:22-33** - Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. {23} Are they ministers of Christ?-- I speak as a fool-- I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. {24} From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. {25} Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; {26} in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; {27} in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—{28}

besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. {29} Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation? {30} If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity. {31} The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. {32} In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me; {33} but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.

3. Yet Paul says that he had not attained anything (3:12a, 13a).
  - a. Paul understood that there was still work to be done.
  - b. He knew that he had to remain faithful to God.

**B. We must understand that no matter what our position in life, there is work that needs to be done.**

1. Even if we are currently faithful to God, we have not yet obtained our home in heaven.
2. There is still work to be done.
3. Remember, Jesus says that we must continue to be faithful, even to the end.
  - a. **Rev. 2:10b** (Jesus speaking to the church in Smyrna) - **Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.**
  - b. We must be faithful **UNTIL** death.

**II. In order to obtain a home in heaven, we must forget “those things which are behind” (3:13).**

**A. Notice what this meant for Paul.**

1. Paul had to forget worse things than we have ever committed.
2. Before Paul became a Christian, he was a great persecutor of the church.
  - a. Paul was in favor of the stoning of Stephen.
    - 1) **Acts 7:58** - And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.
    - 2) **Acts 8:1** - Now Saul was consenting to his death.
  - b. Paul continued to persecute the church.
    - 1) **Acts 8:3** - As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.
    - 2) **Acts 9:1-2** (Paul goes to Damascus) - Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest {2} and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.
  - c. Even Paul admitted that he persecuted the church.

- 1) Acts 22:4-5 (Paul speaking before the angry mob in Jerusalem) - I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, {5} as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished.
- 2) I Tim. 1:12-13 - And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, {13} although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.
3. There is no way that Paul could ever forget the things that he had done to Christ.
  - a. However, Paul says that we must “forget those things which are behind.”
  - b. The point that he is making is that we must understand that those things have been forgiven and move past them.

**B. The point that Paul is making is that we cannot dwell in the past.**

1. We must forget the sins of the past.
  - a. Satan would love nothing more than for us to drown ourselves in guilt.
  - b. While we know the sins that we have committed, we do not dwell on them after they are forgiven.
2. We must also, to an extent, forget the good that we have done.
  - a. Far too many times we hear someone say that they have done enough.
    - 1) They get the idea that others should come and visit them because they spent enough time visiting others.
    - 2) It is almost as if they are quitting until someone does something for them.
  - b. However, we cannot rely on our good deeds of the past to get us into heaven.
  - c. Each day is new, and we must determine to forget the things of the past so that we can obtain that which is in the future.

**III. In order to obtain a home in heaven, we must reach “forward to those things which are ahead” (3:13-14).**

**A. We must constantly “press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”**

1. We must reach “forward to those things which are ahead” (3:13).
  - a. The idea of “reaching forward” is that of stretching out to accomplish a task.
  - b. We must constantly “press toward the goal for the prize” (3:14).
2. Our work on this earth is never done.

- a. We will never obtain that home in heaven if we do not continually strive for it.
  - b. Finding that home is not something that is done by accident.
- B. It is only when we consistently reach for this goal that we can obtain it.**
- 1. While it is easy to become a Christian, it is more difficult to remain faithful.
  - 2. To obtain this reward, we must strive to obtain it.
    - a. **Lk. 13:24** - Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able.
    - b. **I Cor. 9:24-27** - Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. {25} And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. {26} Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. {27} But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

### **Conclusion:**

- A. Even with all the great things that Paul had done up to this point, he had still not obtained that home in heaven.
  - 1. He understood that this home would only come when his life was over and he had been faithful to the end.
  - 2. This is why he worked so diligently for the kingdom of God.
- B. Today, we must learn the same lesson and continue to “press towards the goal.”