

**HAUNTED BY THE PAST**  
***Forgetting My Past and Pressing Forward***  
***Philippians 3:12-14***

***I'm Not There Yet***

***Philippians 3:12 "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect:..."***

- When we think of Apostle Paul, we think spiritual giant
- Paul's estimation of himself is he doesn't feel he has it all together
- Paul doesn't believe he's attained spiritual perfection
- He doesn't feel as a believer he has already arrived
- He doesn't feel he's perfect, complete
- There are still areas of growth in his life
- We can't be satisfied with knowing Jesus as our Savior because there still areas we need to grow and mature in
- There must be a *divine dissatisfaction* with where we are spiritually
- What Paul is saying is that there must a constant desire for spiritual growth
- Not only is God glorified by our spiritual growth, but our growth is noticed by others
- *You* even notice as well when you're growing in God
- Your spiritual growth makes you a witness to the world
- Paul was saying I can't be satisfied with where I am
- Being "spiritually satisfied" is a dangerous place to be
- Instead of growing, you're slowing dying spiritually

***Pursue Jesus Christ***

***"...but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus."***

- Instead of being spiritually satisfied, Paul says "I follow after" or I pursue, chase, to *apprehend* what apprehended me
- He says he wants to apprehend that for which he was apprehended for by Jesus Christ
- When Jesus apprehended (grabbed) Paul on the Damascus Road it was for a purpose; it was for *him* to become like Christ

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- We must tell ourselves we will *not* be satisfied until we are fulfilling the purpose for which Jesus Christ saved us
- Jesus did not save us only to make us “heaven ready”, but we are also saved to fulfill God’s purposes while we are still here on earth
- We are in a lifelong pursuit of becoming like Jesus

**Focus**

**[13] “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, ...”**

- Paul says this *one thing* I do
- Paul has identified and is focusing on his God given purpose in life
- Paul realizes that Jesus saved him for a divine purpose, and he is focusing his life to achieve to goal of pleasing God with his life
- When Jesus saved you, He saved you for a purpose; to become like Jesus
- Many believers are ineffective because they are focused on so many things that our God given purpose gets lost in the shuffle or it does not get the attention it deserves  
**James 1:8 (KJV) A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.**
- In order to focus, we direct our attention on the one thing God has purposed for our lives, be like Jesus
- Any time there is a concentration, a focus on something, it becomes a source of power
- So, if you’re not experiencing God’s power to do great things for Jesus, you may want to check what you’re concentrating on!
- Focus also means some things will not get the attention
- We have to identify the things in our lives that are distracting us from our purpose **Hebrews 12:1 (KJV) Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside**

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***every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,***

- There's too much at stake not to live with a purpose, on purpose

***Forgetting the Past***

***"...forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,***

- Paul is taking an inventory of his life and says there's one thing right now I must do and that is forget the past
- Paul is not saying he can erase the past from his memory, because he can't, and neither can we
- When God says in Hebrews 10, *He will remember our sins and iniquities no more*, He is not saying, "I will conveniently have bad memory"
- **So, forgetting the past does not mean we don't remember, but it does mean we break the power of the past by living for the future**
- If anyone in the Bible has a past, it's Paul
- He was a past sinner, he even described himself as a "chief sinner"
- Therefore, we need to forget past sins and remind ourselves we are living a new life now and our sins of the past are covered by the blood of Jesus **2 Cor. 5:17 (KJV) Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.**
- We must forget the *hurts* of the past
- We need to forget the worries of the past; nothing changes or improves by worry and focus on the fact that if God can take care of sparrow, I know He can take care of you
- Forget about your past failures and focus on your forgiveness through Jesus Christ

# HAUNTED BY THE PAST

## *Forgetting My Past and Pressing Forward*

### *Philippians 3:12-14*

- We must forget our past successes, too
- If anyone was successful, it was Paul
- Paul had past successes, he was great preacher, great church planter, great writer, great mentor and spiritual father, etc.
- If we focus on our accolades and accomplishments regardless of how great they were, we'll miss out on what God wants to do next through us
- Forget past sins, past failures, past relationships that didn't work out, past trials, past delays, past decisions, past regret, and even past successes
- The devil knows if he can just keep you occupied in the past you will never reach your goal of being like Jesus
- You can't do anything about the past
- The past is a prison the devil wants to keep you in
- The danger of "*looking back*" is you will start "*wanting to go back*"
  - ***Luke 9:62 (KJV) And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.***
  - ***Luke 17:32 (KJV) Remember Lot's wife.***
- But right now, we are breaking out of the prison of the past
- Stop looking back at the past *and* start reaching for what's in front of you
- We are to reach for the *goal* of becoming like Jesus
- Becoming like Jesus is a *goal*, not an *accomplishment* because we will never *be like* Him until we *see Him*
- So, in this life we are continually, reaching for, striving, and stretching to be more like Jesus
- Don't look back but reach for the future

### ***Pressing for the Prize***

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**[14] I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus**

- The things we are to remember are the things that cause us to keep our eyes on Jesus and press toward the *prize* of the high call of God
- With all that Paul had been through and all that he had accomplished, he did not say I quit, nor did he say I've done enough
- He said I press!
- Paul refused to quit, give in or give up, he was focused and pressing for the prize
- What is driving Paul to keep pressing forward?
- The prize. What's the prize?
- The prize is the goal of being like Christ
- We will be perfect as He is perfect **1 John 3:2 (KJV)**  
***<sup>2</sup> Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.***
- That's a prize worth *running for, striving for, stretching for, and pressing for!*
- Paul was literally chained to a Roman guard, and he was still writing words of encouragement and instruction to the Philippian church because his race was not yet finished
- Paul kept pressing until the end **2 Timothy 4:7-8 (KJV)**  
***I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: [8] Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.***
- The prize is yours if you will not quit, faint, give up, get tired, get offended or look back
- This prize will be worth it though

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- This prize will be worth celebrating

***Hold on to the Progress You've Made***

***[15] Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. [16] Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.***

- Paul kept his mind on growing and maturing Christ and that's what we must do to one day be like Jesus
- It requires that we stay focused on the goal and that can be hard at times because of the world we live in
- The world strives to take our focus off the prize
- But *God is faithful*, but when we become *otherwise minded*, God will reveal it to us
- God stirs our minds to get us back to living as we should; with a laser-like focus pressing toward perfection in Jesus
- We are to hold onto the progress we have already made
- We must refuse to live "up and down" lives
- What God is calling for is *spiritual consistency*, whatever spiritual gains you've made, don't lose them
- Verse 16 literally means to spiritually stay in line, or stay on the path you're on
- The *biblical principles* that have guided your life thus far, stick with it
- The *spiritual disciplines* that keep you spiritually focused; keep doing them

***• Keep growing, keep moving, keep advancing, and keep pressing forward!***