

Series on Philippians – sermon 29 - 14/11/10 (pm)

Press on! Strain Towards what is Ahead!

Philippians 3:13-14

Theme: Christians are to press on to take hold of that for which Jesus took hold of them by straining towards what is ahead.

We are considering Paul's resolution for the Christian life.

The first thing he did in practice was to forget what was behind (3:13).

He does something *in conjunction with* forgetting: He strains towards what is ahead.

What Paul did in Practice Part 'B': Pressed on to What was Ahead (3:13b)

Key terms in 3:13b-14:

Straining. Picture of an athlete straining every muscle as he runs, stretching out his hand towards the finish line, body bent forward.

What is ahead. Complete salvation lies ahead for Paul: knowing Christ fully, being in perfect fellowship with Him, resurrection from the dead. He also refers to what is ahead in 3:12c, 14.

Press on. Means *to move rapidly and decisively towards an objective*. Same word as *persecute* in 3:6!

Goal. Target/mark. The athlete's target was the finish line. Paul's target/mark was the end of his race.

Win the prize. The prize is the full/complete gaining of Christ.

God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. Better translation: *I press on toward the goal for the prize promised by God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus.* God's call gives Christians the promise of the prize.

What is the overall thrust of 3:13-14?

Paul, as he lives life on earth being obedient to Jesus and serving Him, fixes his eyes on the finish line and strains towards the time when he will receive the *prize* of knowing Jesus fully.

Paul's aspirations should be a catalyst
for each Christian's personal
reassessment.

They should cause Christians to ask
What is my goal in life?

How do you strain towards what is ahead?

1. Forget what is behind.
2. Realise that *the Lord is behind* your straining towards what is ahead (2:13).

3. Realise that *you have to* strain towards what is ahead.

The *Let go and let God* philosophy/method is not Biblical in this matter.

Remember the picture of the *straining* athlete!

4. *Strain towards* what is ahead!

How?

There are no shortcuts to holiness!

The Christian must *strain*!

- Discipline in Bible study and in prayer, *cf.* Psalm 119:14-16; Acts 2:42.
- Discipline in self-examination, *cf.* 2:12.
- Count yourself dead to sin and act accordingly, *cf.* Romans 6:11-14.
- See your life as service and what you do as your God-given vocation, *cf.* Colossians 3:23.

**Conclusion—Press on! Strain towards
what is ahead!**

*Those who are always looking back
to the good old days either suffer
from a bad memory or bad eyesight!*

(Warren Wiersbe)

*Determine to make the gap
between your level of Christ-
likeness and perfect holiness as
small as possible at the moment
Jesus returns or when your body
dies.*

That is pressing on and straining
towards what is ahead!