

Pressing on for the Prize Philippians 3:12-16

Introduction

If you are trusting Christ, then you have already been forgiven and justified and adopted into God's family. But there are aspects of your salvation that are still in the future, like being resurrected, and glorified, and entering heaven.

So when it comes to these future aspects of salvation, how important is the way we live now? Must we live a certain way to receive these? Or is the way we live now irrelevant?

Paul tells us in Philippians 3:12-16.

What has Paul not yet obtained? (v.12)

Paul says he has not yet obtained perfection. Then he lists what that means in verses 8-11.

But we could misunderstand this. We could think that if Paul has not yet attained these, and if he still needs to pursue these, then Paul might fail in reaching these.

To keep us from drawing that wrong conclusion Paul says something very important at the end of verse 12.

What does it mean that Christ Jesus made Paul his own? (v.12)

The moment Christ saved Paul, and each of us, he sovereignly made us his own. That means he did everything necessary so that we would be forgiven, persevere in faith all the way to the end, and finally enter heaven.

How does this truth impact Paul? (v.12)

The fact that Christ made Paul his own motivated Paul to press on to reach heaven.

How does that work? If we thought there was some chance we might fail in reaching heaven, we could think it was not even worth trying. But if we know that Christ will not let us fail, that will motivate us to keep pressing on.

So what does Paul do? (vv. 13-14)

Paul focuses his entire life on pressing on to gain the prize of Christ forever.

And what should we do? (vv. 15-16)

Follow Paul's example – press on to gain the prize of Christ forever.



HOME GROUP DISCUSSION OF SUNDAY'S TEACHING

(Sometimes in our home groups we talk about Sunday's teaching, so we can work together on responding to God's Word — asking questions, sharing insights, talking together.)

Before reading this passage, how important did you think your life here on earth was for entering heaven? How did this passage change your thinking?

Paul lists at least five things that he has not yet obtained. Are there any of these that you don't understand? Which of these is most motivating to you?

Do you agree that when Paul says Christ made Paul his own, that this meant that Paul would certainly persevere in faith and enter heaven? Why or why not?

We could think that Christ promises to bring us to heaven, that this would make us spiritually lazy. So how is it that Christ's promise to bring us to heaven actually ends up motivating us to persevere all the more?

On a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high), how passionately have you been pressing on to gain Christ forever? What has weakened your passion? What has strengthened your passion? What could you do this next week to strengthen your passion even more?

Share prayer requests are stored up by this passage, and pray for each other as a home group.

Then when you come back next week, share how this passage has been impacting your life.

