

Title: Press On

Text: Phil. 3:12-4:1

Date: January 25, 2014

Place: DCOG

Theme: Philippians

It's a grand thing to be a Christian. I won't turn back.  
 I have decided to follow Jesus. I won't turn back.  
 Take this whole world but give me Jesus. I won't turn back.  
 I have started for the Kingdom. I won't turn back.  
 If none go with me, still I will follow. I won't turn back.

Press on! That is how goals are obtained. Press on! That is the way to complete a journey. Press on! It is essential when seeking education, formal or informal. Press on! It is the only way to get a house built. Press on, if you want to get out of debt. Press on, if you are going to do anything worthwhile that brings satisfaction and accomplishment.

PRESS ON!

***Philip. 3:12-21***

*Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. [13] Brothers, 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.***

*[15] All of us 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.*

*[17] Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. [18] For, as I have often told you before and now say 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 on earthly things. [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.*

***Philip. 4:1***

*Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, **that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!***

Paul uses the image of a runner at a track meet...”Straining toward what is ahead,” an image of a racer going hard for the tape...eyes for nothing but the goal...with arms almost clawing the air, with head forward...a body bent and angled to the goal...flat out for the finish.

The Christian experience involves perseverance, determination, and all our dedication. Press on through the first, simple steps of being a new Christian. Press on through the joyous experience of finding yourself in the fellowship of the church.

Press on through the difficult times of discouragement. Press on through times of learning and relearning the hard sayings of Jesus, through times of adjustment in the fellowship, and through times of coming to grips with individual responsibility. Press on not because it is easy, but because it is the only way you can really be a Christian.

***Isaiah 50:7***

*Because the Sovereign Lord helps me,  
I will not be disgraced.  
Therefore have I set my face like flint,  
and I know I will not be put to shame.*

Even Jesus pressed on.

**Luke 9:51**

*As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.*

**I. Something or someone must take hold of us.**

- A. This experience is part of Paul's commitment to press on.
  - a. Paul says Christ has taken hold of him.
    - i. There is a purpose larger than any that Paul could dream for himself.

\*In the movie, "Tucker: The Man and His Dream", Abe, the bottom-line businessman and beleaguered bookkeeper of Preston, Tucker, who conceived a radical new low-cost automobile with fuel injector, rear-mounted engine, disc brakes, pop-out windows, seat belts and aerodynamic design, caught the 1948 dream of Tucker. Despite a misremembered warning from his mother.

Abe thought his mother said, "Don't get too close to people; you'll catch their dreams." (Actually she had said "you'll catch their germs.") But Abe got caught in a dream.

- b. Paul also got caught up.

\*There is often a response attached to whatever it is that has taken hold of us. (little league baseball, boy scouts, cheerleading, even our work or vocation.)

- B. What has a hold of you?
  - a. What has caught your mind, your attention?
  - b. What has hold of your passion today?

**II. Living up to what we have accomplished is a part of the task of pressing on as a Christian.**

- A. The Christian life is a growth experience.
  - a. Sometimes we demonstrate progress.
  - b. Sometimes we regress.

Can we agree that the process is valuable?

- B. Living at a level below that which God has taught us to live is very dangerous.
  - a. Lot
  - b. Simon Megas
  
- C. Living up to what one has accomplished includes “forgetting what is behind” (v. 13).
  - a. Forgetting means that we consciously choose to no longer make some events, some experiences, some relationships factors in our decision making nor in the patterns of our lives.
  - b. Forgetting becomes an intentional act.
  
- D. All this enables us to stand firm in the Lord.

\* Some of you may remember the opening day of the 1954 baseball season, the Milwaukee Braves visited the Cincinnati Reds. Two rookies began their major league careers with that game. The Reds won 9-8 as Jim Greengrass hit four doubles in his first big league game. A sensational debut for a young player with a made-for-baseball name.

The rookie starting in left field for the Braves went 0 for 5. Not a very auspicious start, but Hank Aaron was willing to stand firm and he was willing to press on.

How about you?

### III. The prize is the incentive for the race.

- A. There was a prize for Paul...
  - a. To see the risen Lord
  - b. To know that Christ lived in him
  - c. To Live in fellowship with Christ

- d. He longed for that time when in eternity he would be with Jesus

***Philip. 1:21***

*For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.*

***Romans 14:8***

*If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.*

- B. Do you recognize the prize?
- a. What is the prize for you?
  - b. Are you striving for the prize or have you given up?

Conclusion: Some runners day-dream about participating in the Olympic marathon...26 miles and 385 yards. Can you imagine running into the stadium, eyes watering, lungs burning, legs aching, body covered with sweat, and feet blistered? The people are cheering. You are not 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup>. But the announcer calls your name as one who finished. Wouldn't that be awesome?

Many of us are hoping that one day we will hear the Master say, "well done good and faithful servant." We anticipate the day when Jesus will announce our name and say, "I knew you would do it. I was waiting for you. Come on in and let's spend some time together. It is good to have you here."

For us who press on, that is the prize.

Jesus knew that coming to Earth and being born into a human family would end in his crucifixion. Still, He came. Because He pressed on, we have a new day every day. Because He pressed on, we have salvation. Because He pressed on, we have eternal life.

Knowing what lays before you today, will you accept the challenge to press on? **PRESSS ON!**