

“New Year’s Day 2023 – A Year in Preview”

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Scripture

Philippians 3:7-14

“But whatever things were gain to me, those things **I have counted as loss** for the sake of Christ. More than that, **I count all things to be loss** in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”

12Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but **I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus**. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: **forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.**”

Paul in Prison

A Book of Joy in difficult circumstances

Paul is not able to personally care for the churches

He longs to be able to serve the people but not able to leave

God has imprisoned him, not the Romans -> **Paul recognizes God’s sovereignty over his life**

God has a greater purpose for Paul at this time -> Paul will write the Prison epistles

- Ephesians
- Philippians
- Colossians
- Philemon

Paul assesses his personal priorities in this passage

Philippians 3:7-8

“But whatever things were gain to me, those things **I have counted as loss** for the sake of Christ. More than that, **I count all things to be loss** in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ”

“whatever things were gain to me” -> earthly possessions, prideful titles, personal glory

"I count all things to be loss" -> all that Paul had, has been lost -> Paul's marriage and Jewish standing

"for whom I have suffered the loss of all things" -> coming to faith in Jesus cost Paul all that he knew

Many others have made these choices in our modern world -> Syria, Afghanistan, Iran, and Iraq

"count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ" -> they are rubbish, dung, nothing but excrement

These are really all loss in view of Christ -> **gaining Christ was the most important for Paul**

Philippians 1:21

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

The Value of Christ in Life

Matthew 6:19-21

"**Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth**, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. "But **store up for yourselves treasures in heaven**, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Matthew 13:44-46

"The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and **sells all that he has and buys that field.**

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and **sold all that he had and bought it.**"

Matthew 16:24-27

"Jesus said to His disciples, "If **anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.** "For **whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.** "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? "For **the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.**"

Paul's Clear Focus

Philippians 3:9

"and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,"

Paul's righteousness didn't come from being a good Jew, following the Law to a T, or anything else that he had accomplished on his own or in his own strength

It is only through faith in Jesus -> **not just the words of faith but the actions that stand behind the words**

James 2:14-18

“What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? **Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.** But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”

Don't just have a lip service faith -> have an active faith...

Philippians 3:10-11

“Oh, **that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.**”

Paul focus was on knowing Jesus, experiencing that spiritual life again and again

Being SO committed to Jesus that he willingly suffered for Him and had Joy in that suffering -> even in prison

So that Paul would eventually get that big prize -> resurrection from the dead -> an everlasting spiritual body

Philippians 3:12

“Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but **I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.**”

“I press on” - dióko -> “to earnestly pursue as if hunting prey”

Wars and rumors of wars? -> I press on

Economic upheaval? -> I press on

Departures from the faith -> I press on

Relatives not coming to Christ? -> I press on

Death of loved ones? -> I press on

Poor decisions in Washington D.C.? -> I press on

Philippians 3:13

“Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: **forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead**”

Let me tell you what MY focus is on!

“Forgetting What Lies Behind” -> Not resting on past successes as baked in glory

Past success should be celebrated, for sure, Paul completed three missionary journeys!

Thousands had come to Christ in faith!

He could have “rested on his laurels”

A Laurel was a green plant shrub, **used to signify victory in a race in Ancient Greece ->**

A Great Year of 2022

What successes and victories should we recognize for 2022 at Calvary Baptist Church?

Spiritual growth?

How many of you feel that you have grown spiritually in 2022?

How many of you have experienced great spiritual growth in 2022?

Service to the Community? The ALF? The hospital? Dinners to families? Benevolence to the Woods family?

Serve First – Speak Second!

What about personal failures in 2022? -> they should be left behind, as well.

As a Nation?

- We’ve seen a Third World War begin in Ukraine
- We’ve seen our national decay even more morally and spiritually
- We’ve seen more anger and unrest in our people than ever before
- We’ve seen political division lead to family division and fracture

If you’re distracted by the past, it will derail your success in the future...

“Reaching Forward to What Lies Ahead”

A New Year of 2023

Daniel 9:27 -> The next earthly event believers wait for is a 7-year Peace Treaty in the Middle East

“He will make a firm covenant with the many for one week” -> 1 week of seven -> seven years

Most likely, a two-state solution -> between Israel and the other Middle Eastern countries

The scene is set -> the enemy has tested the planet’s response with COVID 19

In the next crisis, the church that meets in person will be persecuted, pastors will again be jailed



Believers will be made to suffer for the sake of Christ

Pressing on to the Main Goal

Philippians 3:14

“I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus”

Paul’s Goal: To be more like Christ:

Philippians 2:12-13

“So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you**, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”

What will you do in 2023 to be more like Christ?

How can we serve the Lord better as a church in 2023?

Communion

Prayer

Benediction