

**Ministry of The Holy Spirit**  
**Prison Letters**  
**Philippians 3:12-21**

Last time...having no confidence in the flesh and counting all things loss (a detriment) for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ

This time...pressing toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus as citizens of heaven

v12 In having no confidence in the flesh and counting all things a detriment for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, the Apostle Paul acknowledges that he had not

- already attained...he was not a “finished work” (Phil 1:6), has not “arrived”
- yet reached full maturity in Christ

but declares that he pursues that for which he was seized (on the road to Damascus) i.e. the plan and purpose of God for his life

Acts 9:15 But the Lord said unto him, *Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:*

Acts 26:18 *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*

He is doing as he exhorted Timothy to do

1 Tim 6:11-12 follow after (pursue) righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called.

Still underway in Paul's life

Phil 1:6

Phil 2:13

Said another way:

“When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen (Gal 1:15-16a), I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision (Acts 26:19). The Lord Jesus Christ seized/apprehended me for His purpose. He is not done, the purpose has not been completed. So I continue to pursue His plan and purpose in my life.”

Therefore...

v13-14 Knowing that the Lord still has much to do in and thru him, Paul is laser-focused on the “Finish Line”

- A. forgetting the long list of failures in the rear view mirror, asking the Lord to purge his mind of things the Lord has chosen to forget (our sins)  
e.g. his zealous persecution of Jesus (His Bride)

Is 43:25 I, *even I, am* he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

2 Cor 5:17 Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Ever been suddenly knocked down in your walk with Jesus by a storm surge of painful, grieving, and condemning memories and regret for things done and or said in your past?

Who is speaking and what is the motive for his “reminders”?

Therefore, ask the Lord to help you forget the things He has chosen to forget to continue moving forward with the Lord

- B. reaching for, marching forward to, focused on the things before

- heaven
- kingdom of God on earth
- new heaven and new earth undefiled by sin
- eternity with God

And today,

Just a closer walk with Thee  
Grant it, Jesus, is my plea  
Daily walking close to Thee  
Let it be, dear Lord, let it be

I am not the person I was, nor am I yet the person God apprehended.  
He worked salvation in, He is working sanctification/purification out.

- C. moving forward, pressing toward, the goal of this probationary life – the prize of a glorified body at the “Finish Line”

Matt 25:21 *Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

“The good ole days” are not behind us, they are before us so “kick it” to the Finish Line  
Do not stop or retreat, do not wander to the left or to the right  
Focus!

And with laser focus, that is precisely what Paul did!

2 Tim 4:6-8 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: 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.

v15-16 Paul encourages the church at Philippi and us to be similarly focused, like-minded with him on “Job #1”, v13b-14

As we pursue God’s plan and purpose for our lives, being focused on the prize of following Jesus and maturing in our relationship with the Living God, let’s walk together in one accord, in unity

To the extent/degree that we have seized that for which we were seized i.e. God’s plan and purpose for our lives, let’s not look over our shoulder at our many past failures, but let’s look forward and up to what awaits us at the Finish Line  
And if you think differently, God will reveal this wisdom to you

We have not “arrived”, are not “Finished Goods”  
We are still works-in-progress  
The Lord Who saved us is not done in and thru us;  
He has started a good work and He will finish it!  
There is a Finish Line; can you see it?!

Having no confidence in the flesh and counting all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, let’s be laser focused on Jesus and all that He has for us until we enter glory!

v17 And Paul encourages the church at Philippi and us to follow him following Jesus  
To Paul were given inspired, inerrant, and infallible words of God (14 letters) to record  
He lived what he received and recorded...he followed Jesus

Let’s be co-imitators with Paul!

1 Cor 4:16 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.  
1 Cor 11:1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ.  
Eph 5:1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

By receiving into our hearts and minds the very words of God given to us thru Paul,  
we too

- by faith and not by sight
- by the Spirit and not the flesh

follow Jesus on the narrow path that few find that leads to eternal life.

v18-19 Not all who carry the name of Jesus Christ are in one accord with the Lord, as Paul has repeatedly told them and us

Those dogs, evil workers, and the concision (v2)...teachers of

- a salvation-by-works gospel
- the Prosperity gospel (mammon worship)
- the Social gospel (Woke, Inclusion, Psychology, etc)
- the Love gospel (everybody goes to heaven, hell is not real)
- Cross-less Christianity (no repentance of sin, no Matt 16:24)
- all other carnal, ear-tickling perversions of the Gospel of Christ

are enemies of the Cross, which is

- God's one and only Plan of Redemption of fallen mankind
- The Father's sin sacrifice for our sins and the sins of the world, His Son as the Father's Sin-Bearer and our Substitute and Champion

The enemies of the cross exalt mankind as god and glorify the flesh

“People are basically good.” (to avoid accountability)

“God made me this way.” (to justify their sin)

They are deceived, their self-centered pride is really their shame

Pride Month is a shameful celebration of perversion

Much of Christianity proudly embraces the shame to be inclusive

The end to which the enemies of the cross are racing, lest they repent, is destruction

To be reconciled to the Living God, they must fall at the foot of the Cross where every sinner must fall to confess and repent of sin and to call on the name of the Lord to save them from the wages of sin

They must be born-again of the Spirit of God, which is God's will/desire for them

If they refuse to make peace with God on His terms only, they and their spiritual poison are to be avoided by those who are “in Christ”

Rom 16:17-18 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

v20-21 The corrupt influence of the enemies of the Cross is to be avoided by those “in Christ” because the Body/Bride of Christ, in the world but not of the world, are citizens of heaven and strangers and pilgrims on the earth (Heb 11:13)

Col 3:1-4

Num 23:9 the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. (into which we are grafted, Rom 11)

2 Cor 6:17-18 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

We have another Passport!

Our heavenly Passport is valid for

1. heaven
2. the kingdom of God on earth
3. the new heaven and new earth...eternity

It has been purchased and secured with the blood of Jesus Christ, shed on the Cross for sinners

Today and every day granted, do not look in the rear-view mirror but press forward in God's plan and purpose for your life until the soon appearing of the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ

1 Thes 1:9-10 turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

Titus 2:11-14 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

At the Finish Line is our prize: our vile, low-life body will be

- transformed
- transfigured
- changed in outward form or appearance
- exchanged

for a glorified body,

- a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,
- a spiritual body like Jesus'...immortal and incorruptible

We are dual citizens

1. of an unholy nation on earth
2. of a holy nation in heaven

The mark/goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus is NOT

Christian Nationalism, a political agenda in this unholy nation

Our mission is not to save the world, our mission is, with God's love, hope and encouragement, to invite people out of the world/darkness into the kingdom of God/Light, the holy nation in heaven

We just celebrated the 248<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the Bible being one of the "foundational" documents of the new nation

Yet we have witnessed a steady decline in Judeo-Christian values in this nation since the 1960s

In fact, the nation is now in many ways a dumpster fire

What is happening?

God knows...and we know by the Word of God, and I will not be negligent in bringing into your remembrance that which you already know

Historical context for the exhortation and encouragement of our text

**Job 12:21-25**

**Job 14:5**

boundaries in time and space for people and nations

Acts 17:26-27 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

Deut 32:8-9 When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel (Most Important Nation status). For the LORD'S portion *is* his people; Jacob *is* the lot of his inheritance.

**Dan 2:20-22, 40-45**

**Dan 4:17**

**Dan 7:13-17**

We live in the Days of Noah, the Days of Lot, the days of growing deception

We live in the last of the last days

According to the Word of God, what is happening?

We are seeing the demise of

- the 4<sup>th</sup> Kingdom, the Roman Empire in its iron mixed with clay stage
- Western Civilization
- the American Empire being the latest and greatest of the “lesser” empires

The leftist Brazilian president: The US election is important for the whole world (being echoed by many European countries)

before the kingdom of God on earth is established

- the King of kings returning to earth to destroy His enemies and rule for 1000 years from His Throne in Jerusalem
- The stone cut without hands (not of man but of God) that destroys all the kingdoms of man, all of which gather to fight against Him and to try to wipe out Israel
- the kingdom of which we are citizens and in which we rule and reign with King Jesus

So, are our dual citizenships contrary?

No, but they must be prioritized

1. of a holy nation in heaven
  - a. our primary, most important citizenship
  - b. the citizenship that governs the other citizenship
2. of an unholy nation on earth
  - a. called to be good citizens, orderly and law-abiding, participating
  - b. ambassadors of Christ and His kingdom to those in this nation whose hope is in man

Clearly, from our worldview and Matt 24:35, things are unravelling (Is 5:20) in this nation we love, our secondary citizenship

But, Be of good courage

Fear not!

Pray!

Rejoice            in the Lord  
                         evermore  
                         in all things

Fight the good fight of faith...the battle/solution is spiritual, not political

Everything is foreknown by God and used for His will and purpose

Is Jesus Christ the Lord of USA?

Yes, He is Lord of all, the God of all the earth

Does USA acknowledge Him as such?

No, that's the problem and it is a spiritual problem

Who are the warriors in the Lord's Army to fight the spiritual battle?

His Body planted as His ambassadors in USA

Let's be laser focused on

- fighting the good fight of faith
- pursuing God's plan and purpose for our lives
- not looking in the rear-view mirror but looking up and ahead because the "good ole days" are in the next kingdom!
- pursuing the prize
- the Finish Line
- being model citizens of heaven first and foremost

I have decided to follow Jesus;  
No turning back, no turning back.

The world behind me, the cross before me;  
No turning back, no turning back.

Though none go with me, still I will follow;  
No turning back, no turning back.

My cross I'll carry, till I see Jesus;  
No turning back, no turning back.

Will you decide now to follow Jesus?  
No turning back, no turning back.