

TITLE AND NUMBER: 153. Let go, press on



REFERENCE AND KEY VERSE(S): Philippians 3:12-14

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus.

LOOKING FURTHER: Philippians 3:7-11; Jeremiah 29:11

What does this Bible passage tell us?

In this passage, Paul talks about two things we will have to tackle when we try to live as Christians; letting go of worldly things and pressing on to become closer to Jesus.

In verse 8, Paul uses strong language when he describes worldly wealth and position as 'garbage.' In verse 10, he goes on to talk about our 'participation in [Jesus'] sufferings.' Many of us realise all too well that our choices in life have consequences. The consequences of Paul's choice to follow Jesus and preach His message were that he gave up his position of authority, suffered persecution and was eventually arrested and imprisoned.

Following this example does not mean deliberately throwing away our reputation and inflicting suffering on ourselves. But sometimes we have to choose a course of action that is less comfortable, or less financially rewarding, than the alternatives. It may be as simple as sharing some sugar or coffee with someone who is going through a hard time, without keeping count and demanding something back. For some of the volunteers who help the Chaplaincy support those in prison, it may be a choice to give some time rather than working extra hours. For a few people over history, it has meant being imprisoned or even killed because they chose to preach about Jesus where it was not popular or even permitted to do so.

Many reading this may have already lost a certain amount of reputation, wealth or comfort. What Paul tells us here is this situation need not be a disaster. When we have little, it is easier for us to respond to the call to press on to get closer to Jesus, to know the plans God has for us (Jeremiah 29:11) and eventually to receive the promised reward. We press on by reading the Bible, praying and worshipping Him.

Reflections:

- Is there anything you are hanging on to that is called 'garbage' by Paul? Offer it to God in prayer and let Him know you are willing to let go of it if necessary.
- The 'goal' Paul talks about here is to become mature and strong as a Christian. As mentioned above, we can do this by reading the Bible, praying and worshipping. Think about one specific way that you can 'press on' and commit to doing it every day.
- Reading the Bible each day is important to becoming mature. If you do not have a habit of daily reading, get some daily reading notes from the chapel.

Write or draw something you read in this Bible Study that stood out to you.



Do you have any questions about this week's Bible Study?



How does this week's message apply to your life?



What can we learn about God from this week's passage?



What would you like to ask God this week?



Has God responded to your prayers this week in the way you had hoped for? It's okay to talk to God about this.

