

“Press On! Press On!”
(Philippians 3:8-21)

Now that Paul has freely received everything necessary for rightness with God, what is he to do? Sit back and passively wait until he dies in order to receive all that is yet to come in a “new heaven and a new earth”? Carelessly and smugly do whatever he wants since his status with God is “fixed” in Christ? In no way! Instead he declares, “I want to press on! Ever onward and upward into the full reality of what it means for Christ to be my life!”

Paul states clearly, “I have a new goal now. I want to experientially know Christ and be a purer and purer expression of His pure and perfect Life. There is a fullness, a completion graced to me in which I am not yet completely functional. I may have a perfect salvation, but I am not yet a perfect expression. So here’s what I’m doing - I’m pressing on in faith to know as I am known. I’ve taken up a ‘this on thing’ mentality - an intentional (not accidental) and determined (not resigned) focus. I am constantly forgetting what lies behind - no living off ‘old’ grace for me - and daily I am exerting every spiritual muscle, stretching every newly created fiber to get to the ‘finish line’ of God’s ‘well done’.” (See Phil 2:16 also.)

For Paul, Christ had become the horizon of His life. He looked back and saw the Christ of creation and of Calvary. He looked forward and saw the return of the victorious Christ. He looked outwardly and saw a reigning and redeeming Christ. He looked within and saw the riches and fullness of Christ. All his interests, all his objectives, all his activities are now within this horizon. The grace of Christ, in other words, is no excuse to become “earthly horizoned” (v19), but all the reason necessary to remain “heavenly horizoned” (v20).

Paul is encouraging his readers to “walk the line” (v16) of an ever increasing reliance upon the person of Christ lest their new found Christian liberty devolve into an un-Christian license. Without such an intent, such a “heavenly horizoned” focus, it would be all too easy to slip back into living as though we were “enemies” and not friends “of the cross” (v18). Meaning what? That personal and sensual satisfaction could become our authority (“whose god is our appetite”). That our values might be turned upside down as we acclimate to fallenness (“whose glory is in their shame”), and that the pursuit of pleasure and comfort would be our aim (“who set their minds on earthly things”) (v19).

Paul saw it clearly: only in pressing on in knowing and expressing Christ do we allow the gospel of grace to prevent us from becoming self-indulgent. To walk the line, to stay in step with our righteousness in Christ requires that we remain “heavenly horizoned”. Only in this way do we keep our “walk” from falling dangerously below our “talk”.

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A Psalm of Singlemindedness

*Lord of reality make me real
Not synthetic, plastic, pretend, phony,
An actor playing out his part, hypocrite.
I don't want to keep a prayer list
but to pray,
Not agonize to find your will
but to obey what I already know,
Not to argue theories of inspiration
but to submit to Your Word.
I don't want to explain the difference
between eros and philo and agape
but to love.
I don't want to tell it like it is
but to be it like You want it.
Thank you for refusing to invade
the freedom You have given us.
Thank you for treating us
as if we shared Your image.
(A portion of a poem by Joseph Bayly,
from Psalms of My Life.)*

<u>JULY</u>	
6,20,27	CCF
8	Alachua Study
10-11	Asheville, NC (828-348-9146)
12	Boone, NC (828-348-9146)
13	Asheville, NC (828-348-9146)
<u>AUGUST</u>	
9-10	Milton, FL (850-983-2494)
<u>SEPTEMBER</u>	
14-19	Bozeman, MT
25-28	Binghamton, NY

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-  A full and complete salvation
-  The freedom we have to “press on”
-  CCF pastor search
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