

# Philippians 3:7-14

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good evening once again. Be in the New Testament. The book of Philippians chapter 3.

This evening.

The book of Philippians is one of the prison epistles that Paul wrote. And oddly enough, in our finite minds oddly enough, this is sometimes referred to as the epistle of joy.

And if you consider that and consider that Paul was in chains in prison when writing this letter, it brings a whole other new light to it.

It being referred to as the epistle of joy. But in Philippians 1, Philippians 2, Paul is of course greeting the Philippians and thanking them and really praising them for their partnership with him and spreading the gospel and for their efforts in doing so.

[ 1 : 23 ] And Paul actually expresses some joy that even though he's in prison, the gospel is still going forth. It's still spreading.

And he exhorts the Philippians to continue on in unity and continue on in steadfastness. And he uses Christ as the ultimate example of doing so.

And that's just Philippians 1 and 2 in a very tight nutshell. He also gives a little bit of warning to the Philippians about some things.

But it brings us to Philippians 3. And Paul writes to the Philippians. Philippians, I was thinking about another sermon that I preached a few years back from Philippians 3 verses 1-7.

But those verses, he's kind of going through his own testimony and talking about how he was and who he was and talking about what a great Pharisee that he was and how nobody really, he was saying nobody could hold a candle to him as far as that righteousness went.

[ 2 : 45 ] And that's where we're going to pick up tonight in Philippians 3. So all that being said, Philippians 3 beginning at verse 7. It says, But what things were gained to me, those I counted lost for Christ.

Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dumb that I may win Christ and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings being made conformable unto his death.

If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead, not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before.

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Back to verse 7, Paul writes, but what things were gained to me, those I count lost for Christ.

[ 4 : 23 ] I want you to pay attention to how he worded this, and I also want you to pay attention to the tense that is used in this. He says, but what things were gained to me, those I counted, those I counted lost for Christ.

First of all, that's past tense. Those I counted lost for Christ. Those things that were gained to me, all that is past tense, but he says, I counted them lost for Christ.

He's not saying here that this happened by accident. This is something that Paul, after his experience with Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus, and what an experience it was that we read about there in the book of Acts, but after he encountered Christ, or we might rather say after Christ encountered Paul on the road to Damascus, Paul done some reevaluating of his life.

Paul done some reevaluating of what was really important. Again, in the first few verses of Philippians 3, we read all these things that Paul saw that was great about himself, but here in verse 7 is where the rubber meets the road.

He says, but what things were gained to me, those I counted lost for Christ. I counted these things lost for Christ. It's not something, again, that happened by accident.

[ 5 : 46 ] It's not something that happened circumstantially. It's something that Paul evaluated in his life, something that he thought on, something that he reflected on, and after seeing the glory of Jesus Christ on the Damascus road, after acknowledging the wonderfulness of Jesus Christ, and after Jesus Christ saved his soul, he counted all of those things as worthless.

He counted all of them for naught. He said they were all in the next verse. He gets into it, and he counts them all, but done. Let's get into the next verse. Verse 8, he says, Yea, Dallas, and I counted all things but lost.

I count all things but lost. Notice, this is in the present tense. In verse 7, he counted what was in his past. He counted all those things that he was considering, made him great, and made him worthy of God, made him worthy of salvation.

He counted in past tense all of those things, lost for Christ. But here in verse 8, he says, Yea, Dallas, I count, that's present tense, and I count all things but lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.

He's presently counted these things, but he's gone from what he thought made him great, and what he thought made him worthy, into all things. And folks, I'll tell you now, I'll tell you right now, that whatever we are holding on to in this world, whatever worldly thing that we hold on to in this life, no matter what it is, no matter if it's family, I'm not saying men desert your families, I'm not saying women desert your children, I'm not saying anything along those lines, but you do not put them above Jesus Christ.

[ 7 : 34 ] You do not put them on a pedestal that they do not belong on. You do not put them in a throne that they do not belong in. We count Jesus Christ highest of all.

Jesus Christ saved our soul. None of our children are able to do that. Grandchildren aren't able to do that. Parents, grandparents, no one is able to save a soul outside of Jesus Christ.

And we count Him the highest. We put Him upon the pedestal. He is on the throne. He is King of Kings, and He is Lord of Lords, and we must acknowledge Him as such.

Otherwise, something else is in that throne, and something else is in that pedestal. You tell me what your heart lays on most during the day. You tell me what your thoughts most often turn to, and I will tell you what your God is.

We need to reflect on the goodness of Jesus Christ constantly. We need to think about His goodness constantly. We need to think about His salvation. We need to think about His glory.

[ 8 : 36 ] We need to think about His Word. We need to think about His promises constantly. Now, I understand things happen. I understand that life happens. I understand we've all got work. I understand that we have things to tend to.

I get that. But folks, it is no different than what Paul wrote to the church at Thessalonica when he told them to pray without ceasing. He's not telling us to live our lives on our knees. He is saying that we should always have an attitude of prayer.

We should always have an attitude toward God. And that's what I'm telling you now. And that's what Paul is getting at here. Yea, doubtless. And I count all things. Everything. All things.

He's gone from what made Him so religious. And what made Him so wonderful. What he thought made Him wonderful. He's gone from that to all things. He says, Yea, doubtless.

And I count all things but lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung that I may win Christ.

[ 9 : 37 ] He counts all these things but lost. He counts them but dung for what? For the excellency of the knowledge of knowing who Jesus Christ is. Folks, it doesn't matter what we have here on this earth.

It doesn't matter how rich you are, what kind of assets you may have, what kind of real estate you have, or anything else. It is all dung as compared with the glory of Jesus Christ.

Hallelujah. And I'm glad that it's that way. I'm glad that it's that way. And I'm glad that God makes that very plain throughout His Word. That there is none above Him.

He says, I am the Lord, thy God, and beside me there is no other. Praise God. But He says, all these things are lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord.

And folks, to know Christ, to have knowledge of Christ is one thing, but to know Him, and that's what Paul is getting at here, to know Him is a whole different thing. There is a world of people out there that can quote Scripture to you.

[10:41] There is a world of people out here that can tell you things out of Christ's life, but they do not know Him. And Paul says that all these other things, everything in his life, whether it be material, goods, or whether it be the qualifications that he had as a Pharisee, whether it be any of those things, they are all lost.

But, the excellency of having the knowledge of Jesus Christ, His Lord, He trades it all in for that. And what a trade that is.

But He uses a stronger language here at the end of this verse. He says, I do count them but done, folks. He wants us to see the contrast of worldly treasures versus the treasure that we have in Jesus Christ.

This world is going to burn up one day and everything in it is going to burn up. It's going to be destroyed. It will be no more. But what we have in Jesus Christ, our Lord, what we have in Him is eternal.

It is forever. It is immortal. Why not invest in that? Don't invest in the things of this world. Christ said Himself in the sermon on the bow, lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust doth corrupt but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.

[12:09] Folks, Christ is our treasure. Christ is our treasure. There is no treasure above Him. There is no treasure that's shinier than Him. And I promise you, I promise you, when you concentrate on Christ, when you really concentrate on His glory and what He has done for you, what the very Maker of this world has done for you in redeeming your soul from a hell that it deserves, when you concentrate on that, the treasures of this world will lose their glitter, they will lose their glam, they will lose their shine as compared to the glory of Jesus Christ.

And they'll become as nothing more than done in comparison to Jesus Christ. Verse 9, And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, and be found in Him.

Now folks, this is Paul. This is a man that wrote half of the New Testament that is writing these words. And then the very next verse, he says, that I may know Him.

What about Christ did Paul not know? Paul. Again, he wrote half of the New Testament. I dare say, even of John and Peter and Matthew and any of the other disciples, any of the others that followed Him around for three years, I don't think that they knew me personally.

I don't think that they knew Christ as well as Paul did. And Paul says, that I may be found in Him. That I may be. That's future tense. That I may be found in Him.

[13:49] And the very next verse, that I may know Him. That's future tense. Folks, a man that had the experience with Christ that Paul did, still desiring to know Him better.

That's what he is getting at. Desiring to know Him better. Don't become complacent in your walk with Jesus Christ. Don't become complacent with your Christian life. Don't say, I've done enough. Don't say, I've read enough. Don't say, I've studied enough. Don't say, I've prayed enough. It's never enough. Folks, Christ gave it all for you. And He gave it all for me.

He gave it all for everyone who would repent of their ways and believe on Him. He gave it all. Who are we to say that we have done enough? And Paul here says, and be, and to be found in Him.

And be found in Him. Not having mine own righteousness. Again, the first few verses of Philippians chapter 3. Paul talks much of his own righteousness. And that's all it was was self-righteousness.

[14:50] He talks about his qualifications as far as being a Pharisee. He talks about being of Israel and being of Benjamin and all these other things. He says, nobody had knowledge of these things like I did.

Nobody had better qualifications than I did. But he says, and be found in Christ. He wants to be found in Christ. Folks, I'll tell you now, when it comes to the end of the road, when it comes to the end of the way, it's not going to be.

How religious were you? How moral were you? What did the community think about you? The question is, are you found in Christ Jesus? That's the final question.

The question is, are you found in Him? And I'm glad that I am. I'm glad that I am. But folks, he says, and be found in Him. Not having mine own righteousness. Paul understood something.

He wrote to the Romans in Romans 3. He said that no flesh will be justified by the deeds of the law in the eyes of God. No flesh will be justified.

[15:50] And there's too many people. I'm talking about Christians. There's too many Christians. Too many born-again people out there that still think somehow that their righteousness, that their keeping of the law, is what brings, or what retains, salvation.

Let me tell you now, it wasn't you that saved you, and it wasn't you that will keep you saved. It is Christ and Christ alone that does these things. You've heard me say many times, that does not give us a license to sin.

No, absolutely not. But, when we've experienced Christ, and we've experienced salvation, and we have seen Him in His glory, when we have experienced these things in Christ, the last desire that we should have would be to sin against Him.

I'm not saying that you'll live your life without sinning. Most of us have sinned since we come through the church doors. In one way, shape, form, or fashion. Because we don't sin because that's what we do.

We sin because that's who we are. As creatures. The very skin that you wear is filled with sin.

That's why it's got to be renewed one day. That's why we're going to be granted a glorified body one of these days.

[17:09] That sin will not be able to touch. Death will not be able to touch. Satan will not be able to influence. None of these things will happen in that glorified state. But Paul says, Be found in Him not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law.

Folks, all the law does is show us our unrighteousness. Unrighteousness. And show us the righteousness of God. It is twofold. The Ten Commandments are given to show man just how filthy they are and show man just how righteous God is.

Because God is the only one through Jesus Christ when He walked this earth that was able to keep them. Every jot and every tittle precept upon precept and line upon line. Christ kept them all.

And He is the only one that has been able to do it. So the Ten Commandments as well as the other commandments given in Scripture. are given to show us our unrighteousness and to show us the righteousness of God.

But, He says, Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ. The righteousness which is of God by faith.

[18:15] Folks, that's the only way we will be found in Christ. Which is brought up at the beginning of this verse. It's through this faith. The righteousness which is of God by faith.

By faith in what? By faith in whom? In Jesus Christ. In His Gospel. In His death. In His burial. In His resurrection. By faith in those things. By faith in Christ.

And Christ alone is how we will be found in Christ. By our own means. By our own ways. It will never get the job done. But Jesus Christ has done the job.

Jesus Christ has finished the job. It has been completed. He said in John 19, it is finished. And folks, when He said it was finished, it was finished! The work for salvation for lost mankind was completed there on the cross at Calvary.

Verse 10, That I may know Him. Again, folks. Again, this is Paul. Paul, a man that obviously knew who Jesus Christ was. Knew Him very well.

[19:15] But He wants to know Him better. And you and I need to learn something from this. We need to desire to know Christ better. Don't get comfortable with how you know Christ or how well you think you know Christ.

There's still so much to learn. And we can still draw so much closer to Him than what we do. And I'm as guilty as any of the rest of you are for not doing that.

But we need to know Him better. We need to know Him closer. He says, That I may know Him, but this knowing Jesus Christ. Paul goes into three different dimensions of that knowing here.

He says, That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection. The power of His resurrection.

The power of Christ's resurrection. We know, we know from the Scripture that the same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead dwells inside of us.

The same power that raised Christ from the dead. It dwells within. And folks, that power was of God. It is of God. And it ever will be of God. But Paul here says that I may know Him and the power

of His resurrection.

[ 20 : 25 ] Let me remind you, dear Christian, that once upon a time you were dead in your trespasses and your sin. And you would still be there if God had not reached down in the pit that you were in, picked you up, set your feet upon a solid rock, and established your going, God brings life out of places where there was nothing more than death.

He done it for you spiritually. He done it for me spiritually. You think about Sarah over in the book of Genesis. Her womb was dead. She wasn't sick. Her womb was dead.

She was unable to produce children. But God brought life out of something that was dead. And He done the same thing with your soul and mine. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. God specializes in that kind of thing, don't He?

I praise God for it. Folks, that's the power of resurrection. It's not just the resurrection of Christ from the tomb. Hey, I'm not discounting that at all.

Don't get me wrong. But He is resurrecting us from spiritual death into spiritual life. He's resurrecting us from a dead state to a live state.

[ 21 : 34 ] From being dead in trespasses and sin to being lively stones according to the Scriptures. God has resurrected us and because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, that is possible now and it is possible on into the future.

It is possible, folks. We are guaranteed a resurrection. I read about it over and over in the Scripture. These bodies are not what's going to heaven with us and I praise Almighty God for that.

I'm going to have a glorified body that is likened and fashioned unto the Son of Man. Hallelujah!

We're not taking these bodies. Could you imagine spending all of eternity in these bodies?

I thank God this ain't what I'm taking to heaven with me. I thank God He's got something better. I thank God there's something more glorious for us that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering.

Dear brothers and sisters, don't get discouraged. Don't get discouraged when you suffer for the sake of Christ. Don't get discouraged if you're persecuted. Don't get discouraged if you're rejected.

[ 22 : 36 ] Jesus said it Himself. He said, If man hates you, know that they hated Me first. He said, You shall be hated of all men for My name's sake. Folks, He gave us warning that it would happen.

And He told us, He said, If they hate you, know that they hated Me first. But you remember, you remember, not only not to get discouraged when the persecution and the hatred and the rejection come, but you also remember that it has nothing to do with you.

It's not how great you've been. It's not how well you've done. But it is whom you are associated with. That's why the world hates you. That's why the world despises you. They hate your guts because they hate the guts of Almighty God.

And no other reason. It is not because of us. If you made a profession of Jesus Christ to gain the world's approval, you're in for a rude awakening.

The world does not approve of Christ. They do not approve of the Gospel. They do not approve of the Bible. They do not approve of the things of God. Period. But folks, don't let that discourage you that I may know Him, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings.

[ 23 : 49 ] The fellowship. Folks, when you suffer, when you suffer for the cause of Christ, and I'm not just talking about persecution and hatred and rejection here, but when you suffer for the cause of Christ, sometimes God may allow sickness to come in.

God may allow disease to come in. Not because you've done anything inherently wrong, but because He's going to use you to get to someone else. Because He's going to use you and your faith in Him through whatever that sickness is.

Through whatever that ailment is. Through whatever that death may be. To get to someone else.

But folks, when we suffer, when we suffer for the sake of Christ, not because you go out and do something stupid, but when we suffer for the sake of Christ, it is fellowship with Christ.

He suffered for your sake. He suffered for my sake. He took your shame upon Him. He took your guilt upon Him. He took your punishment upon Him. Therefore, when we suffer, it is considered fellowship with Jesus Christ.

That I may know Him, the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death. Folks, if you've made a profession in Christ, and you are not crucifying the flesh, if you're not being made conformable unto His death, if you're not mortifying the deeds of the flesh, I question your profession of Christ.

[ 25 : 16 ] Folks, this is a must. This isn't something we can bargain about. This isn't something that's for some and not others. Being made conformable unto His death, we must crucify the flesh.

We must mortify the deeds of the flesh. We must die to self. Jesus said Himself, if any man would follow after Me, let him take up his cross daily, deny himself, and follow Me.

We've got to deny ourselves. We've got to deny our fleshly lusts. We must crucify the flesh. Paul even wrote to the Galatian church, Galatians chapter 2, he said, I am crucified with Christ.

Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. In the life that I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me. He said, I am crucified with Christ.

is how that whole verse began. Yet I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. Folks, when we crucify the flesh, we make room for more of Christ in us.

[ 26 : 24 ] We make room for more of His Word in us. More of His glory in us. Not more of His salvation, folks. You can't be any more saved than what I am.

And I can't be any more saved than what you are. But we make more room for Him within our lives when we crucify what we want to do with this flesh. It is an ongoing battle.

An ongoing battle between the flesh and the Spirit. Verse 11, If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

Paul has gone through these few verses that we've gone over here. And then he says here in verse 11, If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead. He says, no matter what it takes.

Now listen, Paul had understanding of salvation. He had understanding about the crucifixion. And he knows that salvation was by the work of Jesus Christ. But he says here, If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

[ 27 : 30 ] Paul had his sights set on the future. Not on his present circumstances. Not on his present situation. Folks, he was in prison when he was writing this.

But he says, that's not what I'm worried about. That's not what I'm worried about. I still want to know Christ closer. Paul could have said, you know what, if it wasn't for Christ to me preaching His gospel, I wouldn't be here in this prison right now.

And he could have turned bitter. He could have got angry. He could have shook his fist at God. He could have pointed his finger at God. He could have done any number of things. But what does he say?

If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. He's looking far into the future. Not worried about what's presently going on in his life.

Now folks, I understand that things happen in our lives. Again, sickness comes, disease comes, death comes, financial problems comes, relationship problems come, all kinds of problems come.

[ 28 : 29 ] But folks, in light of eternity, and in light of what is promised to the people of God, to the children of God, by their Heavenly Father, in light of those things, what does it matter?

Really, what does it matter? Paul saying here, again, I count all things but dung. All of them are but dung.

If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead, verse 12, not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect. This is important, folks.

This is humility. This is humility. Again, Paul, think of who is writing this. He says, not as though I had already attained.

He's saying, I haven't arrived just yet. I haven't gotten there just yet. That's why we see him speaking in the future tense in the previous verses that I may know him.

[ 29 : 29 ] That I may know him. And be found in him. And here he's saying, I ain't got there just yet. Folks, we need to learn from this.

You haven't arrived yet either. And neither have I. I have not arrived at the place that God has for me. But I'm on my way. I'm on my way.

And if you're born again, you're on your way. Not as though I had already attained. Either were already perfect. Now, perfect here, he's not talking about being in a perfect state. He's talking about being in a complete state.

Just to verify there. But I follow after if that I may apprehend that for which I, that for which also I'm apprehended of Christ.

He says, excuse me, but I follow after. Again, folks, this is humility. Paul says, I have not arrived. I haven't gotten there. I haven't reached that state of complete perfectness just yet.

[ 30 : 30 ] God's still working on me, basically. And I'm still striving for all of that. But he says here, I follow after. What's he following after?

If that, I may apprehend that for which also I'm apprehended of Christ Jesus. He is trying to get a grip.

On what? On the purpose. Read this again. But I follow after if that I may apprehend that for which. On the purpose that he's trying to get a grip on the purpose that Jesus Christ had for him when Jesus got a grip on him.

Praise God! That's what we all need to be doing. And I thank God that I don't have to depend upon my grip on Christ for salvation.

It is his hold on me that I'm relying on for salvation. He says, but I follow after if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended.

[ 31 : 35 ] He's saying, I'm trying to grip. I'm trying to hold on to. I'm trying to catch up with. I'm following after. I'm pursuing it. And if you have had a true experience with Jesus Christ and you have received salvation, you should have this same pursuit in your life.

As should I. All of us should have this attitude of pursuit of the purpose that Christ saved us for. Of the purpose that he apprehended us.

That he laid hold on us. Think about that, folks. You might have come to an altar and made a profession. You may have come to an altar and cried out for mercy. And I thank God for all those things.

But still, it is not what you did. It is all in what Christ did and does. Yes, we must believe. Yes, we must repent.

And if we truly believe, we will truly repent. Plain and simple. Verse 13. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do.

[ 32 : 46 ] Now pay attention to that. I count not myself to have apprehended. I count not myself to have a complete knowledge. I count not myself to have a complete grip.

To have a complete hold on these things. I count not myself to have apprehended. but this one thing, this one thing I do.

Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before.

That's the one thing that Paul is doing.

And in turn, he is encouraging and he is exhorting the church at Philippi to do likewise. He says, he says, again, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before.

And I notice, folks, he doesn't say those things which were wicked. He doesn't say those things which were nasty. Those things which were sinful. He says here, forgetting those things which are behind.

[ 33 : 54 ] It's all-inclusive what he is talking about here. I'm not telling you to forget about the day that you got saved. And if you've been born again, I dare say you'll never forget that day.

I know I won't. But folks, what he is saying here is to forget all those things and press on. Keep going.

Keep going for God. Keep going for Christ. He says, I haven't got hold of all of it yet, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind.

Hey, if you're here tonight and you're a born-again child of God, there is no reason for you to sit around and regret a past sin that you've been forgiven of. But at the same time, there is no sense and no place in the Christian life for you pridefully clinging to past achievements.

There's no sense of any of that. You've got to let those things go. Folks, if God has forgiven you, it's forgiven. The Bible says it's cast as far as the east is from the west.

[ 35 : 02 ] It's thrown into a sea of forgetfulness. Praise God to be remembered no more. We cannot dwell on past sin. I know Christians right now that think about sins and cry about and get depressed about sins they committed before they were even saved.

My goodness, it's been forgiven. Go on with life. Press toward the mark. That's what we're about to get to in this verse. Reaching forth unto those things which are before.

What's before? Glory is before. Heaven is before. Christ is before. All these things are before us in this race.

Paul, many times in Scripture, Paul uses as an analogy figures of athletes. I'm of the personal opinion Paul was an athletic man because of some of the figures of speech that he uses.

But folks, Paul wasn't running toward. Nor was he telling us to run toward a temporal crown or trophy on this earth. He's exhorting us and he is imploring us to keep running toward the mark of Christ.

[ 36 : 28 ] Toward what we have in Him. Toward Heaven. Toward God. Toward all of these things. Because all of these things are eternal. We have an eternal crown that is awaiting us.

Not a temporal trophy here on this earth. Again, all those things are going to burn up one day. But what we have in Christ is forever. Reaching forth unto those things which are before.

We have a picture here. Reaching forth. Not just running toward, but reaching forth. We have a picture here of a man in a race and he is stretching out for the finish line.

You ever see these people in the Olympics? They run in those races. They get down. You know, if it's a race that's 12 laps long, they get down to that last lap and every one of them take off for about Mach 4 around the track.

They get within a few feet of that line and every one of them is leaning forward as far as they can.

That's the picture that we have here. It's reaching. Reaching toward that.

[ 37 : 27 ] Reaching forth unto those things which are before. Verse 14, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. I press toward the mark.

And folks, I encourage you now to press toward the mark. Forget those things which are behind.

Forget all of that. And press toward the mark.

Press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. That's the mark that we are pressing for. It's the high calling of God.

What is the high calling of God in Christ Jesus? It is eternal fellowship. It is perfect fellowship with Jesus Christ. Our fellowship with Jesus Christ here is hindered.

And it's not Christ's fault that it is. It is hindered by sin. It is hindered by doubt. It is hindered by demons. It is hindered by health. It is hindered by finances. It's hindered by all kinds of things.

[ 38 : 24 ] But folks, the prize that we have in the calling of God in Christ Jesus is unhindered, perfect fellowship for all of eternity with Jesus Christ.

Press towards that. Leave these things here behind. And don't look back. Folks, if you're in a race, and I've never been athletic, but I know if you're in a race, if you're in a foot race, and you're looking behind, you're going to lose speed.

Don't look behind. Forget those things which are behind. Forget about those things and move forward. Now the gist of this entire passage, the gist that I get from this, in this context that we preached it in, is that Paul saw something greater in Christ than he saw Him in self.

Again, in the first few verses, just read them starting about verse 4 in Philippians 3. It says, Though I might also have confidence in the flesh, if any other man thinketh that he hath whereof, he might trust in the flesh.

I'm more. It says, I have more of this than any other man. Verse 5, Circumcised the eighth day of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, and Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law of Pharisee, concerning zeal, persecuting the church, touching the righteousness, which is in the law, blameless.

[ 39 : 50 ] And we get again to verse 7. But what things were gained to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Paul saw something greater than his own righteousness.

And that's what he was talking about in all of that was self-righteousness. He saw something greater in Christ. And folks, we got all kinds of examples throughout the Scripture that you think of Abraham.

You think of Abraham at that time when God caught him out of the land of Ur. He left family. He left everything that he knew. Everything that was secure.

Everything that he knew. To do what? To seek after a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker was God and is God.

He saw something greater out there than what he had in Ur. You think of Moses. Hebrews 11 describes it wonderfully. It talks about Moses and how he forsook Egypt.

[ 40 : 51 ] And he would rather suffer affliction with his own people. And he counted that as greater than all the riches of Egypt. Moses saw something greater than what Egypt had to offer.

He saw something greater than all the treasure that was in Egypt. You think about the disciples for just a moment. Folks, most of them, not all of them, but most of them were fishermen. And they left their nets.

