

GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES (For July 11, 2021)

For Community Groups or Personal Study

The book of Philippians is a personal, heartfelt, passionate, insightful letter that emphasizes central truths about Christian faith. This morning we are focusing on the second half of the third chapter in this letter. The writer, Paul, cares deeply about his friends in Philippi. He writes to encourage them. He writes to remind them of the freedom they have been given by Jesus. He writes to point them to the future not the past.

Every one of us has a history of things we wish we had not said, things we wish we had not done. We are reminded of our past by those who wish to paralyze us, those who wish to render us ineffective, those who want us to doubt the promises God has made to us.

Paul speaks in this passage of "forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead." He did not forget the lessons in his past ... but he was not ruled by them. He did not allow his past to destroy his future. He believed, and he wanted the Philippian Christians to believe (us too) that our past was not meant to control us. More than that, God has given us a new start and a new future, and no one can take from us what God has promised.

As Christians we are mindful of our past, grateful for our present, confident for our future, as we keep pressing forward.

PHILIPPIANS: FORWARD LIVING - IN CHRIST

SERMON PASSAGE: PHILIPPIANS 3:10-21

¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, ¹¹ that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

¹² Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me His own. ¹³ Brothers and Sisters, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind, and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. ¹⁶ Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

¹⁷ Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. ¹⁸ For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹ Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. ²⁰ But our citizenship is from heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself."

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

1. What makes it possible for Paul to keep "pressing on"?
2. How does Paul "press on toward the goal"?
3. In verse 19, what are the ways Paul identifies those who now live as enemies of the cross of Christ?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

4. What does it mean when Paul writes, "Christ Jesus has made me His own"? How does Christ make us His own?
5. What does it mean to "forget" what lies behind?
6. As Christians who are we to imitate? What are the dangers in imitating other Christians?

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?

7. As a follower of Jesus is it possible for you to be "perfect"? What would that perfection look like for you and how could you obtain it? Does God want, expect, you to be perfect?
8. In what ways is your past helpful for your present & future life, and how can it negatively impact your present & future?
9. Who do you look to as a role model for your Christian life? What is it about their life and faith that you hope to imitate? What would happen to you and your faith in Jesus if they failed in some significant way? Discuss.

Notes: _____

Spend time in silence, praying (even if just for a moment or two). Prayer is simply a conversation with God. Be honest. If you don't know how or what to pray admit that and ask God to help you pray. Ask God to help you let go of past hurts and mistakes and instead hold on to Him. Ask God for the ability to keep your eyes on Jesus at all times, especially tough times. Ask God to guide you in what is true. Ask God for good Christian role models without those role models becoming unhealthy. God loves you and He WILL help you.