

## PRESSING ON INTO THE NEW YEAR

### **TEXT: PHILIPPIANS 3:10-16**

#### **Introduction:**

1. 2010 is now behind us.
2. It will soon be gone forever.
3. 2011 is a clean slate. I remember a beloved teacher in Bible college telling all the students on the first day of class, "You all have an A today."
4. Well, we are all going to start off the new year with an A.
5. 2010 had its sorrows, its disappointments, its difficulties, and its surprises -- some were good but some weren't.
6. There have been some regrets and some mistakes and some failures.
7. Philippians 3:13 says, "forgetting those things which are behind."
8. We should learn from our mistakes, but let's not dwell on them.
9. Let us "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (3:14).

### **I. LET US FORGET ABOUT THOSE THINGS THAT ARE BEHIND (3:13).**

1. The wonderful thing about God's grace is that He allows us to move forward in our Christian life and not dwell on our past failures.
2. Paul said in I Timothy 1:12-15, "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."
3. Elsewhere, Paul wrote to the Christians at Corinth, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (I Cor. 6:9-11).

4. "And such were some of you..." "Were," but not anymore. By the grace of God they were transformed into saints. That is what Paul calls them in I Corinthians 1:2.
5. I do not agree at all with the AA philosophy. They identify themselves as alcoholics, even if they have been sober for 20 years. To me that is foolishness.
6. Once a man gets saved he has been delivered from sin by the grace of God. He is no longer a drunkard or a thief or a liar or an adulterer.
7. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."
8. Do not be discouraged by past sins. Thank God they have washed in the blood of Christ. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).
9. Psalm 103:12 says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."
10. Micah 7:19 says the LORD has cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.
11. Jeremiah 31:34 says, "For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."
12. That precious promise is repeated in Hebrews 8:12 and 10:17. "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

## **II. LET US REACH FORTH UNTO THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE BEFORE (3:13).**

1. The apostle Paul had built churches all the way from Jerusalem westward to Spain but he was not looking back. He was reaching forward.
2. Paul often used athletic imagery, such as what we have here in Philippians 3:13. The idea is of a runner, straining every nerve to maintain and increase his speed (cf. I Cor. 9:24-27).
3. Once you are saved, you are in the race, and the race has just begun.
4. Hebrews 12:1 says, "And let us run with patience the race that is set before us."
5. Some start off OK, but then they falter. Galatians 5:7 says, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?"

6. Paul had a singleness of purpose, one burning desire, and that was to win souls for Christ -- "but this one thing I do" (Phil. 3:13).
7. This singleness of purpose kept Paul on the right track.
8. Paul was beaten, shipwrecked, stoned, betrayed, falsely accused, and imprisoned, but he was content (Phil. 4:11-13).
9. Though he was content, Paul was not complacent. Paul never slacked off. He kept going forward, kept striving, kept on serving the Lord no matter what.
10. "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended" (3:13).

### **III. LET US PRESS TOWARD THE MARK FOR THE PRIZE OF THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD (3:14).**

1. The prize is waiting for us at the judgment seat of Christ (cf. I Cor. 3:13-15; II Cor. 5:8-11).
2. The Bible teaches each Christian will stand before the judgment seat.
3. Second Corinthians 5:10 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."
4. Second Timothy 4:8 says, "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."
5. The "high calling" (Phil. 2:14) is literally the "upward calling" (Scofield margin).
6. Are you going up?

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. I heard a true story about a Christian man who got far from God, and left his wife and children. He got deep into immorality and other sins, and was so backslidden that he decided to kill himself.
2. He thought he had sunk so low that God could never forgive him or restore him.
3. He was going to jump off a bridge in the Thames River in his home town of London, England.
4. Just as he was getting ready to jump, Big Ben struck 6:30 PM and he remembered that was the time for the Sunday evening service.

5. So he decided to go to church one last time, and listen to his pastor one more time before committing suicide.
6. As he entered into the Westminster Chapel, the pastor, Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, was praying, and the man heard these words: "God have mercy on the backslider."
7. Those words went straight to his heart and that prayer was immediately answered.
8. The backslidden man was forgiven and pardoned. He was restored to God, to his wife and children, and to his church.
9. He went on to serve God faithfully for the rest of his life (Phil. 3:13, 14).