

Philippians 3:12-16

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[0 : 00] So, we're going to pick up in verse 12 tonight and go through verse 16, but before we do that, it's really, I think, helpful to kind of look at the beginning of chapter 3 and kind of where he's going, or where we're coming from tonight.

And so, he's been warning the Philippians to some degree about a group of men who were Jews, and they were going around and telling people that to be right with God, they had to obey all the Old Testament Levitical laws, all the systems that they followed in the Old Testament that were actually pointing towards Christ.

And now that Christ had fulfilled those things, they weren't really necessary anymore. Things like circumcision was a big one. And so, he goes on to tell them that if these men think that they are actually good enough on their own to have a right standing with God, that they have something to boast about, compared to me, they really didn't have anything.

Compared to who I used to be. And it kind of goes through this list and gives you, like, his background. And that's kind of found in verse 4 and 5, going on down and talks about what he was. But then he says, those things that I used to, like, boast a lot about and claim that made me right with God, I no longer trust in those. I look to Christ. Remember when we talked about justification and how Christ's righteousness is given to us so that we can stand before God clean and justified.

[1 : 34] So, from there, he gets on down to, if you look, and he says, look at verse 10. It says, that I may know him, talking about Christ, and the power of his resurrection, may share in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible, I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

So, I'm going to kind of start off by asking you, kind of jump towards, actually, the end of what we're looking at tonight, verses 15 and 16, where it talks about maturity.

And just to kind of pose a question, I think the small groups I've actually sat in on, I've talked about this in the past, but if I was to ask you, how would you define spiritual maturity?

I remember when I was probably, like, earlier years in college, there was, like, a saying going around, like, man, that guy, like, he's deep.

Like, spiritually, like, that guy's deep. Like, John Piper, deep guy, spiritually deep dude. And you would just start defining maturity by all these different things.

[2 : 48] But if I was to ask you what that meant, what would you think? And for a long time, I probably equated it with this. So, I equated it with possessing a lot of biblical knowledge, theology, doctrine, learning Greek and Hebrew, like, that kind of stuff.

And, like, being able to spout off these big, big reformers from back in the day and all the old dead guys. And, you know, Christian philosophy and thinking and someone that could almost talk a foreign language to you, like, in a Christian type of language.

And you just thought, and those people, like, their spirits are mature. They're pretty deep. And I kept learning that's not the case because the more I learned up in my head, the more of an idiot I became in a lot of ways.

Because I was allowing that to kind of become my identity and who I wanted to be the guy that you could ask a question to and I would know the answer. And in a lot of ways.

So, I became miserable. God allowed me to become miserable. But I remember in my freshman and sophomore year at Georgia Perimeter, I actually kept going to my home church.

[3 : 56] And a guy who had a big influence on me was my youth pastor at the time. Later became my pastor. His name was Chris Jordan.

And he was an incredible guy and knew the word inside out. And so, but the crowd that came at the youth ministry was mainly, like, probably like 70%.

It was actually cool. You know, they could do evangelism. And, you know, came from unbelieving homes. They just kind of came to get away from the craziness in their life to spend time with us. But, so, among all the things that Chris had to deal with sometimes was some of the believing teenagers that came. I remember he just kind of kept pumping the gospel, like, every week in just a different way, a different text to try to share Christ with these guys.

A lot of the people that were coming that didn't know him. And so, I remember after one of the meetings, I was kind of standing, like, maybe from here to the front row.

[5 : 05] And I just overheard a conversation he had with one of these teenagers. But this one guy, he kind of came from a Christian home. I think he went to a Christian school. You know, he knew all the right Sunday school answers to everything.

And he came up to Chris and he just said, when are we going to go a little deeper, man? Like, are we ever going to, like, go on? Kind of implying, like, I'm ready for something a lot more in-depth than just hearing the gospel every week.

And so, Chris was just quiet. And he kind of folded his arms and kind of looked puzzled for a second. It was, I remember, like, maybe, like, five seconds of silence. And then Chris said to him, well, are you, like, trying to, like, connect with any of these other people that are coming?

These other teenagers that are coming and trying to share Christ with them and love them? And he was like, no, not really. I haven't really got a chance to know a lot of them. And they said, well, are you trying to share your faith anywhere, like, at school or outside, like, people you know?

And he was just kind of like, no, I mean, not really. And then, so then Chris said, I kind of, he kind of got a little louder. And he's like, well, you go do that first and then come talk to me about being deep.

[6 : 18] That's like what he said to the guy. And I was just like, man, I kind of like, kind of that, I just kind of act like I didn't hear what happened. I kind of walked away because I think the guy is, like, turning red and, like, kind of walked out very embarrassed.

But this guy was equating stuff with knowledge but not really maturity. See, spiritual maturity, according to verse 15, 16, look at it. Let those of us who are mature think this way.

And if anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained. And so, Paul's definition of maturity is living up to what you've attained.

And, like, so a child can actually be spiritually mature, spiritually deep, if they live up to what God has already revealed to them.

And I know some children that are kind of like that in a lot of ways. And they press on to know Christ more. That's the other mark of, you see, in maturity. And to this other group of people who think that they can have it all together and be perfect, it's like Paul is saying that if you think that you've reached maturity, God is going to kind of reveal to you that you haven't quite arrived yet.

[7 : 31] Like, if you think that you're there, that you've arrived to perfection or whatever, God is going to show this, kind of expose you for who you are. And so, if they could travel back in time with me to imagine that you live in this city where Paul wrote this letter, Philippians.

And you've become a believer. You became a believer the first time Paul came there and preached the gospel. And you and your friends are just striving hard to love God and to know God and to make Him known in that city, in that really high Roman city.

And you hear, like, hey, there's a group of guys down the other side of the city that they seem to know a lot. They know, like, the Old Testament very, very well. Stuff that I'm kind of ignorant of because I'm a Gentile.

Like, I don't know. And they're saying all this stuff, so let's go hear them. And so you go in there with your friends, and they're like, hey, you have to get your act together.

Like, if you were as disciplined and as squared away and knew the Old Testament, had it memorized like I do, and if you were circumcised and all these things, then you could reach perfection.

[8 : 44] Like, you could actually attain, like, what we're talking about. To be honest, if you were in that context, you probably would be like, man, I never could be this guy.

Like, I'm not a little quit. Like, I'm not ever going to be able to become as polished and clean on the outside as this guy is. And if he's saying that the Scriptures teach these things, like, man, like, we're in trouble.

It would be, like, very discouraging. It would just bring you down to, like, I can't. I'm never going to attain what's mine in Christ. It would be very discouraging.

You would go home, you know, to your friends later and just say, we struggle so much with sin. This guy that we haven't heard speak has it all together. And you would just really have a lot of depression and want to quit, probably.

To think that that would be what you had to attain to please God. But just imagine while you're in that meeting, you're just kind of slumping down in your seat, and then some dude comes in and is like, hey, we've got a letter from Paul.

[9 : 43] And so they all sit down, and the guy busted out, and he starts reading it to everybody. And then, like, you're just, like, on the floor by the end of it, just kind of hearing what he says.

But he's saying in chapter 3 that these guys that you're listening to, basically, I could put them to shame, like, in my former life.

Like, I was a Pharisee of Pharisees, a Hebrew of Hebrews. I belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, which was most Jews didn't know what tribe they came from at that point. He did. And he's like, I persecute the church, on and on.

So he could put any of those religious leaders that they were listening to to shame. But then he says, going further down, about, like, obtaining the resurrection from the dead and becoming perfect, that kind of idea.

And so they're probably like, oh, man, this is what that guy was talking about. Can we actually do this? Can we actually reach perfection in this life? And then he comes in with, like, the next part of it, not that I've already obtained this.

[10 : 44] You know, he kind of, like, encourages them to say, like, hey, I've not arrived yet either. And to hear Paul say that, they're like, well, what do these jokers think they're saying? When they, if Paul's not there, I know these guys aren't there.

Because he could put them to shame in every way with his background. And so it gave them encouragement to know, like, wow, the man that led us to Christ and is going out and giving his life to the kingdom who's been beaten and scourged and all these things, like, he's telling us he's not there either.

And that would, like, a mark of humility by Paul. Like, I've not obtained this yet. But so we're going to look at four, I guess I want to call them marks of maturity as well as just, like, ways for you to persevere and endure, like, in your Christian life, I guess.

So the first one is to realize that there is a goal to attain. You have to realize that there is a goal that we're moving toward. There is a goal to attain.

And look at verse 14. It says, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

[12 : 02] So the goal here is to basically receive what fully is yours, your salvation, to, like, to attain that one day. Like, that's the goal.

That's the end. And so the goal is perfection. And, but that perfection will not be realized in this particular life. It will be realized when we actually die or the Lord comes back to save his people. He returns. At that point, it's what we would call in Scripture, Romans 8, glorification. It's where we shut off the old man and we are given new bodies.

We're made perfect. So, at that point, like, that's the goal, like, to be glorified and to be perfected and to stand, like, in the presence of God for eternity and to enjoy him for all eternity.

Like, that's the ultimate goal. That's what we all want. We want to shake sin off. We don't want to have to deal with sin anymore. We don't want to have to deal with the suffering and death that it brings. So, the goal is, like, attaining that.

[13 : 06] The goal is to reach that at some point. And, but then Paul kind of goes on to tell us some more about that goal. That's kind of the shortest point. But to realize, like, where we're going.

We're going towards heaven, towards glory, where, like, sin and death will be no more. And we will reach perfection in the life to come. So, number two is realize that you have not attained that goal yet.

Realize that you have not attained that goal yet. And look at verse 12. He says, not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect.

And then jump down to 13. He kind of reiterates, brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. So, he's saying, like, I've not, I've not got there yet.

Like, I've not reached perfection yet. And I'm not going to in this life. But, but just to kind of throw a word out. Most of you probably are familiar. But just for the sake of following where we are tonight. [14:16] Like, this life, we as believers, we kind of live in between. Like, we have been saved by God. We've been saved by Christ. But, but the fullness of that salvation has not fully yet been realized.

We still battle sin. We still battle, like, a lot of things in this life. We, failure, so forth. So, so this life is, is what scripture calls sanctification. And it's, it's a, if you want a definition for it, there's a lot of definitions for it.

But I think they're kind of honing in on this one to some degree. But it's like a progressive work of God and man. And so that means, like, we cooperate with God. Okay.

And that's different than justification and regeneration. We're all the work of God. But in sanctification, we actually cooperate with God. And it makes us more free from sin and more like Christ in our actual lives right now.

That's what sanctification really is. It's the outworking of the new life that we've been given in Christ. And so, so, so though we have been saved, the fullness of that salvation has not fully yet been realized because we still live in fallen flesh, sinful flesh, in a broken world.

[15:31] And with, with, with the devil who's, who's also out there seeking to kill and destroy. So that's kind of like what that is. And so sanctification, if you want to just think of it this way, it's becoming who we are.

It's becoming what God has already made us in this life. It's, it's striving on to, to be who we are, which is children of God. And so, but in this present life, we're going to, to battle.

We're going to, to have some, some serious issues, but we're going to keep pressing on to, in sanctification and to strive after Christ. So, so I guess this is kind of a word for, for myself right now. So I need to remind myself of this and I'm sure that you can't be reminded of this enough. But, but as, as children of God, you can get really weary. You can want to quit a lot. Like I almost wanted to quit yesterday and just lay down and be like, I'm pretty sick of life, Lord.

I'm just kind of ready to just get out of here. And then it just took some meditating on the word and, you know, and God really just built me back up and, just changed my perspective, I guess.

[16:40] But we hear, we hear God calling us, hey, love me with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might. And, but we never seem to like actually reach that. We never can like give him everything we want to give him.

And, and it grieves us. We, we, we do the things that we do not want to do and the things that we want to do, we cannot do. That's what Paul says in Romans 7, this battle that's going on and, and inside of us, there's like a law of sin, like a gravitational pull to like do sin in our lives.

But, but what we need to realize is that Christ and the work of Christ, what he has done is, I guess in two ways you want to think of it. In this life, he's weakened the power of sin over us.

He's weakened the rule of sin over us. And then, so that by, by his power, we can overcome sin. We don't have to sin anymore by his grace and by his power.

So, but this is something that we have to take up and use. We have to like come to him to overcome sin that comes our way. And the future implication is that he has totally rescued us from sin in the life to come.

[17:50] So sin will be no more. So, but in this life, sin still has a sting. It still hurts. It's still, we're going to like really mess up.

And we're going to have shortcomings and failures. And it's going to grieve you and cause you a lot of sorrow. And so we have to keep our eyes like on the salvation that awaits us.

And that kind of like cultivates hope inside of us. And so I'll read you a quote by something that Martin Luther said.

He said, We're always being purified.

And so that's, that's what this life is. It's just a process of pressing into what we really are and what we will be one day. And so that's what it is. There's a, we're not going to be able to attain that goal fully in this life, which is going to kind of lead to these next points.

[19:10] Because I've heard some people just kind of say, well, we can't reach it. Kind of like, what's the point? Like, what are we, what are we doing then? Like, what's, if I can't reach perfection in this life, then should I just like chill out and do whatever I want to?

Because eventually I'm going to be perfected. So that's really not the heart of what, if you actually have experienced the grace of God, like that's some, some, some thinking that could not really be of God.

So it's going to like move to this next point. Number three is realize that you must strive hard after the goal. Realize that you must strive hard after the goal.

So putting, putting all that together, there's a goal to be attained. Realize that you have not attained that goal. And then realize that you must strive hard after that goal.

And look at verse 12. The last part of it where it says, but I press on to make it my own.

[20 : 14] Go to verse 13. But one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind, straining forward to what lies ahead. And I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

So as, as a lot of, I'm sure Paul is super, super familiar with this, might even have, have gone to see these before. But the Olympic games that went on in, in Greece and so forth.

I'm sure that he, he probably saw those at some point in his lifetime because he was just very, very cultured guy. Like you could ask him if he had been to something or seen something and probably like, yep, I probably have. And just knew that that was just such a big influence on their culture.

He uses the language like a sprinter, someone who's like running in a race and with like really aggressive and energetic action. Like just going really hard at it to, to, to win the prize.

And so he's saying that even though like that goal is, even though I haven't attained this yet, I'm going to like press very, very hard on straining forward.

[21 : 20] It's that idea of like, you're straining towards the finish line. You're kind of running neck and neck with somebody and you're like, you're reaching for the finish line. And so he's like, I'm going to press on and to make it my own.

And so you have to realize your imperfection. And, but also like if you don't want to come to Christ and help him and ask his help to overcome your imperfections, it either is evidence that you don't really believe that he can help you overcome your imperfections.

Or you actually don't want to leave your imperfections. You actually enjoy being that way. So that's why we go to Christ. We don't, we don't like our sin. We hate our sin. We want to be more like him. So that's why we, we strive and run after him. Not really to like be saved by him and to be perfect. But because we want to overcome sin, we hate it.

And so, so like if you're, you're a failing student in college and you really want to pass, that's what you do. You get help. You get a tutor. Like you go and get this. If you're sick, you go to the doctor and get a diagnosis and antibiotics or surgery or whatever.

[22 : 35] And in the same way, like we, we go to Christ. Like we want to, to like overcome the sin that's in our life. Flip the, keep your hand on Philippians, but go to 1 Timothy 6 real fast.

1 Timothy 6. I'll read you this in just a second, but.

Yeah, 6 and go to verse 11. Okay, it says, But as for you, O man of God, flee these things, sinful things.

He talks about before that. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you have been called and about which you made a good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

And so he's like, fight for it. Go, go forward. Lay hold of, lay hold of that goal. And, and this idea of like, pursue these things, flee these things.

[23 : 45] That's, that's like calling us to action. Calling us to, to strive and to fight. And, and so, so a true believer realizes that, man, this is not easy.

Like, really living a Christian life, following Christ, it's a fight. That's why there's so much imagery in scripture about warfare and soldiers and armor and so forth.

And it's, it's really what it is. And it's something that you really can't win in your own strength, in your, in your physical body. It's a, it's totally spiritual battle. So he's like, hey, fight for this.

Fight to lay hold of, lay hold of what's yours in Christ. And so, I mean, we hear these kind of exhortations. Press on, go. And so the other part of this, jump back to Philippians.

Again, he says something really important. A huge part of pressing on and moving forward towards Christ is, is in verse 13, where he says, one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind, is turning forward to what lies ahead.

[24 : 54] And if there's ever something that I have struggled with, it's this. And, and, and maybe that's you too. So, but think about this.

In a race, would anybody like deliberately just put on really, really heavy, thick clothes and, and gear up with a backpack and just like get all this junk on them to go run a race? I mean, it's just, it's that simple.

It's that foolish. And like, that's, that's what actually holding on to like things in your, your sinful past can do to you. That can hinder you, slow you down.

And, and actually even call you to like recommit those same habitual sins from your past. And, and so, for Paul, what he left behind, if we read the verses before this, he left behind his own self-righteousness, this idea of how he could be made right with God, all his religious pedigree. He's like, I'm leaving that behind, leaving all these sinful, crazy things I did. I'm leaving those behind. I'm just keeping my eyes fixed on what's in front of me. I'm going to pursue, pursue Christ. [26 : 00] And, but, you know, for others, we're not allowing, we're allowing our past failures, our past sins, our old life, whatever it may be.

You could have had a totally different, crazy life before you were in Christ. And, and you're not able, you're allowing like the guilt and the shame and the unworthiness to kind of beat you down so much where you actually can't keep striving on towards the goal.

And, so Paul's, Paul's saying, like, man, like in Christ, you're, you're pardoned, you're forgiven, you're justified. Read, read these previous verses. And, so this frees you, like, to run the race without hindrance.

It, it, the righteousness of Christ, it frees us from those things. Just a few places to turn, but I just thought, in light of this, meaning that a lot of us just can't let go of things we've done, even recently, you know, like with me yesterday, just had a hard time getting going.

And, turn to Psalm 103. I just thought, in light of this idea of not being able to move on because of past sin, things that we just constantly weigh ourselves down with, we're saying, like, Lord, I want to be used by you, I want to know you in a deeper way, but I just can't get over a lot of the terrible things that I've done.

[27 : 33] There's just no way. I'm, like, way too messed up for you to ever use at all. Like, I'm just such a dirty vessel. And, we need to learn, like, to let go of that and put it behind us because God has forgiven us in Christ.

And, if the one, the sovereign judge has forgiven you, you should be able to receive that. There's no higher, no higher court. So, Psalm 103, verse 11, just a reminder.

So, these are just Hebrew pictures of, like, an infinite distance.

There's not, there is no distance from the east to the west. It's an infinite distance. As high as the heavens are above the earth, an infinite distance. And, he's saying, like, that's what God's love is like.

It's like an infinite, infinite thing. And, as far as the east is from the west, he's put away your sins. Think about the imagery here in the Old Testament.

[28 : 53] You've heard of the two goats that were brought out, and they prayed over one goat with the sins of the people. And, then, that one was sacrificed. And, one was killed, and then one was set free to actually symbolize, like, God carrying away their sin, the scapegoat idea.

And, so, he's removed your sin. And, he's taken it away from his own presence as far as the east is from the west. And, so, because of such awesome truth, we should be able to, like, not be weighed down by our sinful past.

Like, it's dealt with. Past, present, and future sins have been dealt with at the cross. So, go back to Philippians, and we'll just keep rolling here.

But, just an example of this. I think the time that, I think this verse really had a huge impact on me was in my senior year in high school.

And, I was a young believer at the time. And, I really wanted to, like, go right at, like, all my lost friends. Like, I was just like, I want to go out and, man, they need to know the gospel.

[30 : 09] They need Christ. They're just, man, they're just dying, you know. And, their sin. And, I want to go and be an instrument that God can use to call them into the light and to the gospel.

But, I felt so ashamed of, like, my sin that I had committed, these despicable things that I had done all through my previous life in middle school and high school.

And, I thought, they're just going to think I'm an idiot. And, like, I was just burdened with, like, guilt and shame. And, I remember going to a man that disciplined me for several years.

Named Daryl Johnson. He, kind of, like, took me to this verse in Philippians. And, he was just kind of saying, like, because Christ has saved you and made you His own, you can, like, put behind, like, that lifestyle that He saved you from.

And, you can strive forward to, like, what's ahead. And, you can press on with joy. Go towards Christ. I don't be weighed down by the past. And, along with this point, something to rejoice in.

[31 : 21] John Newton, who wrote the hymn Amazing Grace, he said, I am not what I ought to be. I am not what I want to be. I am not what I hope to be in another world.

But, I still am not what I, excuse me, he says, But, still, I am not what I once was. And, by the grace of God, I am what I am. So, he's saying, like, by God's grace, I'm no longer what I used to be.

So, he kind of, like, rejoiced in that. Not kind of despairing at the fact that he hadn't actually reached where he wants to go. He's like, man, so, to look at where you've come from, and God will encourage you with that.

But, don't look to, like, just all your imperfections all the time. And, Swanson and I were talking about this yesterday. But, you know, like, Paul's sin. I mean, you know that he did, like, some messed up things.

You know, he was a sinful man. But, in his writings, do you actually hear him, like, just kind of sopping over his sin? You ever thought about that? He's like, I'm just no good.

[32 : 26] Kind of like the whole, just never can do this. You know, just very, kind of beating himself up constantly. No. Like, he does mention his sin, doesn't he? He does. But, what is more of his main focus, though?

It's like the grace of God. It's the cross. It's like the power of God to overcome his sin and who he is. So, like, if that's, so we do need to, like, learn to identify sin in our lives and bow sin in our lives.

But, we need to focus more, like, on, like, the cross after that. In light of seeing our sin, we don't just kind of say, I'm terrible, I'm terrible, I suck, I suck.

Like, at some point, you've got to, like, start fixing your gaze, like, on the grace of God that is greater than all your sin. And so, rejoice that you're not what you used to be.

And by the grace of God, you are what you are. And, leads us to the fourth and last point. Back in Philippians. Realize that because of Christ, you will attain the goal.

[33 : 29] Alright? So, putting all the points together, there is a goal to be attained. Realize that you have not attained that goal yet. Realize that you must strive hard after that goal.

And then, fourthly, realize that because of Christ, you will attain the goal. And, look at verse 12. It says, But I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me His own.

Really awesome. So, we are His. And this is, like, a key statement to, like, endurance. And, perseverance in the Christian life is, like, realizing that you're Christ. And, He has secured you.

So, all you're reaching, you're striving, you're yearning, you're fighting. It's not so that you'll belong to Christ. That's already happened, right? It is to complete what's lacking, like, in your likeness to Him.

That's what we strive after. Not to be saved or to belong to Christ, but to just press into who we really are in Christ. It's kind of like, hey, stop doing that. Like, you're not that guy anymore.

[34 : 40] You know? Just be who you are. Stop trying to be this and that. Like, be who I actually have made you, Christ is saying. So, like, I guess a way to think about this is that Paul's effort to grasp, like, the joy in Christ was secured by Christ's grasp of him.

You see that? Like, his efforts, his strivings to reach the fullness of joy in Christ were secured by Christ's grasp of him.

You see that? You get the picture here? It's kind of like some of you who rock climb. I've only been rock climbing twice in my life. But one time, it was like a year before I had my lung transplant, so my health wasn't that great.

But I was going to do it anyway. I was going to do it whether I died or not. So, I was climbing. And I had a...

I remember, like, getting halfway up this rock face and just thinking, like, I don't think I'm going to make it to the top of this. It's like, just what I thought. Just because I was, like, having a hard time breathing and kind of just feeling really weak and tired.

[35 : 49] And I stopped saying, you idiot. You know, like, what were you thinking? But there was, like, this really huge, like, jacked guy, like, at the top of the cliff.

And he, like, threw me down something and I was able to clip it on, a little delay, whatever. And so, so then, like, it actually gave me, like, the hope and joy to, like, finish it because I knew that he got me.

Like, this guy was, like, three times my size and he was just nothing but muscle. And he was, like, a Harley rider and, like, had his head buzzed and had tattoos down his arm.

He was a really cool guy named Mel. This was on the northern Irish coast. And so, when I finally got up there, I just knew that, man, I can press on and finish this because he's got me. You know?

And, like, that's kind of like how Christ is with us. Like, he's definitely got you. And, like, because of that, you can press on without fear of falling away.

[36 : 45] So, our efforts to lay hold of Christ are secured by Christ already laying hold of us. You see that? And so, look at this.

Colossians 1. Flip there real fast. Just to kind of emphasize this. Colossians 1.

Go to verse 21. It says, And you, who were once alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds.

So, who you used to be. He, Christ, is now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death. So, through the work of Christ, we've been reconciled to God.

In order to present you holy and blameless above reproach before him. See? Remember the goal?

Like, the goal is, like, to reach that point where we're sinless and that we can stand before God clean and righteous, justified before his sight.

[37 : 49] So, based on the work of Christ, he's already secured like our future. We will be holy and blameless before God based on what he's done at the cross. We won't be alienated.

We won't be hostile towards God. We'll be reconciled to God. And so, just a verse that kind of, like, talks about, like, our future glory and what we'll be like before God one day.

So, holy and blameless, secured. And so, like, I'm going to, we need to press on to, like, gain Christ because Christ has already gained us.

You see that? It's like this idea of how we're just becoming who we are and laying hold of who we are in Christ. Remember, like, if you go back to, I think, the second sermon in this whole Philippians series.

We were in chapter 1. We focused in on verse 6 in chapter 1 of Philippians. Most of us know this verse. I'm sure of this, Paul says, that he who began a good work in you, he will bring to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

[38 : 59] That's what he says in chapter 1, verse 6. So, I remember also reading this quote from this sermon, the one that, the second sermon, that I thought I would throw out there again because it's just so good.

And something that I read while I was gone this summer. This is a Puritan guy named John Flavel. And he says, This is, So, if we're here when Christ returns, this will happen.

Or if we die and go on to be with him, at some point we will reach perfection. And I'm just going to read to you something from 1 John 3, verse 2 to 3.

You can write that down if you want. 1 John 3, verse 2. He says, Beloved, we are God's children now. And what we will be has not yet appeared.

But what we know will happen is when he appears, when Christ appears, we shall be like him.

Because we will see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

[40 : 35] So this idea that, like, one day that's going to happen. We're going to, like, be like Christ in every way. When he returns, when we see him, we will be like him.

And he's like, in this life, it hasn't appeared what yet we will be. So, the conclusion of all this, we're going to just kind of wrap it up in, I think, maybe two other places.

But look at Hebrews 12. This kind of just ties a lot of this in together. Hebrews 12, verse 1. And we'll just kind of settle in on this a little bit.

Hebrews 12, verse 1. And the writer of Hebrews, whoever it was, whether it was Paul, Apollos, or some other guy.

And in chapter 11, he's kind of gone through this huge list of men from the Old Testament who walked by faith and who pursued God with all they were in the Old Testament.

[41 : 38] And, you know, Abraham, Moses, Joseph, so on. And so, verse 1. Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely.

And let us run with endurance the race that is before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

There's so much things in this, but probably the cloud of witnesses that are surrounding us are all these people who have gone before us, the people he's kind of mentioned in chapter 11.

It's all the believers who have died and gone before us. And it's kind of like a picture of like they're kind of rooting you on, like in the stands, kind of idea, like go on, you know, press on, win the race, go.

So, and so then he says, like we've just talked about, forgetting what lies behind, pressing on toward his head. He says, throw it off, like throw off every sin.

[42 : 50] And even, then he says, wait. Some people want to make a distinction between those. So, throw off sin, obviously. Battle against sin in your life. Seek to put sin to death in your life.

But on the other hand, he says, wait, which probably could mean a lot of good things that are probably not going to be good for you, because they're slowing you down. It could be a lot of things that aren't evil in and of themselves, but you've allowed them to slow you down, like in your race, and you might need to cast those off to run the race.

Leave behind all your guilt and your shame and pursue Christ. And he says, run with endurance, a picture of not someone who's just going to be sprinting, but someone who's more like a marathon type runner.

You've got to have, you know, people that I spend time with in my life, men that I spend time with, if they ever walk away from something from me, I hope that they're going to learn, like, Christian life is a fight, and it's about endurance and perseverance.

It's not hype. It's not excitement. It's not, you know, let's go out and do this. It's like, it's a war. And you've got to be, have a picture for the long haul.

[44 : 01] Like, it's going to be long and grueling, and you have to, like, be ready to endure and to press on through a lot of hardship. It's not going to be just an awesome ride all the time.

So, to endure, run the race with endurance, he says. And so, as you run a race, what do you look to? You look at, like, the prize, the goal that's at the end. That's why you keep running, fixing, you know, looking to Jesus, or fixing your eyes on Jesus, some translations say, the founder and perfecter of our faith.

And we see that Christ ran the race because of the joy that was set before him. He had joy to enable him to endure and to run.

What's really cool, I mean, I really enjoyed this word right here where it talks about founder, perfecter, that idea. It's really cool. And, eriaagos, I think is how you say this word.

And it's the idea of, like, a leader who goes ahead of a group or a team that he's on to open up the way for something. And I mentioned this, I think, last year sometime, but just to revisit it in this text.

[45 : 12] Like, if you think about, like, a special forces team or whatever, like, military-wise, they're on a mission and they're going and they come up to this really huge ravine and they can't get across it.

And they don't have time to go around it. They have to kind of keep going forward. And so there's no way across. But they finally figure out there could be a way that they could, you know, get across.

And so their team leader, whoever it is, their commander, at great risk to his own safety, like, he takes that risk and he actually ends up getting across the ravine and he actually ties the line up and he kind of secures, you know, the way for his men to follow him.

That's kind of like what this is a picture of, like, of Christ. Christ has gone before us. He's, like, endured everything that we would endure. And he's been victorious. And now, like, he's prepared the way for us to follow him.

Like, the way is already clear. So pursue him and go after him. And so he's gone before us and he's secured our resting place.

[46 : 18] He's secured the victory for us. And so all we need to do is just walk in it, you know, live in that victory. So we don't have to, I mean, it's important on how you think, but when you're battling sin in your life, you don't need to say, man, like, I'm fighting for victory.

Because the reality is you just need to walk in the victory that you already have been given. Like, you've already been given victory in Christ. It's not like you have to just beat this thing. It's like

embracing the reality that Christ has conquered that sin in your life.
So that's just a few things to think about. And we're going to just end with a little time of singing, and then we'll break up and have some discussion about this.
But let's press on and lay hold of all that is ours in Christ.