

Pressing Forward in Christ

The Covenant Brethren Church Executive Board has selected Philippians 3:13-14 to be our theme verses for the coming year.

"Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

In the journey of life, we often find ourselves reflecting on our past experiences, both the victories and the defeats. We carry the weight of our past mistakes, regrets, and accomplishments. Sometimes, these memories can hinder our progress in our walk with Christ. However, in Philippians 3:13-14, the apostle Paul provides us with a powerful perspective on how to navigate our spiritual journey with purpose and determination.

Paul begins by acknowledging that he has not yet reached the ultimate spiritual destination. Despite his remarkable accomplishments and profound spiritual experiences, he humbly admits that he has not "taken hold of it." This admission reminds us that even the most mature believers are still on a journey of growth and transformation in Christ. There is always more to learn, more to experience, and more to become in our walk with the Lord.

Paul's next words are crucial: "Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead." Here, Paul encourages us to let go of the past, both the positive and negative aspects of it, and to focus on what lies ahead. This is not an invitation to erase our memories but rather a call to release the burdens of the past that can hinder our progress. Dwelling on past mistakes can lead to guilt and shame, while dwelling on past successes can lead to complacency. Instead, Paul urges us to fix our gaze on the future and the eternal prize that awaits us.

The imagery of "straining toward what is ahead" conveys the idea of intense effort and determination. Just as an athlete exerts every ounce of energy to reach the finish line, we are called to give our all in our pursuit of Christlikeness. This effort is not based on our own strength but on the empowering grace of God working within us. It's a daily commitment to seek God's will, grow in faith, and become more like Jesus.

Why do we press on with such determination? Paul provides the answer: "I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." The ultimate prize is the heavenly calling that God has placed on our lives. It is the promise of eternal life with Christ, where all our striving, suffering, and growth in faith will find its full and glorious fulfillment.

As you meditate on these verses, I pray you are encouraged to adopt Paul's perspective in your own journey of faith. The CBC is determined to look to the future with great anticipation for what God has in store for us.

Grover Duling, CBC Executive Board Chair

Weekly Prayer Request

“Moses answered the people, ‘Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.’ The Lord said to Moses. “Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward.” (Exodus 14:13-15 – NIV84)

Heavenly Father, thank You for being our strong tower who protects and defends us from the hands of our enemies. Thank You for being our mighty deliverer who parts the “red seas” in our lives so we can “go forward” with the plans You have for us according to Your perfect will and purpose. Help us to get away from all the noise and mindless chatter in our lives and to “be still and know” that You alone are the one and only true God. (Psalm 46:10) Open our ears to hear Your voice and fill our hearts with the determination to stand firm in that which You have called us to. Heal our hurts as we “shake the dust off of our feet” (Matthew 10:14) and give us the strength and courage to “go forward” into the “promised land” that You have called us to.

Please Pray for these congregations and pastors

Ebeneza Congregation in Tanzania and Pastor Irene Aniseih Chandeu
Elk Run Congregation in Churchville, VA and Pastor Jonathan Farmer

CBC Prayer Committee