

Philippians 3:12-16 Joy in the Race

Intro: Are you forgetful? I can be forgetful – grocery list – text it to me!

A)Brain Freeze: Sometimes I can run into someone here at Church that I have known for 20 yrs – lunch – many talks – their name?

B)I can be forgetful – Is your Husband forgetful – Is your wife forgetful?

1)Are you kids forgetful?

C)Aaron – can be so forgetful. – Text me to remind me- no the pressure is on me to have to remember to text him.

1)NOT FAIR!!!

D)Being forgetful can be annoying – embarrassing and even costly

1)Ever forget to pay a bill? – COSTLY – Ever forget to show up at an appointment – costly

E)But in our text today we are going to see that there are certain things that – are necessary to forget.

Context sake: Lets read from the beginning of the Chapter – focus in on V.12-16 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. {Theme of the book – Joy

A)Joy and rejoice are used 16 times in these 4 short chapters Reminder to rejoice- In the Lord!

For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.

Joy Stealers-

2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! Legalism- Add something to faith in Christ – Paul went down that road himself before coming to Christ

3 For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, 4 though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; 6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.- Legalism breeds a real confidence in the flesh.

➤ Legalism steals your joy – pressure to perform –

➤ if you are honest – you are never measuring up.

➤ Legalist – are always harping on something – why?

- Misery loves company – I am not happy – you won't be either – I am sacrificing – you will too!

Paul had a radical change of focus after meeting Christ!

7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted {Past tense} loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also count {Present tense} all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, {incredible value of knowing Jesus – in other words I have gained way more than I have lost!} for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Principles for having Joy in the RACE!

12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul was a sports fan!

A)Loved using sports analogies – Boxing – 1 Corinthians 9 – AIM

B)Wrestling in Ephesians 6 – wrestle not with flesh and blood.

C)Training in 1 Timothy 4 – Train yourself toward godliness

D)But by far his favorite analogy is that of Running the race! Galatians, Timothy, 1 Corinthians, Hebrews

Do you like to long distance Running? – I don't! Can't now my hip

A) Christian life is a Marathon – long distance – steady – race - Endurance – not short sprints –

B) Paul had learn to run the race with Joy

C) In V.12-14 We have 3 great principles for Running with Joy.

#1 Knowing God has a Plan for my life V.12

A) Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

B) The KJV puts it this way: **I press on that I may apprehend the reason that I have been apprehended by Christ Jesus.**

1) Hear that word – Apprehend what think? – Cops – apprehended a suspect

C) **Good description of Paul's life** – His conversion on the road to Damascus – He was apprehended by Jesus

1) Knocked off horse – voice – Jesus did a lot to get his attention

Some of you can relate to that- You were running as fast as you could away from Jesus – and he chased you down!

A) He apprehended you! – He laid hold of you.

B) Now I know that some of you don't relate to that – 1) You grew up in a Christian home – always believed – **NO TESTIMONY?**

C) **NOT TRUE:** Some have been saved out of the pit – Jesus pulled us out –

1) other saved from it Jesus got a hold of us before.....

D) But we can look and see from the life of others – friends, family,

1) what could have happened had he not laid hold of us.

But here is the thing I want you to understand and catch from what Paul is saying:

A) Whether you were saved **OUT of the pit or FROM** the pit –

- **Jesus has laid hold of you for a REASON –**
- **A PURPOSE.**

B) Paul found great joy in discovering – the reason why Jesus laid hold of him!

C) For Paul **it was an ongoing revelation:** - Each new city that Jesus led him to – was a part of the REV.

1) Ok – He apprehended me to preach to the people in Ephesus

D) IN Philippi – he ends up in Prison – Singing at Midnight – doors spring open – Philippians Jailer – saved his whole house

1) **Wow – Didn't see that one coming**

Paul learned that life is about

DIVINE APPOINTMENTS

A) People that God would bring into his life – to share Jesus with – Light to – love on!!!!

B) Even now he is in prison in Rome as he writes the letter to the Philippians – Rejoicing why?

1) The gospel is spreading to the whole palace guard – these guys end up getting assigned to guard me –

C) **captive audience** Them not me! –

D) Now I know why Jesus apprehended me – this part of his plan – Gospel in Rome – in Chains

1) **Even Caesars household – the guards**

Life is about Divine appointments!

A) Jesus has apprehended you for a reason and a purpose! - On going revelation

B) Who do you work with? Live by? – who is in your sphere of influence?

1) Life gets exciting when you see the Divine appointments

C) I had a situation a few weeks ago – teaching at the Bible college – my weekly class –

1) shared something wasn't in my notes

Student – exactly what he was going through –

D) Same thing happened the week before – another student

E) Conversations on planes – Divine appointment

1) God picked that seat assignment

F) Christian going through something – encourage – or unbeliever seeking

1) **LIFE GETS EXCITING** – see the Divine appts

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10

We need to Realize God has a plan for my life and he has laid hold of me for a purpose

A) Purpose Driven life- so popular? What is my purpose?

B) Spend yrs trying to figure that out.

1) Don't think big picture- I have wasted so much time trying to figure out what is the big plan for my life?

C) Realize it is an ongoing revelation – that involves – where God has placed you now.

1) How he has gifted you? – The desires that he has given you.

D) The best place you can be is in the center of God's will

For me: I know right now- and for the foreseeable future – God has me as the lead pastor at CV.

A) Gifted me to teach his word, to lead, to counsel- **He has apprehended me for this purpose**

B) Teach – lead our churches with a great team, meet with men.

1) Encourage marriages – gifted me for these things – Joy in it

C) On Thursdays – I teach at CCBC – I know for this season that is something he has apprehended me for

1) Pour into young people and future leaders – LOVE IT

D) 30 Yrs ago – Friend Prophesied – Rob you are going to be a Pastors pastor –

1) Counsel and help other Pastors – CRAZY

E) The Lord has done that – my book – conferences – this August in Austria –

1) I know – God has called me to that.

E) Few yrs ago NZ – Ministry in NZ as a church

Here is what I want you to understand: First saved – didn't see any of that.

A) Couldn't imagine – wasn't thinking full time ministry.

B) But I just tried to be faithful with what God has put in front of me.

C) I have discovered that is Plan for my life – has been this ongoing revelation – **SURPRISED!!!**

LORD – I never saw that one Lord- Exciting

A) ALSO - Learned things that God hasn't called me to – areas where he hasn't gifted me in.

B) There are things that I would liked to do - that He hasn't allowed me to be a part of-

1) That can become a distraction – if sulking – wondering – I want to do that! What is wrong

C) Be faithful in the moment – be faithful with what God has put right in front of YOU now-

1) RESULT IS JOY!

D) AND FREEDOM – this is what you have for me right now – Cool!

1) There is Joy in that.

Paul is in Prison – he could think – he was limited

A) but he realized – Jesus had him right where he wanted him

B) He Running with great Joy – He laid hold of me for this. – Prison season. –

1) Write and share – make the most

C) Principle #1 in running with Joy - Knowing God has a Plan for my life V.12

#2 Knowing the race is a process. V.12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected....

V.13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended;

Paul has been walking with Jesus for 30 yrs and he says – guys I haven't arrived yet.

A) That is so encouraging to me – Paul was amazing – He never arrived – this life

B) I find Great Joy in knowing this Race is a process

1) We are all in Process – no perfect people here. –

C) No such thing in this life of reaching a state of sinless perfection.

Charles Spurgeon said he met a couple of young men who walked up to him one day, claimed that they

were morally perfect, that they had attained
SINLESS PERFECTION

Spurgeon happened to have a pitcher of water in his hand, And he just couldn't resist the temptation, and he poured the pitcher of water on THEM to watch their reaction – Boy did they get mad – and violently aggressive - . – He proved his point

There is Joy in knowing that we are in process!

A)Life is about the journey not the destination – We know where we are going – we know the outcome-

See Jesus be like him

B)Right now is about the process that God is putting us through to move us in that direction.

1)Why James writes – **count it all Joy my when going through various trials – producing something –**

C)There is a purpose to the process!

D)God is not expecting me to become complete over night,

1)he just wants me to keep moving, running and growing.

E)I can rejoice in that! –

Principle #3 in running with Joy- Don't dwell on the Past- 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,

A)Paul is telling us that forgetting is essential to having Joy in the race!- **Forgetting what lies behind**

B)Problem is the Past is hard to forget! – We all have things in our lives – failures – **BC days – regrets**

1)Memories that we would like to forget that have a way of resurfacing in the memory banks of our hearts, soul and minds

C)So it is important to understand what Paul is really saying by this statement **forgetting those things which are behind**

1)He is admonishing us to not dwell on the past! – Don't let your past influence your present

Don't dwell on the past in two ways.

A)**1st is our failures** – Satan loves to use our failures to bring condemnation

B)Think about what this meant for Paul ? Prior to becoming a Christ Follower –

1)he had Christians Killed – imprisoned – beaten

C)He ripped families apart – He was a beast – Acts 9 “still breathing murderous threats”

D)Imagine the condemnation that Paul dealt with!

Some of you battle with that too- Wicked past the devil likes to bring it back into your memory – look at what you did.

A)Paul says – Don't dwell on that – push that out of your memory

B)Focus INSTEAD on who you are now in Christ

1)Focus on what Christ has done and what he is doing in your life now – REJOICE IN THAT!

C)But it is not just the BC days we need to not dwell on – but it is also the backsliding days

D)Sometimes we wrestle more with the failures – that we have had after being saved – we knew better!

1)The devil loves to use those to condemn us – God is so disappointed in you.

E)We wrestle with that – But we need to remember – God forgives and he forgets

1)Peter – failed miserably – Be strong in Grace – Jesus is all about giving us what we don't deserve

Moms – You wrestle with this: Bad day lose your temper – just tired and frustrated – need a break.

A)Listen: Don't dwell on yesterday – today is a new day – God's mercies and new every morning

B)Forgetting what lies behind – reaching forward to what is ahead

1)Your purpose – God wants you to find JOY IN – this season is about your kids –

C)**Embrace it – bad days and the good days –**

1)You are doing a great work – don't let anyone tell you different

Learning to not Dwell on the past is huge for having Joy in the race

A)But it is not just about not dwelling on our failures – but we need to also not dwell on the Victories

B)Here is what I mean: If our lives are always looking back to what God did **2 yrs ago – 10 yrs ago – 20 yrs ago – PROBLEM**

1)**GOD IS NOT STAGNATE – HE IS ACTIVE**

C)Question is what is he doing now?

1)What is he doing in your life TODAY! –

D)How is He **DEFINING** your purpose in this SEASON OF LIFE?

I see some believers – always talking about the good old days

A)I used to do this – I remember when

B)Problem is there is no active work happening now

1)They are not in the game-

C)Deep down they know it – but they talk about the past to validate their inactivity in the present.

1)In their hearts – they are miserable – no joy – because they know deep down – not moving forward.

Now listen: I know life changes – More time when Single than married

A)More time and less responsibilities when we were younger

B)Older you get the more complicated life gets!

C)Older we get the less energy we have!

But we must not allow anything of those things to be excuses for not moving forward now!

A)God's plan for you never stops – it continues to expand it continues to take on new shapes – avenues

B) “Unless you try to do something beyond what you have already mastered, you will never grow.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

C)Growth continues to happen in us – when we learn to not dwell in the past – Failures - Learn from them

1)Or our Past Victories we can **REJOICE IN THOSE**

But we need to be people – and a Church – who are always reaching forward – always pressing forward

A)Upward call of God in Christ Jesus

B)Always wanting Jesus to reveal Himself a fresh and a new in our lives!

C)Tell our staff - **Dream:** Don't be afraid to Fail – **Peter walked on Water**

D)New things: Resurrection Trail – Car Show!

1)What else do you want us to be doing?

You personally- **PRAY IN THAT WAY!**

Question: Spiritually what are you reaching forward toward right now?

A)What new thing are you praying about today?

B)What are some of the Desires or burdens that God has placed on your heart –

1)Burden is from the Lord it doesn't go away!

C)Rap up V.15-16

15 Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.

16 Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.

Mature: Grab a hold of this mindset –

- Knowing God has a **Plan** for my life V.12
- The Race is a **Process** V.12,13
- Run with a single **Purpose** V.13

Keep doing – keep being consistent in the things that have already attributed to our growth!

LISTEN – You here today – Wondering about your purpose – spinning wheels

Starts – Knowing Christ

Surrendered to Christ

Sinner – Savior

Prodigal?

Let Jesus lay hold of you today – Starting point