



Series: Philippians III:12-15

Title: Are We There Yet?

Pastor Chad E. Billington

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Smythe Street Church

## Pre-Sermon – Pastor Verner Introduction of Me & Series

Introduction of me, also going to read the passage for the series.

“I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. I do not consider myself to have apprehended it yet; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, let us who are mature think this way, and if in anyway you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.” Philippians 3:12-15

### The Beginning...

When we were doing our planning for the series, Pastors Verner, Wayne, Heidi and I were together in a room and each of us highlighted the section of this passage that grabbed at our heart and our attention. For me, it was this:

“I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. **I do not consider myself to have apprehended it yet;** but one thing I do,

Philippians 3:13

Actually what came just before the passage we are studying is what I gravitated to first:

Philippians 3:12-14

**12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal,** I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. **I do not consider myself to have apprehended it yet;** but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

## Where is this comment coming from? You need to look to the context

Paul's letter is written to people living in Philippi, a Roman outpost. Most of the believers in this church would have been Gentiles (non Jewish believers). Further up in Philippians 3, Paul talks about a group, today referred to as the Judaizers.

The Judaizers would come along and tell people, that if you really want to be secure in your relationship with God, you need to keep our Jewish Customs (principally men needed to be circumcised). This sign lets you know you are in, you've arrived, you're good.

Paul comes back, telling them he was a Jew by ethnicity, not just conversion, that he had the sign of circumcision, and if that was all they wanted, they were settling for a poor deal.

Philippians 3:10–11 (NIV84)

<sup>10</sup> I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup> and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Paul says, that's what I want to know.

You can keep your religion if you want, but:

**RELIGION GIVES FALSE SECURITY WITHOUT POWER AND LIFE.**

## The Reality: None of Us “are there yet”

Honestly, I get scared when I encounter Christians who ‘have it all figured out.’

- I get concerned because ‘the arrived’ have figured things out so well that they become unteachable
  - You can never teach them anything new, because they cannot admit they didn't know it to begin with.
- They become dangerous
  - Their air of superiority makes them unbearable

- Or they become idolized by those who are desperate to find solutions to their insecurity.
  - This is what Paul was fighting with the Judaizers.
  - He was so upset with them he wished they would go ‘all the way and emasculate themselves.’ (Galatians 5:12)

## What Scripture Teaches Us Is “We Don’t Have It All, Yet”

The call of the believer is to “Remain Humble and Align Ourselves to God’s Ultimate Purpose”

It makes me think of professional athletes. In hockey rinks across the country there are tons of boys and girls who are playing, dreaming of the chance to play in the NHL. In gyms across the country there are those dribbling and shooting, hoping for a shot at the NBA.

But here’s the thing, when a young person arrives to draft day and they are drafted into the NBA or the NHL, the quest is just beginning.

- Ottawa Senators – on the bikes after the playoff game to develop endurance
- Steph Curry Practice dribbling and shots
- **Marriage -**

**As Believers when we experience Jesus, when we receive the power of the Holy Spirit, we haven’t arrived, we’re entering the game. We’re are to humbly realize Jesus is taking us somewhere, and align ourselves to his goal for us, because we’re not all there.**

## That makes us teachable

- I read a book last fall. The Good and Beautiful God by James Bryant Smith.
- The question of the book is simple, what are the stories we tell ourselves about God, and do they line up with what Jesus reveals about who God is.

- Topics included: God is good, God is generous, God is trustworthy, God is love
- Spiritual Exercises – ways to reflect and open ourselves to experience God in practical ways
  - Get enough sleep, Count your blessings, pray Psalm 23.

Reaction could have been: been there, done that. I've been around a while. Know how many times I read the gospels before I was 10? Psalm 23, Verner had me memorize that when I was in Middle School.

Going back to the basics, is powerful if we are teachable. The people who I know are most spiritual, came back and said, I want to look at this more slowly.

**Starting class on this book on Wednesday, January 30<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM. I'd love to have you join me and the group (even if you don't I recommend the book).**

## ARE WE HUMBLE OR DO WE THINK WE HAVE IT ALL TOGETHER?

**Imagine what it would be like if our church, humbly realized it wasn't there yet.**

- We would be teachable.
  - We could learn from others, and from each other, not trying to pretend it was all together.
  - We could be broken and receive grace and healing from each other
- We could be a welcoming church
  - No one wants to be around a know it all, and no one wants to explore Jesus around know it alls. We do know Jesus, and the power of his resurrection, and the Holy Spirit, but that doesn't make us better, or having reached our end.
- We wouldn't settle for less.

- Often we settle into comfort rather than press forward into God's vision of growth and transformation in our lives.
- As individuals we need to grow.
- As a church we cannot settle for what is comfortable, otherwise we will die.

## Closing Prayer

- Where have you settled? Where do you need to Grow?
  - Let's not despair, God has his resurrection power and spirit available to all who entrust their lives to Jesus. Let's ask for his power, and press on, aligning ourselves, our time, our desires and activity to his will.