

A graphic featuring the word 'PHILIPPIANS' in white, uppercase letters, with the numbers '12-15' below it in a large, orange-to-yellow gradient font. The text is set against a dark blue background with vertical lines and a central image of a sunset or sunrise over water, framed by three vertical bars that resemble the letters 'P', 'I', and 'I'.

Forgetting What Lies Behind

The following document is a copy of Pastor Flowers'

sermon notes from February 10th, 2019

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“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.” Phil. 3:12-15

Previously...Pushing past easier. Are we there yet? A servant’s attitude.

What is this passage saying to us?

- Adopt and embrace an attitude of “pressing on.” (don’t give up or slack off)
- God has “taken a hold of you” for a great purpose.
- We also must “take a hold” of God’s plan for our life.
- We have not arrived yet. There is more ground to gain!

Today I want to focus on one phrase in the middle of the passage.
Forgetting those things which are behind!!

Moving into our future means knowing, accepting and dealing with our past.

This is my hope and prayer for today...God will help us recognize and put to rest the way something from our past is hindering us from embracing all that God has for us right now.

Our past...

1. Our past can bring us joy.
 - Reminiscing. Isn’t it enjoyable?
2. Our past can teach us.
 - We learn from experience. We can not change the past, but we can learn from it.
3. Our past can inspire us.
 - God was faithful.

I spin my tales of days gone by
Sometimes with a smile, sometimes with a sigh
A mixture of sadness or a splash of joy
Some stories are happy, some stories annoy

I lose myself in these sweet subtle scenes
And I’m swept away by yesterday’s dreams
For now I am known by the trials of my past
My soul has been shaped and my future made fast
For woven so surely in each time and place
Are traces of kindness, of mercy and grace

So I gladly embrace those beautiful years
My past gives me courage and speaks to my fears
For there God was known in my pleasure and sorrow
And this gives me hope that He’ll be there tomorrow

I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done. Psalm 143:5

My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you from the land of the Jordan. Psalm 42:6

Transition...

The past is not always so kind!!!

4. Our past can ensnare us.

Events in our past can become – in our minds - breeding grounds for the following:

– Hurt. – Distrust. – Anger. – Bitterness. – Guilt. – Pride.

The example of Paul.

Why did he say “forgetting the things that are behind?”

There were two things Paul had to lay down...

1. Paul had to lay down his past accomplishments.

He had the following list of credentials:

If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ. Phil 3:4-8

Paul let go of the impressive achievements of his past so he could embrace something far better, that is, Christ!!

For Paul the choice was quite clear. Righteousness by the law and human effort, or righteousness in Christ.

We – individually and corporately as a church – can have our “monuments” that we cling to.

They may be things that were very Christ centred and very blessed of God at the time.

They become our “glory days.” Our bench mark. Our highwater mark.

What can't church be like that today!!

Those were the good old days!! We won't have church...move of God...unless we _____!!

Illustration:

Senior retired minister at one of the churches I pastored. Still had an office and a lot of influence. One day as we were planning Easter he said, “Boys, I would like to take seven nights and have a church meeting each night where I speak on one of the last seven sayings of Jesus from the cross.” My assistant pastor and I just looked at each other. In his mind it was April of 1969. A successful evangelistic campaign became the benchmark.

A word for SSC...

These are not the days for leaders to become defensive, protective or territorial.

We must not encamp around our monuments or accomplishments.

While there are certainly godly principles to teach and share and instill, we must not make the “glory days” of years gone by the high water mark.

Pruning...not just what is dead, but buds that are good, just not sustainable.

There are exciting things to embrace!!

Also, Paul had to lay down...

2. Paul had to lay down his guilt and remorse.

For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 1st Cor. 15:9

We take what is for a season and make it forever. We take what is forever and make it for a season.

We as a church, like Paul, need to lay down the remorse.

We could have done this or that!! Why didn't we _____??

May there be a Holy Spirit illumination moment right now!!

What is in your past that still looms large in your life right now?

There is a direct correlation between embracing the future plans God has for you and laying aside the things from your yesterdays.

We cannot take a hold unless we let go!!

Let's illustrate this...Call Zach to the platform.

I will represent Christ and all the great things he has in store for Zach.

Key Verse:

I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

Christ “takes a hold” of our lives.

Our response is to reciprocate and to take a hold of Christ and the future he has for us.

But what if there is something that is getting in the way??

What if that something is all the stuff we are carrying from our past?

Load Zach up one bag at a time.

What are the things? There is a descriptive tag on each item.

* Please note, Zach is representing us all. These things are not necessarily his story. ☺

- A dear friend told some terrible lies about me that were not true.
- I worked day and night on that project and nobody said not even one word of thanks.
- A trusted leader in whom I had great confidence fell fast and hard.
- Why was my family life so hard? I did not deserve to be raised that way.
- I led a successful ministry back in the 90's. Why can't they do things now like they did then?
- I am so embarrassed to show my face around those people. How could I have messed up so bad?
- I was told "I will love you forever." What happened to that promise?

As we take each bag off, we will declare just how we are putting this behind us!!

I am declaring a ***funeral to be held!!!***
Necessary endings to be put in place!!!

Lay these things down so you can embrace God's future plans!!

How?

As we take each bag off, we could reiterate what needs to be done...

1. **Understand** this. Accept it. Learn. Look at it wisely and objectively.
2. **Forgive**. Receive healing.
3. **Appreciate** it for what it was.
4. **Address** it through prayer..."I am not forever defined by that event in my life!"

A graphic featuring the word 'PHILIPPIANS' in white, uppercase letters, with the numbers '12-15' below it in a large, orange-to-yellow gradient font. The text is set against a dark blue background with vertical lines and dots, resembling a digital or data visualization. The letters 'P', 'H', 'I', 'L', 'I', 'P', 'P', 'I', 'A', 'N', 'S' are arranged in a grid-like pattern, with the numbers '12-15' centered below the 'P', 'I', 'P', 'I' letters. The background also features a faint image of a sunset or sunrise over a horizon, visible through the letters.

PHILIPPIANS
12-15

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