

WEEKLY SERMON

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The prime goal

Philippians 3.7-14 (NIV)

We live in a world driven by goals. Individuals, businesses, organisations and even sports clubs pursue certain goals. For example, every football club in our country has a target - to reach to glory - to strive to win the League, Championship, Premiership, cup final etc. As individuals we can have certain goals, for example to achieve a certain qualification; to find a decent job or to own our own home. What is your prime goal of life?

In this passage Paul presents the prime goal of his life and how he presses on towards his goal. The question is, what is that goal? Paul's goal is not a 'what', it is a 'who'. Paul's relationship with Jesus means a Pursuit of Jesus (v12). Jesus took hold of Paul on the Damascus Road. This one encounter with Jesus has changed Paul's life.

Before this he was pursuing Christians to persecute them. Now he pursues Christ. He wants to gain Christ, to be found in him (v9) and to know Christ deeply, to be like him in death and be glorified with him through resurrection (v10-11). Paul's prime goal is Jesus. He is striving towards his goal to win the prize of glory with Christ.

We may have many goals in this worldly life, but our prime goal is Jesus, who is the life (John v14:6) and came to give life to the full (John v10:10).

Paul says you must stay focused on your goal. Every Christian knows that Jesus has already taken hold of them since their first encounter with Jesus. But the mystery is, we have not yet fully arrived at our goal. We are to fix our eyes on Jesus, as an athlete fixes their eyes on the finish line. Paul encourages us to stay focussed to reach fullness in Christ: to know him deeply and to be found in him as individuals and as his Church. Jesus is our prime goal, stay focused on him.

The question is how committed we are to reach to our prime goal? Paul commits himself fully to Christ and lays aside any distractions by forgetting what is behind (v13). What was behind him was his confidence in flesh (v4), his credentials which he counted as loss because of the surpassing knowledge of Jesus (v7). We may be distracted in our pursuit of Christ by various things such as our past, our qualifications, status, wealth, achievements, ego, attitude and so on. But we must lay behind every distraction and remain fully committed to reach to our goal, who is Christ Jesus.

This world is driven by goals, and we may each be pursuing different goals in our lives. But Jesus should be our prime goal of life. The call is to stay focused and remain committed in our race to reach our goal, 'to be found in Jesus and to know him deeply', to win the prize for which God has called us heavenwards (to be glorified) in Christ Jesus (v14). May this Lent season reinforce our pursuit of Jesus in every aspect of our life.

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