Do Something: Perspective

Philippians 3:12-14

*[12] Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. [13] Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, [14] I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

**Our perspective shapes the way that we live.**

* It shapes the way that we view ourselves.
  + Overconfidence, we think everybody loves us.
  + Self-deprecation, we think that everybody hates us.
* It shapes the way that we interact with others.
  + Live to serve others.
  + Live to be served.
* It shapes where we put our focus.
  + Big picture, vision.
  + Small picture, just what’s in front of us.
* It shapes the way that we live today and the way that we think about tomorrow.
  + “Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die.”
  + “Seize the day.”
* Our perspective shapes what we do.

In Philippians 3:12-14 we get a glimpse at Paul’s perspective on life.

**Paul says…**

**He had not arrived.** (v. 12a, 13a)

*Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect…  
Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own.*

* He is not perfect. He is still in this world, and not in resurrection perfection. He still lives with the struggles of temptation and sin. (*Romans 7*)
  + The Philippians likely looked to Paul as a pastoral father.
  + He reminds them that partiality is not part of the Kingdom economy.
* **We have not arrived.**
  + We are not perfect. All we have to do is evaluate ourselves at the end of a day and it’s obviously clear that we’re more than flawed.
  + Pride tells us the opposite of this.
  + Pride tells us that we’ve made it and that we’re self-sufficient.
  + This is the opposite of the Gospel. Response to the gospel is complete dependence and dependence disqualifies us from self-sufficiency.

**His motivation to keep going was Jesus.** (v. 12b) **GOSPEL**

*…but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.*

* *press on*: to run swiftly in order to catch a person or thing.
* *make it my own*: to have his final inheritance.
* He presses on, following Jesus, because Jesus first pursued him. (Acts 9)
  + Earning something isn’t what keeps him going. We cannot earn our salvation or work for our inheritance.
  + Grace keeps him going. Salvation is given to us through Jesus.
* This is the truth of the Gospel. It doesn’t make sense why we would get something of such great value in exchange for something of such great worthlessness.
  + We strive to follow Jesus, because he first pursued us.
  + This is discipleship, following Jesus. Living in relationship with him.
* Paul is writing to the church, Christ-followers, in Philippi. He’s writing to people. He’s encouraging and challenging them with his own life. We’re challenged in the same way.
  + We’re reminded to press on, that we strive to follow Jesus in response to His life-giving pursuit of us.
* **Our motivation to keep going is Jesus.**
  + We keep following Jesus toward our future inheritance because, he has made us his own.
  + We belong to Jesus, and we live life following him.
* **How do we press on; how do we follow Jesus?**
  + We follow Jesus our own. We spend time with Him through *reading* *Scripture*. We spend time with him by talking with him – through *prayer*. We spend time with him in *silence*. We spend time with him by enjoying His good *creation*. We practice spiritual disciplines – using the means that God has given in following Jesus.
  + We follow Jesus together. We follow Jesus together in *worship*. That’s what we’re going this morning. We’re receiving and responding to the good news of Jesus – together. We’re responding to his pursuit of us. We follow Jesus together in *small* *groups* and in *one on one relationships*. Encouraging each other to press on. Through *confession*, and *praying* *together*, and speaking God’s *wisdom* to one another.
  + We follow Jesus for the good of others.As we follow Jesus on our own and as we follow Jesus together, it affects all of life. It shapes how we care for our friends, love our spouses, raise our children and interact with our neighbors and co-workers. We see how Jesus interacted with people and we interact with others the same way. We extend grace. We offer loving correction. As we follow Jesus, we lead others to him and the forgiveness that he gives through his life, death and resurrection.

**He kept the goal constantly in front of him.** (v. 13b -14)

*But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

* *Straining forward: to stretch out toward; hard work mixed with motivation and anticipation*
* *The goal: the distant mark looked at; end one has in view*
* *The prize: the award to the victor in the games*
* Paul does something: he presses toward the goal.
* This is how he presses toward the goal - he doesn’t look to past victory defeats or victories (*EG: driving with eyes on the rear view*). He looks to his final goal of being with Christ (*EG: driving with eyes on the horizon*).
  + From a religious standpoint, he had a lot in his past to be proud of. Paul unpacks this in verses 4-6: circumcised, Israelite, Benjamin’s tribe, Pharisee, persecutor of the church, blameless law keeper.
  + He keeps the goal of being united with Christ in front of him. He looks forward to the resurrection. He’s living a life that will be pleasing to the one who he is longing to see.
  + Living from his past, Paul was living for approval.
  + Living for the goal, Paul was living from approval.
* **We keep the goal constantly in front of us.**
  + We live in the tension of the now and the not yet. The saving work of Christ is applied to those who trust in him now, but it has not yet been made complete, by our being united with him.
  + We keep the not yet in front of us; the day when this tension will pass and our salvation will be finished. We’ll be with Christ, in his Kingdom, forever.
  + The word picture that Paul uses here is that of a runner. Like a runner racing toward the finish line, straining with every stride and reach to finish well – this is how he lives life.
  + We don’t live out of past faithfulness or unfaithfulness, we live following Jesus today. That’s what we have control over, right now.
  + We live life in the present with our eyes focused forward to the day when we will be united with Christ, and his righteousness in us will be fulfilled.
  + We intentionally live life personally, and in relationship with those around us, straining toward our union with Christ.
  + We don’t live for approval, to earn anything. We live from approval, having been freely given to.

**So, what do we do with this?**

* **We remember our need for Jesus.***We have not arrived*.
* **We respond to Jesus’ love for us by following him.***Jesus is our motivation to keep going*.
* **We are ready for the day when we will be united with Jesus.***We keep the goal constantly in front of us.*