**I Press on Towards the Goal**

**The Word**

Read together Philippians 3:12-21

**The Big Idea**

Now that Jesus has taken hold of our lives, we are called to pursue him with focus, passion, and energy. While it is easy to get distracted by merely earthly things, we are to focus on our eternal journey with Jesus.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. Consider Paul’s description of his own journey in v. 12-14. What stands out to you most about that description?

2. On Sunday we talked about Paul’s posture of “holy discontent.” As you take stock of your own journey with Jesus at this time, how would you describe your own posture? Without placing a value judgment on yourself but just making an honest assessment, in what ways are you experiencing a hunger and thirst for a deeper life with God, and in what ways are you not?

3. Consider the five descriptions of the group of people Paul talks about in v. 18-19. Which description was the most personally convicting or impactful to you and why?

4. This passage is about following good examples. As you consider the theme of pressing on towards Jesus with passion and energy, who in your life has been a compelling example of that? What specifically do you appreciate about him/her?

5. As you consider the theme of pressing on, is there anything specific you are feeling called to do in the coming weeks to more intentionally pursue your relationship with Jesus?

**Digging Deeper: Sermon Outline**

I. “I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.” (v. 12)

A. Last week: salvation by grace alone. Last week we saw how “Christ Jesus had taken hold of” Paul by sheer grace apart from any work or effort.

B. This week: now that Christ has saved him by grace, Paul presses on “to take hold of” the life that Jesus has rescued him for. His discipline and efforts are not to earn God’s favor but rather are an appropriate response of living FROM God’s favor

II. A positive example of pressing on towards Christ (v. 12-14)

 A. Notice Paul’s humility

 1. I haven’t obtained this. I don’t consider myself to have arrived.

2. There is still so much more of Christ to know and more of myself to give to Christ.

B. Notice Paul’s effort

 1. I press on, strain ahead

 2. Like a runner running a race with sustained energy and effort

C. Notice Paul’s Focus

1. Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead

2. Paul doesn’t live his life looking backward. He doesn’t focus on his past spiritual accomplishments or his past spiritual failures. He focuses on Christ and the road ahead.

 D. Paul has a “holy discontent”

 1. He hungers and thirsts for more of Jesus

2. “The evidence that you have Jesus is that you want more of him. . . Come near to the holy men and women of the past and you will soon feel the heat of their desire after God. They mourned for Him, they prayed and wrestled and sought for Him day and night, in season and out, and when they had found Him the finding was all the sweeter for the long seeking.” —A.W. Tozer

III. Negative examples (v. 18-19)

A. Paul is very grieved at the way that certain self proclaiming Christians are living their lives (v. 18)

 B. He offers five brief descriptions of their way of life

1. Their mind set on earthly things

a. Rather than focus on the upward call of Christ, their passion for Jesus has been dulled by their focus on earthly things that have no eternal value.

b. Consider the third soil in the parable of the sower (Luke 8:14)

2. Their god is their stomach

 a. They worship their appetites

b. Rather than training and shaping their appetites, they give their cravings free reign

3. Their glory is in their shame

 They glorify and brag about things they should be ashamed of

4. They live as enemies of the cross of Christ

While they might assent to an intellectual idea of the cross, they don’t live “cross-centered” lives of dying to themselves and living for Jesus

5. Their destiny is destruction

 They will not receive the heavenly prize

IV. Our heavenly citizenship (v. 20-21)

A. Our loyalties lie with Christ’s heavenly kingdom

B. Christ will return and transform us, body and character

C. In the meantime, our posture is one of “eagerly awaiting” him