

## Philippians 3:11-21 – A thankful heart presses on – THANKSGIVING ANNC

Welcome, great to be with you, special welcome to our guests, VETERANS DAY- thank you vets-Please stan

As we get started this morning, let me ask.....how many of you have ever set out to do something, you put all of your heart and soul into it.....every ounce of energy, training, trying...

You worked and worked hard, and when it came time ....you failed, maybe you came in 2<sup>nd</sup> place? Anybody ever come in 2<sup>nd</sup> place....

And what have we always been told about 2<sup>nd</sup> place?.....first loser....yeah, b/c that makes us feel really good...

Now...I was going to try this morning and help some of you over come that.....some of you that came in 2<sup>nd</sup> place....really quick....what did you come in 2<sup>nd</sup> place for....what did you try to do....give me the one sentence version..

We all have probably come in 2<sup>nd</sup> place after spending a lot of time training, and trying....

For me, It was my sophomore year of college.....and each summer before our first practice we had a 4 mile run, and each of our position groups were given a time that you had to make the 3 mile run in....

And if you didn't make the time you were given....for us offensive linemen it was like 27 minutes.....(doesn't sound like a lot, but it was up hill both ways).....

And if you failed to make your time, you tried the next day....and the next until you made it....and if you finished first place among your position.....you got a medal....

Well my freshman year....i failed miserably, and I decided, next year.....so I trained, and trained....i worked hard, and I showed up ready to make the run....

And as I am making the run, I get through the first mile, then the second.....then the third, and as I am following the route....we were running through neighborhoods, and it was marked off....

But as I am starting the 4<sup>th</sup> mile.....i come to an intersection in the road.....and some body is standing in the middle of the road....they have polo, khaki, they have the little glow in the dark vest thingy on.....and they have one of those light up sticks that direct traffic.....and he just keeps pointing.....this way....

So....i figured, something must have happened and they detoured us, so myself and some of the guys with me.....take the detour.....only it wasn't a detour.....

It was actually.....a shortcut.....and I should have known b/c myself and our group finished with the wr just ahead of the rb.....and not only did I fail.....but some goober, standing in the street doing this.....caused me to be disqualified....

And .....as we are talking this morning about pressing on towards the prize.....i went ahead and got me one too....its a little bigger....

As we look this morning at **Philippians 3:12-21**.....i want to draw your mind towards knowing that developing a thankful heart means we press on towards the greatest prize of all time....

Lets read and see what Paul tells us we should be pressing on to.....Read with me....

**v.12**.....Not that I have already attained, remember....last week we spoke about the judaizers, and those who taught that you could earn God's favor through action....

And Paul, reminds us in the first part of ch. 3.....that knowing Christ is more valuable than anything....that everything else compared to Christ is garbage....

And we ended last week with Paul's words....that I may do anything possible to attain the resurrection from the dead..

In other words.....Paul was pursuing righteousness, Christ likeness.....and he was willing to do anything possible to achieve the ultimate end of his goal.....to be like Christ in every way possible....

He opens **v. 12** by saying....not that I have already attained or am already perfect.....this is a reminder, that he is sinful.....its a reminder that we are sinful....we fail, we mess up....

Sometimes we can feel defeated when we look at how messed up things are in our life.....but Paul says....don't feel defeated.....instead.....press on

How do we press on.....2 ways.....by forgetting what lies behind.....well.....that's no small feat....

Can we just remember for a moment.....the enemy loves to remind us of our past failures.....

Can I make a confession to you.....most pastors struggle with depression and anxiety at some point in their ministry....

And I have had those moments in life, where I am reminded of failure.....I have found that when I let my mind get fixed on failure....that depression usually is soon to follow...

Instead.....Paul tells us.....forget what lies behind.....all of those things that lie behind you are forgiven, its amazing that we as Christians worry about past mistakes when God has already forgiven

v.13 and strain forward to what lies ahead....

I am convinced Paul was a sports fan and athlete.....he loves to use sports metaphors, he uses boxing metaphors, he uses running metaphors....

And its this running metaphor here that he is laying out for us.....the picture he is painting is of a runner.....approaching the finish line.....straining with every ounce of energy to make it....pushing his body forward

I've been told...by those who run marathons....that there comes a point in running a marathon where your mind tells your body....enough.....and the runner has to make a decision.....give into the exhaustion, or keep going, straining....

Paul is relating our life to the runner of a marathon.....when you get exhausted, you can either quit.....or keep going...

We could easily quit and give into our sin.....or.....we could press on **v.14**

What is the prize.....lets go back to last week.....**Philippians 3:10-11**.....that I may know him, becoming like him....

I've heard so many people preach this passage as a prosperity gospel message.....just keep pressing on, God will reward you financially.....theres an OT word for that.....hogwash....run away from anyone that teaches that...

When we press on, when life is beating us up, sin is knocking on the door, depression is lurking, anxiety is raging.... We should strain.....for the goal of Christ likeness...

Lets look at the application Paul gives us in this passage....how do we do this....how do we press on when its hard...

3 ways...v17 ...#1 – Imitate those who are doing it.....leaders who have proven their accountability, and are willing to be accountable, and Keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example of scripture

#2 – Don't allow your walk to be hindered by those who fall. V.18

2 ways....

1. How many of you know someone that you admired as a believer and they fell? It may be easy....
2. Don't allow your walk to be hindered by those who teach/follow a false gospel
  - a. Pastors, celebrities, whomever.....the world seems to respond to a watered down gospel....we need to guard and protect God's word, know it, defend it.....

#3 – Realize where your citizenship is. V.20

Our citizenship is in heaven, but look at the reward.....v.21 – who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body.....

That is the ultimate prize by which we press on and strain for.....that one day, we will leave this world through death but for those who belong to Christ, those who press on.....a reward.....better than any earthly medal

As we close this morning, have you found yourself struggling to press on.....as we respond to the Lord this morning, spend some time in prayer