



'Back to Basics for Believers Series'

Sermons in the Epistle to the Philippians

Message 16 – 'One Thing I Do' Philippians 3: 12 - 16

As Paul continues in his admonition to the Philippians, he has been encouraging them to be single-minded in their pursuit of the Lord Jesus Christ. Even when others have tried to proclaim a different gospel, they are to remain focused on the gospel of grace, and the Lord Jesus Christ, for everything else compared to Him is as refuse. Paul's desire is to know Christ in the deepest possible way, 'that I may know Him'. As a result, he is single-minded in this pursuit as he exclaims, 'one thing I do'. How was he so single-minded? Well, in these verses we can see some of his key characteristics:

1. Paul was a man who was DISSATISFIED - V12 – 'not that I have already attained'; When we consider the race, the pursuit of being Christ-like, it begins with a sense of honesty of our own inadequacy, and it should bring a sense of dissatisfaction with our current state. The grace of God in Christ chose Christ for the ultimate purpose to conform Paul to the likeness of Christ His glorious image, and this is Paul's goal. Paul's desire above everything is to pursue this. Is that your desire? Is it mine? If you are not serious about your Christian life, then you will miss out on so much. A divided life is a sad life, because it will prevent you from knowing the joy of the Lord in your life, and it will deprive you from seeing the marvellous ways that He can work for you, and the plans and purposes He has for your life. You are never too old to strive on for the goal that Paul has in mind. He was dissatisfied with his current position, it was a holy dissatisfaction, because Paul's desire was Christ and nothing else.

2. Paul was a man who was DEVOTED - V13 – 'one thing I do'; The whole issue of sanctification to Paul is reduced to one thing, that is to pursue Christ-likeness. The believer must undoubtedly devote himself to running the Christian race. James 1:8 says, '*a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*' Concentration and devotion are the keys to great power. Yet, one thing is sure, we should never allow anything to challenge our commitment and devotion to the Lord, or the pursuit of Him. Paul was devoted, and so we should be.

3. Paul was a man who was heading in the right DIRECTION - V13 – 'forgetting what is behind'; The believer must be steadfast in their refusal to rely on past virtuous deeds and achievements that God has granted, either in ministry, spiritual understanding, or God-given success. Likewise, the believer must not dwell on the sins and failures of the past, repent, seek the Lord's forgiveness, learn the lessons and push forward. Being overly constrained by the past will derail efforts in the present. What does Paul mean here? Well, there were things he did not forget. He did not forget his knowledge of the Scriptures or its doctrines and truths. He did not forget God's grace or the Lord's tender mercies towards him. He knew that the things he has to value in his life were given to him by God's grace that was manifested in Jesus Christ. So what then? What did he forget? It is the forgetting of things in the past that overshadow the present. By forgetting we break the power of the past and unleash the hope of the future. This attitude lets the past be past, both the good and the bad, and that focus on what the Lord is doing now, and the work and good that He has for us in the future.



Penzance Baptist Church

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Pastor Jonathan Stobbs