

Good morning!

Welcome again Pastor Hugh and Bev! We are so excited that you are here with us!

ME:

- The story of my journey in math class
- Grade 9 we moved to a self-paced math, and I fell very far behind (“impossible to catch up”)
- I ended up finishing everything in a very short amount of time
- I became very confident in my abilities to do math
- I would ace tests with very little effort
- Grade ten I stopped doing my homework and I asked my parents for grace because I thought, “Well I’ll just really apply myself in grade 11 and 12.”
- Grade eleven, I said, universities don’t actually look at grade eleven grades. They look at grade twelve grades. I’ll try hard in grade twelve
- Once I got to grade twelve and I started to try harder, I realized there was so much I didn’t know
- In the end I barely scraped a 52% in Math 12 a far cry from the 92% in Grade nine.
- I rested on the work that I had done and became stale and stagnant in my math skills

(transition)

WE:

- With our 50th celebration approaching next weekend (***JOIN US SATURDAY!***), we have been spending each week preparing to celebrate.
 - Life Sunday three weeks ago: baptism, memberships, baby dedication
 - celebrating and remembering what God has done

- stacking stones
 - two weeks ago, we talked about our Jubilee King -> Jubilee People
 - Last week (Easter), we are transformed by the resurrection power of Jesus
- This week we're looking at: what do you do after God has done something amazing and significant?
- Problem: We get trapped
 - nostalgia "remember when" > Our faith becomes memory instead of growth. The good ol' days prevent us from moving forward. We remember better than it was.
 - entitlement, "We've earned this." > We feel like God owes us comfort after our blood, sweat and tears
 - comparison: "We're doing better than them." > This lowers the bar for growth.
 - 'comparison is the thief of joy'
- These three traps are not obvious sins, but they are quiet killers of our spiritual growth > both as a church and as individual followers of Jesus
- The best way to celebrate 50 years of God's faithfulness is to refuse to live like we've arrived
- And that's where Paul takes us in Philippians chapter 3

(transition)

GOD:

Philippians Chapter 3:4-11, 12-17

4 though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law,[c] blameless. 7 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss

for the sake of Christ. 8 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— 10 that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. 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. 15 Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. 16 Only let us hold true to what we have attained. 17 Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.

- Feels like most Sundays we say this but this verse is packed.
- Paul starts this section by listing his credentials to point out how qualified he is on paper. He's saying 'if anyone has reasons to brag about how good they are, it's me.' Then he contrasts that with the comparison to knowing Jesus. All that stuff is rubbish.
- Not because those things were evil but because they were never the goal
- So what is the goal? Verses 10-11, Paul tells us:
 - that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.
 - So Paul is saying that he wants to know Christ, not to information but intimacy with Christ.

- He wants to know the power of his resurrection in his present reality as he continues to become a new creation in Christ.
 - And through suffering and pursuit of righteousness, given by God, he wants to become more like Jesus, with the goal of one day attaining the complete transformation and the resurrection
 - Paul's goal is not to be successful himself. He wants to become more and more like Christ himself
- In verses 4 to 11 Paul is not rejecting God's work in his past; rather he is rejecting confidence in himself. Like there's a difference in remembering all God has done compared to how great you are.
 - v12 – “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.”
 - and this is the statement we can all relate to. Paul is saying I haven't fully arrived and I'm not yet complete.
 - We can all agree that none of us are perfect
 - And he says he presses on towards that: why we say “strive”
(Vision statement on the wall)
 - and what does he mean when he says "...to make it my own"?
 - Original Greek is a word that means to seize and take hold of. The idea that he's saying here is that Christ grabbed hold of Paul and then Paul now wants to grab hold of Christ
 - this is not Paul trying to get a hold of salvation, rather, chasing after and trying to grab hold of what he's already been given, but in verse 13 he says, "I do not consider that I've made it my own." In other words, I don't quite have it all yet, so I'm still in pursuit.

- v13 – “...But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,
- So again what's he forgetting? He's not forgetting all the things that God has done. But rather he's forgetting his self-reliance, his status, his ego, his past
- You don't want to forget all that God has done but you refuse to rely on what you have done
- In contrast we strive and strain forward. He gives us this image of a race
- This bleeds into verse 14. I press on toward the goal
- v14 – And for some people it's important to note here that Paul in this passage is certain of his salvation and he's certain that his righteousness, his goodness, comes from God. In verse 9 he says the [righteousness that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God depends on faith.](#)
- And then in the same breath he confirms his own effort in striving toward the goal.
- Not just a little bit of effort but this straining forward, this pressing on.
- God is calling you forward into a full life in Christ and you have to respond to that calling
- v15–16 – Then verse 15 he says, "[Let those of us who are mature think this way and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.](#)"
- The mature believer forgets what lies behind and presses forward to what lies ahead
- And I think that fits with what a lot of us know about advancing in any area of our life
- We know that maturity is not getting stuck on the past. We know that maturity is that mindset of "I still need to grow."
I still need to grow
- So Paul is saying he is secure, already saved in Christ but not yet complete and so press on because Christ already holds you
- ***And I don't know where you are in your faith journey, but the reality is God isn't done with you yet.***
You have to keep moving forward.

YOU:

- Paul is speaking very earnestly about his desires here
- As you reflect on your own spiritual walk with Jesus, this verse makes us ask these same kinds of questions
- **Where have you decided to quietly say ‘this is enough?’ Where have you stopped pressing on?**
- I've seen in young people who feel like I've gone to church my whole life and then when they get a little bit of freedom, they kind of think that they don't need to go to church anymore because they understand well enough
- I see that in adults too who decide I don't need to go to church every Sunday
- I see that in older mature believers as well who stop reading their Bibles because they've already read it a few times and they feel that they pretty much know most of it.
- And remember those traps that we talked about earlier: nostalgia, entitlement, and comparison. Are those getting in the way of how you strive forward?
- Are you living off the energy from when you were a Christian in your twenties or when you first started believing and everything was exciting and passionate and now you are just kind of coasting in your faith
- Or maybe you feel like you've already put in your time in ministry, and you don't have to do any more.
- Or maybe you're comparing yourself to other believers and you're like, "Well I'm a better Christian than those people or than that person." You don't need to do any more because you already got it figured out because you're such a good Christian already
- Well, the reality is God hasn't stopped working, but you may have stopped responding to him
- You are not finished. There is more that Jesus has for you

- He wants you to surrender more. He wants you to grow more. He wants to continue transforming you. He wants to continue to change your life
- But it takes courage to admit that you're not there yet. It takes courage to move forward again
- I know a lot of people knock things like New Year's resolutions, but I respect when people decide to make a change and start to do something towards it
- But it is incredibly difficult to always keep that momentum going because it's a choice you have to make every single day > you have to press on toward the goal!
- So if you want to step into what God has next for you, refuse to coast and settle on what's already been, and refuse to live off the past momentum in your faith.
- Instead, make it your own, like Jesus has already made you his own.

Gospel Call:

- Maybe this morning you relate to somebody who's been chasing all the wrong goals in life
- You've got goals and ambitions, whether it's success or money or relationships, and you've been running hard, not lazy about it.
- You're not actually moving towards anything that lasts
- It's like you've been on a treadmill every day, running hard, sweating, tired, and exhausted but going absolutely nowhere
- Paul said he had a lot of achievements that he could brag about, maybe you do too.
- But Paul says he counts it all as garbage compared to knowing Jesus
- If you talk to somebody who runs marathons, they'll tell you there's a difference between running a marathon and running the same distance on a treadmill
- On the treadmill you'll never get the prize because you're not actually in the right race
- So, consider this morning: What if you're wrong? What if you get everything, you're chasing, and it still doesn't satisfy you?
- That's Paul's story, also many other people here

- And this is where the gospel changes everything because Christianity is not about trying harder to run a better race.
- It's about realizing you've been running in the wrong direction
- And Jesus steps in, and he sets you free from sin, condemnation, the sting of death, and empty, futile ways of life.
- Jesus lived, died, and rose again so that you could have life and have it to the full
- By believing in Him and trusting in Him as your Savior, He then takes you off the treadmill of life and puts you on solid ground.
- And all the believers here have gone through the same struggle of learning to trust Jesus with their whole life. You're not alone in that.

WE:

- And now as a church of individuals who have trusted in Jesus, we have been brought together by the Holy Spirit
- We are celebrating 50 years of God's faithfulness here.
- And as a church, we've been asking the question through this transition: what does the future of SVBC look like
- The best way to celebrate 50 years of God's faithfulness is to refuse to live like we've arrived.
- So, as we step into year 51, We don't want to just be a church that only remembers what God did. We want to be a church that's still responding to what He's doing.
- Still growing. Still being shaped. Striving to take hold of Jesus and become more and more like him > His Jubilee people.
- God isn't done with us yet. So, let's not be done pursuing Him.

Let's pray.

Jesus, thank You that You have already taken hold of us.

Thank You that our hope isn't in what we've done, but in what You've done for us through Your life, death, and resurrection.

God, we confess that it's easy to settle. It's easy to look back, to get comfortable, to stop pressing on. So, would You stir something in us again? Give us the courage to admit that we're not there yet, and the faith to keep moving forward.

For those who feel stuck, would You meet them right where they are. For those who have been running in the wrong direction, would You draw them to Yourself today. And for those who are following You, help us to keep growing, keep surrendering, and keep becoming more like You.

As we step into what's next as a church, would You lead us. Keep us from settling. Keep us focused on You.

We trust You with what's ahead.

Benediction

Philippians 1:6

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.