

20261011 EVELEIGH CHURCH CHUCK DEMASTERS DONT CHEAT ON THE PRESENT WITH YOUR PAST FINAL

(0:00 - 6:01)

God is good all the time. Amen. Amen.

Today's message come after some stuff come around and some past memories hit me. And we're all in that boat. We all have these memories and past experiences that some of them good, some of them we don't wish to remember.

But for some reason, we like to dwell in the past. We like to remember the bad things that happened, sometimes more than we remember the good ones. So I'm a lot like Jay.

I like having a message on my sermon. And the message is, don't cheat on the present with your past. And the verse that we're going to be mostly focused on today, and you'll hear me reference it numerous times, is Philippians 3, 13 and 14.

That's Philippians 3, 13 and 14. If y'all don't mind, follow along with me as we read this. Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race.

That is highly important that we continue to press on depending on what life brings us. In the past, currently, or what is to come. And the first bullet point we'll talk about is that we need to learn from the past, but not live there.

In Isaiah 43, 18 through 19, he says, but forget all that. It is nothing compared to what I'm going to do for you. But forget all that.

Now, as men, I can speak, forgiveness is one of those things that we don't like to forget about. We are prideful. We draw the line in the sand.

Yeah, we might forgive the guy that cut us off in the parking lot. We might forget the guy who blew his horn because we didn't go when the light turned green. But true forgiveness, I'm talking forgiveness that you have to deep down, dig down deep inside.

We like to draw a line in the sand and say that's too far. But really, is it too far? A. W. Tozer said, God is not asking us to live in yesterday's light. There's nothing that happened yesterday that we need to live in.

Learn from? Yes, we need to learn from our past experiences. Because yesterday's blessings were real. They weren't made up or false.

They were real. But God has something much better for us to walk in today. Because see, the past, even bad, it teaches us something.

It teaches us where not to step again, where not to make those faults. But it's the past for a reason. It's not to be our permanent address.

The past failures that you've had are there to teach you, but they're not there to define you. Past victories. And I said victories.

We have victories, as you see on here. When we're victorious, boy, we let everybody know. I know after every football game, anybody that wins or World Series, first thing they say, I praise the Lord for this time right now.

But the guy on the right, they don't interview him and say, I praise God that I just lost. Why is it that we do that? We need to praise God in our valleys and on our hilltops. So, the past victories, they encourage you.

But that victory that you get doesn't sustain you forever. You must keep pressing on. The past hurts that you've had, they shape you.

But folks, don't let them control you. Your past hurts. I've seen this reference, and actually, it was Steve Harvey, and I wasn't watching Family Feud.

But Steve Harvey was talking about a vehicle. Who in here's drove down WK Parkway? Some people never drove down WK? Okay. All right.

We've all driven down WK Parkway. Now, this is going to scare me, and we got a state trooper in the room, but guess what? How many of y'all have driven down WK Parkway staring in the rearview mirror? Good. I'm glad because, oh, Brady has? Charlie, get him.

Anyways, so, the rearview mirrors are there to tell you what you've passed and what's coming up on you. But there's a reason the rearview mirror is smaller than the front windshield, because the front windshield is where you're needing to go. It's more important than the rearview mirrors.

So, why in life do we focus so much on the past and let that past define us? Our past hurts, whether it be financial, marriage, problems at work, problems with the kids. Why do we let that drag us down and keep us from forgiving? The point that I want to make on that first topic is just look back long enough to learn, but look forward long enough to live. The second bullet point I want to talk about today is stop letting yesterday define you, and don't let it define you to who you are today.

(6:03 - 7:08)

In 2 Corinthians 5.17, anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone, and the new has begun. Tells us right there, anybody who belongs to Christ has become a new person.

The new life has begun. Don't dwell in the past. Because you see, Paul, and I love Paul in the Bible, Paul went through so many battles and strifes, but he always remained faithful.

Always. He had plenty in the past that defined him, yet he had understood that Christ gave him a new identity. And I hope the same is true for most of y'all in this room, hopefully all of y'all, that Christ has given you a new identity.

Quit living in the past. Look at the present. Because too often we like to say and look back on our past and say our past has failed me.

(7:09 - 11:00)

I've messed up. I'm not good enough. God can use you.

God can't use you. But God's grace said, you are not who you used to be. I can use you.

I can fix you. Funny story, I brought my father-in-law through these doors one day. It was for the, I think it was during the revival.

And he said, oh Lord, I'm going to burn up as soon as I walk through these doors. That's the, the common, the common theory is that people think that because we go to church that we're perfect. This is a house for sinners.

We can't do it on our own. So your history is part of your testimony. And I like to say often, and I say it quite often, the test in your life creates your testimonies.

The messes in your life create your message. So the tests are not bad. God is testing you.

Everybody knows some geology and you put rocks through pressure to create diamonds. So when you create diamonds through pressure, you don't create it just by picking out a regular rock. It has to be created with pressure.

God did that for a reason. He does the same with us. Through the ups and downs of life, He shows us His mercy and His grace.

We just have to believe in Him to come through to the other side. So, number three, press forward into what God has next. Press forward.

Philippians 3.14 again, He said, I press on to reach the end of the race and I receive a heavenly prize. If you notice in that statement, Paul's language, he says, press on. I like in the Bible, there's action words to say, follow me, press on.

That means make a move, continue to move forward. Don't get stuck in the mud. Don't be the, what Tommy calls the, don't sit there and sink, stower and stink or whatever he says.

Sink, stower, stink, whatever. But Paul made sure that to tell you there's intentional movement to press on. Don't just start, stop looking backwards.

You need to look backwards. We learn from what happened in our past. That's how we grow as Christians.

But we need to start looking forward. We need to look at the now, the presence. Now, I know it's getting close to Halloween and that's not why I'm bringing this out.

But some of you guys in this room know this more than others. Some of y'all know this a lot better than others. Jimmy Lloyd, I know you know what this thing is.

P.W. Yeah. I'm not so much focused on the drill, but focused on the bit. Now, I never give it no thought about a drill bit till I started preparing this sermon.

As this drill bit goes forward, it can go through hard things, right? So, imagine this piece of metal being the drill bit. If it was just a cylinder with no other details on it. Now, I didn't know what the details were till I researched it.

(11:00 - 11:23)

Jimmy Lloyd, you probably know what they are. So, on a drill, and I don't remember all of it, but on a drill, you have these margins, they're called. Lanes and margins.

That's the high spots. That's the high spots in your life, right there. The middle parts, the cutouts, that's called flutes.

(11:23 - 14:01)

They were the low spots. As this moves forward, this edge cuts. But without this flute, it can't remove the material out of the hole.

So, as it continues to go forward, because the edge cuts, and then the flutes remove the old. Now, if you're the bit and you're solid, and you don't have these flutes, and the way these drill bits work, as it drills through the hole and it can't clear the material, the flutes are there to clear the material. If it doesn't clear the material, it'll cause it to jam up and break the bit.

So, same thing's true in life. The flute is Jesus in your life. He's going to clear the debris out of your life.

He's going to open up that path moving forward so that you don't snap and break off. He's there to help you in the trials. He's there to celebrate the tops of the mountains with you.

So, when you press on and look forward, there are people that you may find that you have not reached yet. There are prayers that you have not answered yet. And there are things that God

still wants to do with your life.

There still is a race to run. There's still a purpose to fulfill. A fisherman, and my boy Leroy knows this, a fisherman can't live on yesterday's catch.

Now, we love to tell stories with our phones of what we caught before. We may even stretch the truth, I caught them yesterday. But you can't catch the fish unless you continue to throw the line out.

You can't live on yesterday's success. You have to look and go for the next success of the next day. You have to cast the line out again.

In this study, I'm also back to talking about forgiveness. I have struggled with forgiveness for years and years and years up until about six years ago. And I laid it all at his feet and said, help me forgive, teach me to forgive.

Now, this forgiveness I'm talking about is not the guy that cut me off. I'm talking about real hurt in my life that there's no way no way that I could have come through it without Jesus on my side. No way.

(14:03 - 14:49)

And through the hardships of my life, losing my mother or any of that, God gave me a piece of understanding that surpassed all of my understanding. So, I hope you have that peace in your life. I hope you have Jesus to walk you through the hills and the valleys.

Because yesterday is a place of remembrance, but it's not a residence. You can thank God for yesterday. You can learn from yesterday.

You can celebrate what God did for you yesterday. But folks, don't build your tent on yesterday. You will miss what he has in front of you right now.

(14:50 - 15:50)

He has stuff that he still has planned for you right now in this moment. But back in the forgiveness part, I found a study that they did that said they studied 5,000 5,000 some odd people and it was over five countries and they formed 83 studies around these 5,000 people and they found out that forgiveness was associated with a greater life satisfaction, better positive emotions, and stronger evidence of relationships. It doesn't say, now they didn't say forgiveness alone brought them this happiness, but it tells you right now and it tells us in the gospel that we are to forgive as we have been forgiven.

(15:53 - 16:48)

So again, Philippians 3, 13 through 14, forget the past and look forward to what lies ahead and

press on. Don't let what happened behind you keep from what God's placed in front of you, from you seeing what God's placed in front of you right now. It is important to keep your eyes open.

So if you went home or thought you're going to turn the crock pot off, you don't because I don't get long-winded. I say what needs to be said. But I hope that if there's anybody in here today that's going through a struggle, that's going through a hard time, don't waste a moment.

(16:48 - 17:01)

Don't do it right now by yourself. I hope and pray that you have Jesus Christ in your life and then he will bring you through to the end. The trials of our life are not to bring us down.

(17:01 - 17:16)

It's to grow our faith stronger in him. It's to purify us, to strengthen us. He's with you because he knows where you've been, where you're at, and he definitely knows where you're going.

(17:17 - 17:44)

So there's no sense to sit in the back room and pray, God, why are you doing this to me? Because he's waiting for you to say, God, I trust in you. You're going to bring me through it. And one day you're going to grumble, grumble, grumble, and finally you're going to mess up with his timing and what he wants for your life.

And you'll say, aha. And I hope many of y'all have had some aha moments in your life. I know I have, that that's why God did what he did.

(17:46 - 18:17)

So I ask you today, if you don't know the Lord as your Lord and savior, if you're struggling with depression, hurt, medical conditions, pain, you're not in this alone. You're not in this alone. Our God can do anything.

All is possible for those who believe in our Jesus Christ. This cross I moved down here is for a reason. Put it at the foot of the cross.

(18:17 - 18:26)

Let him bear that burden. Let him carry that weight for you. But the altar's open folks.

(18:26 - 18:49)

If you want to come forward, there's people that were more than happy to pray for you. I'll pray for you. Any of these elders or deacons will be there to support you and whatever you're going through.

We've got ladies, but please don't hold on to the past. No more fly free with Jesus right now. If you don't know him, we'll introduce you to him, but lay it at the foot of the cross.