

THE GOAL IN MIND

Thursday, May 7th, 2020

Philippians 3:12-14

“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. “

The goal, or prize, that Paul writes about and longs for in these verses is complete and eternal fellowship with God. He's writing this, aware that he has not yet attained this goal and taken hold of this complete fellowship (Phil 3, 8-11); aware that he's still living on this earth, which is full of suffering, pain, fear, worries and temptations.

I think Paul could write these words confidently only because of his relationship with Jesus Christ and what Jesus has done in his heart. (Acts 9) He wants to **press on** and **strain toward** the goal to reach it. He doesn't want to half-heartedly pursue this goal, but rather completely focus on it and do anything and everything he can for it. What determination and firmness lie behind his words!

What do we desire? Are we as determined and focused as Paul is? Regardless of the circumstances? Or are we so occupied by the suffering in our lives, or by our past, or by the pain of not being able to see each other due to these Corona restrictions, or by simple worries about our lives... Are we so occupied that these things have become our focus? This has been my experience recently.

But what are all these worries, fears, hardships, all this pain and suffering... what are they in light of the incomparable joy that comes from Jesus' victory, the joy we can already experience here and now on this earth, and the joy we will have in perfection with God someday?

This certainly shifts our goal and perspective dramatically!

With eternal fellowship with God in mind, is it not worth enduring all those things and to **strain oneself** for God's kingdom? (1. Cor 15,58) Let's encourage one another out of love to keep our true goal in mind, and to live and proclaim the gospel. Who could you encourage today out of love? Go for it!

Prayer: LORD, please help me focus completely on You and the eternal fellowship with You that awaits me. Help me understand the worth of the things of this world in light of eternity with You. Restore in me the joy of Your salvation and grant me a willing spirit that will sustain me, just as we read in Psalm 51:12. Thank You for the fellowship we can have with You and with each other as brothers and sisters now, and yes, even into eternity! 😊 Amen.

-Maximilian Mundt-

